

**The Lessons Appointed for Use on the
Sunday closest to June 29
Proper 8 Year B**

**Wisdom of Solomon 1:13-15; 2:23-24, Psalm 30, 2 Corinthians 8:7-15, Mark
5:21-43**

The Gospel today has a little bit of everything. People from all walks of life. Rich. Poor. Healthy. Sick. Alive. Dead. Known. Unknown. Stories which intersect in surprising ways. Just like our lives, the impact is greater because of how the stories play off of each other. It doesn't matter who or where you are. Jesus will transcend any barrier to get to you. Jesus will turn aside to hear you.

We continue to follow Jesus' early ministry. We've been watching his travels back and forth a number of times across the sea of Galilee and this time when he lands the crowd finds him again. He just get out of his boat when a man, Jairus approaches him. His daughter is dying and he begs Jesus to help. In the midst of this great crowd the Gospel focuses on two unnamed women. We hear their stories. We don't know much about them- they were defined by their suffering and the people around them. We acknowledge their pain and suffering. We name the absolute dejection and isolation through disease and death. We see through their eyes how the world works. And we see through Jesus' eyes how the world should work. And as he was going to see the young girl, he was stopped. She was bold. She was isolated and abandoned by the society she was supposed to be a part of. Bleeding for 12 years, she was utterly desperate. And in the moment when Jesus looked at her not through her or around her but in her eyes, she told her whole truth to Jesus.

But he doesn't leave the young girl behind. She who has been alive as long as the other woman has been bleeding. She begins the story by being on the edge of life and death, she enters into death, and is raised up by Jesus.

The world often defines us by our sicknesses. By the death we teeter on the edge of. But Jesus doesn't do that. We are not defined by what our bodies do or don't do in God's eyes or frankly from the amount of faith that we have. Our worth is intrinsic and not based on what other people see. Our stories are always more than meets the eye. Take the hemorrhaging woman. Yes, she was sick. But she was also ostracized by her community because of it. She was not embraced, helped, or welcomed. She was treated as a pariah because of something she couldn't control. There was no acknowledgement or validation of her pain. But with Jesus, no more on the fringe, she is invited to belong.

On Jesus' way to help Jairus' daughter, Jesus stops. Or rather, got stopped. Allows himself to be interrupted. Henri Nouwen once reflected on this and said his life was constantly

full of interruptions. And he would complain about it. And then he realized something. That those interruptions were his work. This is very much how Jesus moves through Mark. Because God works through relationship. Through acknowledgement. By being present. God is defined and defines us by love. No more are we defined by how we can't cut it. God hears the whole truth of our story and our existence. And there in lies our hope. We each carry wounds with us. Some of those wounds have turned to scars, some are still open. And often times with those wounds is this sense of shame. To counteract that we lean into that hope. There is powerful theology from the Wisdom of Solomon today: ¹³ because God did not make death, and he does not delight in the death of the living. ¹⁴ For he created all things so that they might exist; the generative forces of the world are wholesome, and there is no destructive poison in them. God is a good God. And desires good for all of creation. God does not delight in anything that would hurt us.

Just like for the hemorrhaging woman and the young girl, Jesus responds on a case by case basis because we're all created differently. Our answer to prayer may indeed be very different than our siblings. But the answer for Jesus always lies in his willingness to be interrupted in order to heal. To call God to be present in the good, the bad, and the ugly. Our hope is in the absolute and utter power of the resurrection. For bodies, for minds, for souls, and for all the bits and pieces of our lives both individual and communal which need it.

The even better thing is, we don't have to sneak it or steal it because Jesus gives love and grace away freely. While it seems like the woman and Jairus are very different, and they are in many ways, they are both desperate. Yet it's more than that. They both tell the truth to Jesus of their need for him. They were both aware of his growing reputation as a healer. And they both sought him out. They had nothing to lose.

As with any healing or miracle story, there is complexity. In our lives, for ourselves and others, there are countless seemingly unanswered prayers. We've lost those dearest to us. Some tragically young. For some, the healing that we seek in this world doesn't come. So, if it doesn't come magically like in this passage, what could happen when we reach out to Jesus? A man with a terminal illness once said, "I have been healed, not of my disease, but I have been healed of my fear of my disease."¹

In today's reading, we are reminded by Professor Emeritus at Union Theological Seminary Lamar Williamson Jr that "Not even after death is it too late to hope." For what we think has died God may see very differently. And that is the whole truth. That God listens to our truths, who we are as people, and God responds with the truth about hope. Not even after death is it too late to hope. To hope is to know that we might not always get for what we hope for. But we will have a deeper relationship with God. Which ultimately does bring us healing. So keep

¹ Bible Works.

your eyes peeled for Holy Interruptions. Stay open to them knowing that God is working in them. You never know what God is trying to show you.