

I'VE BEEN MEANING TO ASK: WHERE DOES IT HURT?

April 21, 2024

Michael Swartzentruber, Senior Minister



21 When Jesus had crossed again in the boat* to the other side, a great crowd gathered round him; and he was by the lake. 22Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet 23and begged him repeatedly, '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.' 24So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. 25Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. 26She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. 27She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28for she said, 'If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.' 29Immediately her hemorrhage stopped;

and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. 30Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' 31And his disciples said to him, 'You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, "Who touched me?" ' 32He looked all round to see who had done it. 33But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. 34He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.'

35 While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?' 36But overhearing* what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, 'Do not fear, only believe.' 37He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. 38When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. 39When he had entered, he said to them, 'Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.' 40And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. 41He took her by the hand and said to her, 'Talitha cum', which means, 'Little girl, get up!' 42And immediately the girl got up and began to

South Elkhorn Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

4343 Harrodsburg Road, Lexington KY 40513

859-223-1433 southelkhorncc.org

walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. 43He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase or image stands out to you?
2. Jesus enters and bears with a world of pain and suffering. He notices the pain, grief, and loss of others; especially the pain and suffering that others might miss or minimize (or give up on). What kind of suffering is missed or minimized (or given up on) in your context and community?
3. The woman with a chronic bleeding condition is impoverished by it—she goes broke seeking healing. How does this ancient problem persist in today's world, and what, if anything, is the Body of Christ's role?
4. Jairus advocates for his daughter. Have you ever advocated for the well-being of someone you love? What was that like, and what did you learn in the process?
5. Jesus does not shame or scold the hemorrhaging woman who touches him or Jairus when he begs Jesus to follow him. In both moments, Jesus stops what he is doing to attend to the needs of the person who has

been bold enough to seek him. Theirs is a courage that advocates, that reaches out, that refuses to give up. What can these brave people teach us about our human dignity and the character of faith?

IMPORTANT NOTE

There is a lot of misunderstanding on the nature and practice of Jewish purity laws. As New Testament scholar Amy Jill-Levine notes:

“Most people were probably ritually impure most of the time: purity issues kick in primarily **if one wants to enter the Jerusalem Temple**. Thus the woman has not transgressed any purity laws. Nor has Jesus.” (*Signs & Wonders: A Beginner's Guide to the Miracles of Jesus*, page 77, emphasis added). There is no general social shame and isolation because of ritual impurity. This is not a story about “subverting a bad religion” that cuts off hurting people from the community.

Certain Christian interpretations of these stories, which (wrongly) indicate Jesus overturns the purity laws of the Jewish faith (by touching a corpse or letting the woman touch him), are trying to make Jesus look good by making Judaism look bad. This subtle anti-Judaism is not only unfair to the actual details of the story itself, it can cause religious and social harm (even if unintentionally).

Listen Online

Sermon audio available at southelkhorncc.org/sermons