

Arise and Be Healed

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Our Savior's Way Lutheran Church

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We are continuing our journey with Jesus this week with this gospel reading. You heard this incredible story. It is a story of two people that Jesus healed, but there is more to the story. The way to understand it all comes through this idea of *Arise and Be Healed*. When Jesus talks to them, He says, "Your faith has healed you." He proclaims that they are His. There is this incredible sense of reconnection. How does it all happen though? I want to talk through this gospel reading through the lens of sandwiches. What is your favorite sandwich? What do you guys like? We had peanut butter and jelly up here. We had cheese and crackers. Those are all good. What do you do? What is your favorite sandwich?

One of my favorite sandwiches is from Chicago. It is the thing that I miss the most food-wise. You might think deep-dish pizza from Chicago is the thing to do. But my favorite food is Italian beef. There is a sandwich called Italian beef. It is unbelievable. It is a special roll that is put on a Toronto roll, and it is this beef that is layered on that spice just perfectly. You can put sweet peppers on it or hot peppers. You can put cheese on it if you are a little bit crazy, but you can enjoy it that way. It is all right. And then you dip it in the au jus, and it is just unbelievable.

Why are we talking about sandwiches? There is a really good reason. And to understand this, I want you to actually take out your Bible. And I want you to open up to Mark, chapter five, starting in verse 21. I want you to see, first of all, when you look at this section, it is titled *Jesus heals a woman and Jairus' daughter*. There are three paragraphs underneath this. There is the first paragraph, verses 21 to 24, that introduces the story of Jairus and his daughter. The second paragraph is a totally different story. It is about the woman who touches Jesus' robe. And then at the end, the

third paragraph comes back and tells the rest of the story about Jairus and his daughter.

We are going to read through this today. So, make sure you've got this open. This is a sandwich. This is what my seminary professors called a sandwich. They call it a Markan sandwich. Mark does this all the time. He starts telling one story, stops in the middle, tells a completely different story, and then comes back and finishes the first one like a sandwich. You got the story on the outside and the good stuff in the middle. And it is more than that. It really truly is like a sandwich because, just like a sandwich, where the bread is not the star of the show. It is the stuff that is in the middle that helps you understand the rest. So here in this reading today, it is the middle story that helps us understand what Jesus is doing. So, we are going to start with that middle story.

Let us look through this story. It says here that a great crowd was following Jesus thronged about Him. And there was a woman who had a discharge of blood for 12 years. Numbers in the bible mean something. What are the other twelves that maybe you know of in the Bible? The sons of Israel, the 12 apostles...That is important. She suffered for 12 years. She had suffered and suffered, and there were so many doctors. She had spent all that she had, and she was not any better but grew worse. She had heard reports about Jesus and came up behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well." I remember reading this the very first time a long time ago and thinking this is a little bit odd. I do not understand this. I do not understand why she would think that touching somebody's garments would make her well. Also, if she spent everything she had, this is a really tough place to be. What we know about this woman is that because of this flow of blood, this discharge of blood, she was considered ritually unclean. What this meant was that she was not allowed to live with the rest of her family and the rest of her community.

She had to live separated, apart from them because by her presence, by her touching anybody or anything that anybody else touched, she made

everybody else unclean around her. And when you are unclean, you cannot do what you are doing right now. You cannot go and gather and hear God's word and worship. You cannot go to the temple and offer sacrifices. You cannot do anything in the community. So much so that this woman, because of this disease that she had through no fault of her own was forced to live outside of the community, probably in the same places where the lepers were. She was an outcast. She was not supposed to be there.

But she sneaks into the crowd. Why? Why was she there? She said, "For if I touch his garments, I will be made well." Why would she think this? Does this make any sense? Are these the kind of things in scripture you kind of just gloss over?

This is where, when you see Mark and read his sandwich, you want to look in the middle and see what is going on. That really is the important part. And true enough, right here in the middle of this, we get something amazing. She says, "If I touch his garments, I will be healed." There is a connection here to one of the last Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. In Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament, it says this: "But for you who fear my name, the Son of Righteousness,"—notice capital letters, we are talking about the one who is to come—"the Son of Righteousness will rise with healing in his wings and you will go free leaping with joy like calves led out to pasture." So, the Son of Righteousness is pointing forward to the Messiah, the one who is to come, the one who will make right. The one who will bring God's Kingdom into reality right here. He is going to rise with healing in His wings. Now, how do you imagine that, the wings? How do you imagine healing in his wings? Are you thinking like angel wings? Are you thinking like bird's wings? Eagle's wings? That is a good biblical metaphor there. Here is the key. The word in Hebrew that is used for wings is also the same word that is used for corners, like the corners of maybe if you were going to wear like a shawl or a robe. The corners of that robe are called the wings of that robe. After this prophecy was given, the tradition grew that in those wings,

in those corners of the robes people would wear, they would tie tassels up called *tzitzit*.

As this prophecy was known and believed, it was promised that in the *tzitzit*, in the corner of those tassels on the robe of the Messiah, the people would be healed. Hundreds of years before Jesus came, this prophecy was given, and it was understood by the people of Jesus' day, that when the Messiah came, in the corners of His robe, in the *tzitzit*, there would be healing for everyone.

You see, this woman was not crazy. By touching the corner of His robe, she was saying, "Jesus, You are the Messiah. You are the one. This is before Peter says this. She is telling everyone, trusting that Jesus is the one who will come, who has come, who will make everything right.

You see right here in the middle of the sandwich. This is the truth that Mark is getting to, that this woman is proclaiming that Jesus really is the Christ, even though nobody else can see this yet. So, what does Jesus do? Let's go back. After she says this, in verse 29, "And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease." It is true. She goes free, leaping with joy, like calves let out to pasture.

And Jesus perceiving in Himself the power had gone out from Him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?" I always laugh at this. It is not like Jesus did not know, right? He knew. Why does He ask a question like this? Because not only was she hurt physically, but she was also an outcast. They are in the middle of a crowd. Jesus is not saying that is for His benefit. He is saying it for her so that everybody around her will see that she is healed, that not only is her body made clean, but she is made clean, and she can be part of this community.

Once again, He looked around to see who had done it. The woman knowing what had happened came in fear and trembling and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And what does Jesus say? Verse

34. He said to her, “Daughter.” He approaches her as a daughter. He reminds her exactly who she is because everybody else has told her that she is not good enough, that she is not clean enough, that she cannot be part of anything. He reminds her that she is His, that her core identity, who she is, is who He calls her to be, that she is part of His family, and that He loves her. “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Be healed of your disease.” And let’s not get caught up on this. It is not about how well she acted in her faith. It is that she had faith that He was the Messiah and touched the corners of those robes, believing that He was the Messiah. And because Jesus is the Messiah, she was healed. That is the faith that has healed her. This is the core of the story. This is the truth that Mark wants you to see today, that Jesus really is the Christ, the one who was promised, the one who brings new life each and every day, who restores His people, who as God has always done has worked to reconnect His people to Himself. As far as we try to get away from Him, He comes to us, reaches out to us, and brings us back through Jesus.

This is the center of the sandwich. This is how we understand this. Now that we know this, that she is proclaiming to the whole world that He is the Messiah, let’s go to this other story.

In the beginning, Jairus comes and says, “Please heal my daughter because she is sick.” Jesus heals people. That is what we’ve seen in the last few weeks. He has healed people of demons. He has healed them of blindness. What did He do last week, though? The story was all about Jesus calming the wind and the waves. They were in the storm. He calmed it. How did He calm the wind and the waves? He spoke! When He spoke, when He used His words, things happened. When Jesus said, “Be still,” it was still. Keep that in mind as we talk about the story. So, the daughter is almost at the point of death, “Come, Jesus, heal her.” After this woman proclaims that He is the Christ, that He is the one who will bring what was dead back to life, the people come back to Jairus and say, “Do not worry about bringing Jesus to your daughter because she is dead. Just let the rabbi be.

Let him do his thing. There is no use having her go and meet her. He cannot do anything now.”

Verse 36ff, overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.” And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. So, they went to the house of the ruler of the synagogue—Jairus—and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. This was normal. When somebody in the house dies, people come around, and they weep, and they wail. It is part of the mourning process. Somebody has died in that house. Jesus says, “Do not fear, only believe.” He is going to go into that house. He asks people again a question. When He enters the house, He says to them, “Why are you making commotion and weeping?” Again, why is He asking this? It is not for Himself. It is for us. What does He say next? “The child is not dead.”

What does Jesus’ word do? It does what it says it does. When He says, “Be still,” things are still. And because He is the Messiah, what happens when He says the child is not dead? She is not dead. She is alive. This is what the Messiah can do. She is not dead, but she is sleeping. And you know, they laughed at Him after this, because nobody can raise the dead to new life. That is not something that any of us can do. We can heal people, yes, and maybe the little girl was just in a coma, right? Maybe she was just sleeping, and Jesus comes in, and she just kind of wakes up, but that is not the point.

If we pay attention to the middle of that sandwich, we see that this woman has given everything that she has and owns and is just to touch the corner of His robe, because she believes He is the Messiah. And it works because He is. The Messiah can raise what was dead to new life. When Jesus says the girl is not dead, she is raised to a new life. She is not dead anymore. She is not dead.

After they laughed at Him, He put them aside. He went inside with the parents of the little girl and his core disciples. He took her by the hand and

said to her, “Talitha cumi”. Think about Him taking her by the hand. There is nothing so precious and simple as holding the hand of your little son or daughter or grandchild. There is just something honest and real and tender about holding the hand of a child, walking along with Him. Jesus does this compassionate, out of love. He holds her hand. He says, “It is time to you to get up. Arise.” And His word works immediately. The little girl gets up. She begins walking. She was how many years of age? 12. 12 years of age, and they were immediately overcome with amazement because Jesus is the Messiah. He brings what is dead to life. Because He is the Messiah, He takes what is broken and makes it whole. Because He is the Messiah, He heals us of our wounds. Not just today, but for all of time. And it is not by our faith or our strength of will that we believe this, but because of His blessing to us, the way the Spirit works to give us faith to see that He is the Messiah, that He is the one through whom all these things come.

Sometimes we are tempted to take on our own battles, to look at the world around us and to say, “I am going to take this on. I am going to make sure that I do this or I do that. I am going to think about these people this way and these people this way.” You have struggles in your relationships, and you think, “Well, I am just going to do, I am going to take care of this or I am going to ignore it.”

Because Jesus is the Messiah, because He takes what is broken and makes it whole again, all He does is ask us. He asks us to focus on Him, to see who He is, in our struggles, in our celebrations, to keep focused on Him, because when we do, we start to experience and see His way of healing, His way of bringing restoration and forgiveness, and many times it is so different than what we would try to force through on our own. This woman who had nothing left, trusted, believed, and Jesus healed her. When we are at our lowest, seeing Him as the one who brings that healing gives us hope and heals us of things we did not even know were broken.

The beauty of this is that we are able to bring this to the people around us so we experience this together. We know who Jesus is. We focus on Him all the time, but there are so many people around us who do not see that. I

pray that focusing on sandwiches in some weird way will help you understand that Jesus truly is at the center of your life, of the walk that He has given to you, of the relationship that you have not only with the people you are sitting next to but also with the people you see every day. He is at the center of that. When we see that His way brings things that we desire, peace and joy and love and togetherness, that is truly when His kingdom is made real among us. Sandwiches. The key is in the middle. As you are reading your Bible, as you take it out day by day, it is good to keep digging in and maybe you did not know all this stuff about the corners of robes and this and that. Well, you know what? I did not know it a few years ago, either. We all grow in this together. We start where we are, and we continue growing. May God help you to continue to trust in His word, which makes the dead alive. May He help you bring that to the people around you so that more and more people are reconnected with Him.

Let's close in prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your word, which works. It worked back in Jesus' day. It works today because of Your promise to us, that through Jesus you make us alive.

Lord, let us live this life each and every day walking with You. Focused on You at our work, at school, at home, at our community, and all of our relationships, so that these things we desire—Your love, Your peace, Your joy, and Your kindness—that You would give them to us. You would bless us with those through Your Spirit.

And so that when people see that, they would see how good You are for them and trust in You as well. We pray all this in the name of Jesus. Amen.