

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Amen!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

[Intro]

- All medical help had failed. The child was sinking away in death.
- All medical help had failed. ***"If I could only touch His garments, I will be made well."***

In a moment of desperation, could the rumors be true? Could this Jesus heal my daughter from death? Could this Jesus heal me of my flow of blood?

These were the questions of the people we meet in today's Gospel text. Are the rumors true? In a moment of desperation, a father and another woman seek Jesus to find out. On this Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, we meet two people who have come to faith in Jesus through trials and tribulations.

[At the Point of Desperation]

"When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about Him, and He was beside the sea" (Mark 5:21). Immediately, one of the rulers of the local synagogue, Jairus by name, sought Jesus and fell at His feet and began pleading, saying, ***"My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live"*** (Mark 5:23). Jesus then began to follow Jairus to his home.

Jairus was at the point of desperation. You see, although he was among the leaders of the local synagogue, which would be similar to our Board of Deacons. He was a Pharisee, but he was not completely opposed to Jesus, like most other Pharisees. In a time of desperation, he was willing to do anything. He was putting his complete trust in that this man Jesus – *that he has heard much about* – could heal his daughter from certain death.

But Jesus and Jairus were not alone. Jesus and Jairus were joined by hundreds – *if not thousands* – of people, as the inconsiderate crowd kept pressing against Jesus and Jairus on all sides. This immense crowd wanted to see if Jesus could indeed heal this young girl from death. As the crowd encircled Jesus and Jairus, a speedbump arrived.

Among the hundreds, if not thousands, pressing against Jesus, He stops His march to Jairus' home. Immediately, Jesus says, ***“Who touched my garments?”*** (Mark 5:30) His disciples then reacted as we would, saying: ***“You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, ‘Who touched me?’”*** (Mark 5:31)

Jesus looks around the crowd as He knew exactly where to look without causing this woman any shame.

In a moment of desperation, this woman believed that if she only touched a piece of Jesus' garment, she would be healed of her flow of blood. But she wanted to be unnoticed. She thought that Jesus would never notice her. Now, her motivation was not to steal a healing, but to keep her ailment hidden. You see, according to Levitical Law as stated in Leviticus 15:25-33, due to her menstrual impurity, she was considered ritually unclean. In this state, she wasn't even allowed to be in this crowd. In order to keep the people of Israel clean, she was to be separated from the people, due to her uncleanness. This is why she wanted to remain anonymous.

But the odd thing happens, Jesus says, ***“Who touched my garments?”*** (Mark 5:30) As many people touched His garments that day, no one else received a healing, except this one woman. The reason is that the others had no desire or purpose in touching Him, but this woman came purposely and touched Him with her faith. To that touch, Jesus responded by letting His Divine power go out to heal her.

As Jesus was on His way to the bed of a young girl, He stopped everything. You see, Jesus wants to be bothered. He wants us to call to Him at all times and at all places. Even when we think Jesus is too busy for us, He is never too busy. He drops everything to comfort each and every one of us. He hears all of our prayers. Now, He may not answer each prayer the way we want, but we know that each prayer is answered with a “Yes,” or a “No,” or a “Not yet.”

Here, Jesus stopped everything as He wished that this miracle would be revealed to the crowd. This woman had attempted to touch Jesus secretly. But Jesus does not want her ever to feel that she had done anything improper in securing her healing. She had nothing to be ashamed of or to hide, since her flow of blood was miraculously healed, and all by faith in Jesus.

Jesus then says to her, ***“Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease”*** (Mark 5:34). Here, Jesus speaks no word of blame, but only words to cheer and to lift her spirits up. By calling her “daughter,” she is no longer ostracized in the eyes of her Lord.

As Jesus was still speaking to her, there came some from Jairus’ house who said to Jairus, ***“Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?”*** (Mark 5:35)

Jairus had started for Jesus too late. Death outran him and won the race. Now, what about this speedbump? Could this delay have made much difference? From the text, it appears that this delay took only mere minutes.

Jairus was heartbroken. His faith had been shattered. He likely thought, since his child was dead, Jesus could do nothing. Jesus was only a last resort. He believed that Jesus could restore his daughter, but only if He could only reach her before she had died. Now, it seems to have been all to no use. Jairus and the family never thought for a moment that Jesus could restore his daughter back to life after she had died.

As all of this was swimming through Jairus’ mind, Jesus says to him, ***“Do not fear, only believe”*** (Mark 5:36).

Before Jairus is able to say a word, Jesus takes command of the situation. Jesus attends to Jairus first. Jesus does the same for us.

You see, Jesus knew that he had come to faith in His power while his daughter was still alive although she was near death. Now, this news would devastate that faith that Jairus had. Jesus proceeds to keep his faith alive as He pays no attention to what was being said by Jairus’ messengers.

“Do not fear, only believe” (Mark 5:36).

Jesus is the compassionate Savior who is able to “*sympathize with our weaknesses*” (Hebrews 4:15) under sin and death. When Jesus says, “*Do not fear, only believe,*” to the suffering and the bereaved, He is not speaking an empty promise. Jesus not only has the desire, but also the power to “*save completely*” (Hebrews 7:25) those who call to Him in prayer. This truth was demonstrated by the act of power that followed.

Tucked away in this miraculous healing – *from death to life* – Jesus reveals to us something about our resurrection. He says: “*The child is not dead, but sleeping*” (Mark 5:39). You see, when Christ returns on the Last Day, with the sound of the trumpet of God, we will all awake as if we were only sleeping. But unlike Jairus’ daughter, we will awake with our resurrected and immortal body. (1 Corinthians 15:50-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

[Jesus Comes Today with the Healing Medicine in Word and Sacrament]

Until that glorious day, for us sinful human beings, we often think that we can save ourselves. This is what our evil foes – *Satan, the world, and our own sinful nature* – want us to believe. Through our evil foes, we think that we have the power to fix our own ailments, whatever they may be: physical or mental. But it is only God who has the power to heal and save. Oftentimes, we fail to remember this fact. And, oftentimes, we fail to look past today and focus on the eternal.

C.S. Lewis in his book *Mere Christianity* wrote: “Most of us find it very difficult to want ‘Heaven’ at all – except in so far as ‘Heaven’ means meeting again our friends who have died. One reason for this difficulty is that we have not been trained, since our whole education tends to fix our minds on this world.”¹

Yes, the triune God – *the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* – by His will heals many and various temporal ailments. He is still performing miracles today as He works through doctors, nurses, and therapists. We may forget sometimes that God is still working miracles here in the church. You see, each baptism is a miracle as that child is taken from Satan’s kingdom and into God’s eternal heavenly kingdom. Now, each baptized child of God can still fall away, but through repentance and faith in Christ, that son or daughter who once fell away is brought back and without any spot or blemish.

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 135.

God's miracles do not end there! Each and every Divine Service, we all receive God's healing medicine as we hear His Word as revealed in Scripture and partake of Christ's very Body and Blood under the bread and the wine that forgives our sins, which in turn strengthens our faith and gives us eternal life and salvation.

But do we continue in sin so that grace may abound? (Romans 6:1) No, we repent, that is, turn away from our sins and receive the healing medicine that Christ can only give! For if we receive the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner by not confessing our sins and confessing our faith, we ***"will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord"*** (1 Corinthians 11:27). A guilty manner would be abusing the Sacrament by making it an occasion for sin and thus this person eats and drinks judgment upon himself or herself. God's Word teaches us that ***"we are [to be] disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world"*** (1 Corinthians 11:32).

Luther put it this way in his Large Catechism, *"When we come to Sacrament of the Altar, we must ask these three questions: "What is it? What are its benefits? And Who is to receive it? And all these points are established through the words by which Christ has instituted this Sacrament. Everyone who desires to be a Christian and go to this Sacrament should know them. For it is not our intention to let people come to the Sacrament and administer it to them if they do not know what they seek or why they come"* (LC V 1-2).

Here in the Divine Service, we hear the same voice of Jesus as He said to Jairus' daughter, ***"Talitha cumi," which means, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise'"*** (Mark 5:41).

As the world may scoff and ridicule Jesus like those people who were weeping and wailing loudly laughed at Jesus for Him saying about the little girl, ***"The child is not dead but sleeping"*** (Mark 5:39), He comes to us with the same power to heal us from our sin and worry.

Just as Jesus said, ***"Little girl, arise,"*** immediately she stood up and began walking. Life, health, and full strength returned to this lifeless body, and no trace of the disease that caused her death remained. With just a word, Jesus robbed death of its prey. With a word, He put life where death had been.

Through the very Word of Christ, He gives us this same healing medicine through His Word and Sacrament that He accomplished for us through His suffering, death, and bodily resurrection, so that by grace through faith in Him, we would be saved from the power of sin, eternal death, and Satan.

All we have to do is believe. Believing can be tough when life is going well. But, believing often becomes much easier when life is going rough. For anyone who has taken ill for any reason, we soon realize that we can't do what we normally could do. Many times, we become helpless. We realize that we can't accomplish what we would normally find easy.

Thanks be to God that when times get rough, we can always depend on You. ***“For by grace [we] have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast”*** (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Christ comes to us today with healing – just as He did for this woman and Jairus' daughter. All we have to do is believe and trust in Christ alone. For in Him:

- We have found consolation
- Comfort in tribulation
- Balm to heal the troubled soul
- We have Jesus who is our shield from every terror
- Christ cleanses us from sin and error
- And He makes my wounded spirit whole.

So, ***“Do not fear, only believe.”*** Amen.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠