



Pentecost 5-June 27, 2021

Baltic and East Nidaros Lutheran Parish

Mark 5:21-43

“Hearing About Jesus”

Sermon by Pastor Randall J. Questad

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

In today’s gospel from Mark, we learn that there are no boundaries that can separate Jesus from doing what he came down to earth to do for others and for you. Jesus had just crossed a geographic boundary of a body of water to the other side of the sea to heal a man who had spent his entire life suffering from being possessed by a demon. After being healed by Jesus, this man wanted to demonstrate his faith by following Jesus by going back with him across the sea. But Jesus refused the request of this man and told him that the best way for him to demonstrate his faith would be to stay where he was and tell others about what Jesus had done for him. Now after crossing back on the other side of the sea, Jesus breaks boundaries of sickness by quickly healing a woman who had suffered for 12 years and then breaks through the biggest boundary of all, death, as he brings back to life a 12-year-old girl simply by saying, “Little girl I say to you, arise.”

*Both of these stories of healing begin with stories of desperation. As soon as Jesus’ boat had landed on the other side of the sea, Jairus, a leader of the synagogue, was waiting for Jesus to get off the boat. Jairus demonstrated his desperation by falling at the feet of Jesus and begged Jesus over and over to come to his house to heal his daughter. Jairus’ daughter’s sickness had not been healed by the physicians or the prayers of the religious leaders. Jairus went to Jesus because **he had heard** about what Jesus could do. Jairus, who worked at the synagogue didn’t even stop there to pray when Jesus got off the boat, he went straight to Jesus and begged him to lay his hands on his daughter so that she would be made well and live. Jairus had faith that Jesus would heal his daughter. Jairus didn’t ask Jesus to see what he thought he might be able to do. Jairus didn’t apologize for not coming to Jesus sooner, nor did Jesus’ scold Jairus for using him as a last resort. Jairus believed that Jesus would heal his precious daughter. And without saying a word to Jairus, Jesus went with Jairus to his home.*

After hearing the urgent pleas from Jairus, there is no one to clear the path for Jesus so he can get to the little girl as quickly as possible. Others may have heard Jairus’ desperate pleas of urgency for Jesus to come and heal his daughter, but no one moved to the side of the path as we have been taught to do when emergency vehicles are in route when called to situations where getting there on time is critical. Instead, a crowd of people with their own concerns pressed on Jesus and slowed him down.

*As Mark records this story it seems that Jesus’ concern for this 12-year-old girl is forgotten as the story shifts to another woman whose need was less urgent since she had already been suffering for 12 years. But this woman too had reached a point of complete desperation. She had spent all that she had and not only didn’t get better but got worse. She too came to Jesus because **she had heard about Jesus**. Maybe Jesus was her*

last resort, but she had heard that he had gotten off the boat from the other side of the sea and he was somewhere in the crowd of people, and she believed that if she just got close enough to touch the fringe of his clothes, she would be healed. This may be her last chance to be healed and the timing of coming close to Jesus was as urgent for her as it was for the healing of Jairus' daughter.

What she believed she needed to do to be healed came true. She got within arm's reach of Jesus and simply touched the fringe of his clothes and as Mark records she was healed immediately. Jesus healed her without speaking or even seeing the woman in the crowd, but he felt power leave him and he looked around at the crowd to see who had received his healing power. The woman didn't identify herself by raising her hand or giving Jesus her name. Jesus knew who it was because she fell at his feet just as he had witnessed Jairus do earlier. Jesus looked at the healed woman with compassion and called her "Daughter" and told her that it was her faith that healed her. In spite of the large crowd of people, this woman knew there was something different about this man he who was able to save her from the illness that she had suffered from for so long.

Casting Crowns was the last concert on Friday evening during the Rise Fest Festival. We were among this crowd of nearly over 9000 people listening that evening. The music was loud, and we were close to the source of the music being projected in this large field. Many people were on their feet and singing along with their familiar songs. There were many different voices and sounds to be heard that night, but my granddaughter, Esther who had somehow fallen asleep in all of this commotion suddenly woke up and looked straight at me and said, "Grandpa, don't make so much noise, I can't sleep." I wondered how she knew it was my voice that woke her up?

While Jesus was still speaking to this woman who had been healed, someone had broken through the crowd and broke the news to Jesus that Jairus' daughter had died. The messenger suggested that Jesus could just as well stay with the crowd of people and see who else needed healing, because he was now too late to heal Jairus' daughter. Jairus saw this woman healed by Jesus and heard him say that it was her faith that healed her, but now instead of believing in Jesus' power to heal may have believed that Jesus was too late. Before Jairus said a word, Jesus told him, "Do not fear, only believe." What was Jairus to believe in? Maybe he was to believe they made a mistake in their diagnosis. But Jairus listened to Jesus and believed in him and made their way to his house.

When Jesus had arrived at Jairus' house there was loud weeping, but this little girl didn't wake up from all of the noise. Jesus asked the people why they were making all this commotion. Jesus said that she was only sleeping. Their weeping from the crowd for the family of this girl turned into laughing at Jesus who apparently didn't know the difference between death and sleep.

What would Jesus say to the father and mother of this little girl who it seemed arrived too late? Jesus said, "Talitha cum" which means "I say to you, little girl arises". This little girl who had not opened her eyes from all the noise around her was now able to hear Jesus' voice clearly. Jesus only had to say what he said once, and we are told she was completely healed just as quickly as the woman who caused Jesus to delay in getting to Jairus house. Jesus didn't tell the parents that the little girl should take it easy for a few days while she got her strength back, instead she not only sat up in bed, but got out of bed and walked around. The only prescription that Jesus gave to her parents was now that she was healed, they were to give her something to eat.

Verses 2 and 3 of the Psalm for today from Psalm 30 summarize the power that Jesus has over life and death. Verse two describes the power that left Jesus for the woman who had suffered for 12 years, "I cried out to you, and you restored my health." Verse three summarizes what the little girl might have said to Jesus after he said to her, "Talitha cum". "You brought me up, O Lord, from the dead; you restored my life as I was going down to the grave."

Jairus and the woman had heard about Jesus who had the power to heal. The father and mother of the little girl and three of his disciples witnessed Jesus' power over death. We believe that Jesus has the power over life and death because we too have heard about Jesus. We believe that there is nothing that can keep us from reaching out to Jesus and believing that he will hear our cries for help. We believe that he has not forgotten us even when it appears that we are still suffering while others seem to have received their healing. We believe in Jesus alone because we have heard that Jesus is the only one who has overcome our greatest enemy, death, and has promised to one day raise each one of us from death just as he did Jairus' little girl simply by saying, "I say to you, arise." Amen