

**Walking by Faith**  
**Mark 5:21-43**  
**July 1, 2018 – Sixth Sunday After Pentecost**

How many times have I exclaimed that I love the Gospel of Mark. In fact, I'm planning a Bible Study on the Gospel of Mark later this year. Watch the newsletter for more information on that. But, one of the reasons I love the Gospel of Mark is because of its simple yet elegant literary structure; and one of Mark's favorite techniques is called "framing." Today's lesson is a perfect example of framing. Here the story of the hemorrhaging woman is framed in the story of Jairus' daughter. Jairus, the synagogue leader comes to Jesus with a desperate request. His twelve year old daughter is near death. But that story is interrupted by the story of a woman who has been bleeding for twelve years. Notice the correlation; the woman has been bleeding for the daughter's entire lifetime – twelve years. In framing one story in the other, Mark links the two stories together. Both are about women; both are about healing; and both are about faith.

But for purposes of today's message, let's first look at the hemorrhaging woman. We're told that she had been bleeding for twelve years. Obviously, the mere fact that this situation was going on for years was a tragedy in itself. But, key to the story is: the fact that she was bleeding made her ritually unclean by Jewish law. She was forbidden from touching a Jewish man, any man including her husband if she happened to be married. If she was single, she would not be able to be married. She was essentially ostracized from society. Then we are told that, in desperation, she had suffered at the hands of physicians and spent all she had, only to grow worse. But she knew... She knew the healing power of Jesus. She told herself, if I can just touch his clothes, I will be healed. Now let us not forget that by touching him, she was violating Jewish law. But still she worked her way through the crowd, came up behind Jesus, and touched his cloak, and *immediately* she was healed. And Jesus... Jesus felt that healing power go forth, and he said, "Who touched me?" And the woman... The woman was terrified. She had broken the law. She had made Jesus ritually unclean. She fell before him in fear and trembling, and she told him the whole truth. And Jesus, full of compassion, full of love, said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed for your disease." Notice that Jesus didn't say, "I healed you; I made you well." No, he said, "Your faith has made you well."

Then there is the other story about the twelve year old daughter of Jairus, the synagogue leader. Now it's no secret that Jesus was not real popular in the synagogue. We just heard how he basically ignored Jewish law. But Jairus was desperate. His daughter was near death; and he'd heard about Jesus. So he came, fell at his feet and pleaded, "Come and lay your hands on her so she may be made well and live." Jairus had faith in the healing power of Jesus.

But then we have this whole thing going on with the bleeding woman, and Jesus is delayed; and word comes to Jairus: “Don’t bother the teacher any longer; your daughter has died.” But Jesus overhears this dire news; and Jesus tells Jairus, “No. Do not fear. Only believe. Only have faith.” And Jesus enters the house, lays hands on the girl, and raises her to a newness of life.

Friends, these stories are testimonies to the healing power of Jesus; but more importantly, they are testimonies to the power of faith, for faith is central in both healing stories. By now, you may be tired of hearing about The Daniel Plan; and I apologize for that, but it’s been a major part of my life and the lives of our participant for the last couple months. The Daniel Plan is built on five essentials of a healthy life; but faith is number one. And there is a reason that faith is number one; because, without faith we can do nothing. When the Rich Young Ruler asked Jesus how it is possible for anyone to enter heaven, Jesus responded, “For God all things are possible.” (Mark 10:27) The corollary to that is, “Without God, nothing is possible.”

Now, I’m not suggesting that we leave everything up to God. Yes, we need to do our part. The woman did need to get through the crowd to touch Jesus; and Jairus did need to hunt Jesus down and ask, indeed plead, that Jesus come and heal his daughter. The Daniel Plan does not suggest that we can simply pray, and we will suddenly be healthier. But, prayer and faith in God forms a foundation on which we can and should build our lives. Prayer gives us the power, indeed the faith that we can succeed.

Last week, 18 of us went to Buffalo, New York to serve the people there. In my sermon last week, I spoke about how the Spirit of the Risen Christ would be going with us on our journey; and, I spoke about how we must have faith that Christ would calm the storms and would give us the power and the strength and the knowledge to do the job that God had called us to do. Well, we did it, with God’s help; or, should I say God did it with our help.

Eighteen of us went to Buffalo: three work teams – a total of five adult and nine teenagers, five of whom were young teens and had never been on a mission trip before, plus a wonderful three person kitchen crew. We totally rebuild a seven by twenty-four foot porch, new support, new deck and new rails. We scraped and painted two other porches. We laid a new floor in a child’s bedroom. We did some yard work, other painting, and clean-up. We did some amazing work; but, as I have said so many times before, the most important thing we did is spread the amazing love of God. It was our joy to share a meal with the people of Buffalo, to make new friends, to tell the people there, that there are people in Cleveland, Ohio that care about them. And, you know what – we received a much or more love from them than we could give. That’s the way it works on mission trips.

Now, we can't pray that God will build a porch or a deck. As Saint Teresa of Avila said in the sixteenth century, "Christ has no hands but our hands, and Christ has no feet but our feet." Yes, we are called to be the hands and the feet of Christ; and, we are called to spread the love of Christ. Our mission trip teaches our youth what it means to share the love of Christ; and when we share the love of Christ, we grow in the love of Christ. (By the way, the fourth element of The Daniel Plan is "Friends." It's all about sharing the love of Christ with our friends and neighbors.)

But it's not just a group of youth that are called to share that love. Each and every one of us, every Christian, is called to be the hands and feet of Christ; and every Christian is called to share the love of Christ. And I'm proud to say, "That's something this church does really well." Still, I ask if we could be doing more. I pray about that. I hope you are also praying about that – asking what more your church could be doing and what more you could be doing.

How often I hear, "Oh we couldn't do that"; but it's about faith. With God all things are possible. May God continue to lead us as individuals, as a church, as a community. As we celebrate Independence Day this Wednesday may we pray that God will lead our nation that individually and corporately we may share the love of Christ in all we think, in all we say, and in all we do. And may we always give God all the praise and all the glory.

Let us pray. . .

Lord,  
Strengthen our faith.  
Help our unbelief.  
Then lead us and guide us  
as we seek to share your love  
with your people everywhere.  
Amen.

Rev. Mark L. Steiger, Pastor  
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