



MINISTER
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13th Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 2, 2006

Mark 5:21-43
Psalm 130

“Treasure” Seeking

Intro: Our second reading is Psalm 130. Let us listen together for a voice that cries out of the depths.

This past week, CPC has been a busy place. There have been any number of adults running around wearing brightly colored hats. And there have been many children with treasure maps in their hands - looking for Chester’s Jewels. As you can see by our sanctuary this morning, *“Thar bee treasure seeking going on this week”*. But this was not a week of “pirate-y” things. It was a week of learning about the treasure we have with God and discovering that the greatest treasure, God’s love, is always with us.

Our Psalm this morning shows us a person crying out for something valuable that is lost, their wholeness. Our new testament passage this morning shows us two people who were also seeking something that was most valuable but money could not buy. Mark shows us two people whose lives were touched and changed by Jesus. The leader of a local synagogue, and a woman-- who had been suffering with bleeding for twelve years. These two lived in the same area, but

they certainly would not have run in the same circles, and surely they could not have been more different from one another. What they do have in common is that they are in some way "not whole" and are in need of the healing touch of Jesus. Let's consider these two, their approach to Jesus, and how Jesus meets each of them.

The leader of the synagogue, (whom we know to be Jairus from other gospels) would have been a man of influence within his town. His position in the temple would make him a pillar of the community. He had a lot riding on the status quo in society, he enjoyed a great number of privileges that came from his role as chief priest. The priestly role was passed down in families, so his name would have been one of honor. His family would be one of prestige and wealth. Priests had a great deal of education. He has everything, and yet it seems he is powerless to do anything for his precious daughter.

And the woman is not even named in our story. We do know that she had spent all that she had on physicians, and with her condition of bleeding she would bear many shames of being "unclean" and an outcast in the culture. She would be confined to her house and even from physical contact with her family. Anyone who touches her also becomes unclean for a time. Her problem is chronic, things look pretty desperate, in many ways she has nothing to lose, for she has nothing.

From this sketch of these people we see how they were each different, but they do share in common, a real sense of loss, a deep feeling of not being "whole". For Jairus it is the loss of the life of his daughter. For the woman it has been the loss of any kind of life for the last twelve years. They are looking for life to be restored and renewed. Neither of them are confined by what is, to keep them from hoping for what may yet be. They have open minds, and eyes of faith that, in the right moment, can see in Jesus possibilities that are radically new. And they are willing to risk everything for the healing touch. There is much to be learned from how they approach and respond to Jesus.

We see in Mark’s words that we can look for Jesus and encounter him. Jairus approached Jesus very directly and boldly. He went right up to him on the street, stopped him and begged for assistance. Jairus risks his status, his way of life, his reputation by reaching out to Jesus and begging for help. Such was the depth of his loss. My little daughter is everything to me

please help! It would seem fitting and appropriate to those with Jesus that he would stop and respond to this leader. Jairus is the highest local religious authority, so it would be proper for the Christ to respond. Jesus did not react to him because of his position, it was his faith and willingness to risk, that made the difference.

And the woman risks her very life by challenging the rules as she goes out in to the crowds and makes contact with Jesus. Notice how she approaches Jesus by coming up in the crowd, from behind and only desiring the chance to touch his garment, not talk to him, not even look him in the face, but simply touch his clothing. How many of us have suffered silently longing for a cure of the body or of the spirit, longing to touch the garment of Jesus.

I'd invite you to pick up the piece of fabric in the pews in front of you and simply hold it. Feel the textures and notice the intricate weave. Think about the complex threads of our own lives and the frayed edges, the places that feel like they are coming apart, as well as the places that are tightly holding together. What areas of our lives long to be touched by the garment of Christ? What do we wish could be cured?

The Greek word for cure means "the repair of a fractured soul." In what ways are our souls fractured? In order for there to be healing we must first recognize and acknowledge what's not right. Without the recognition of need, without knowing what takes us into the depths, there is no place for Grace. As we become aware of our own

areas of need, we then are open to the presence of God's Grace, and can sing with the psalmist "rejoice in the Lord, Praise the Lord, sing a new song!"

For all of us, Jesus enters our world. Our Savior finds a way to reach out and encounter us today, and we can reach out to God. We are to take the risk of that encounter, to extend our selves toward Christ and to respond when we experience God's presence and call in our lives. Jesus shows us that the sufferings of others are not to be disregarded. We are not insulated and isolated from the lives of others. The temptation to turn away from other's suffering is strong, the tendency to deny the reality of pain comes quickly.

While we can not bear the cross for others we can help them carry it. When we spend time comforting someone with a broken heart, we are doing the work of Jesus. We are part of the garment. We may not have had the experience of pain we see in another but we can feel a part of the loss of others. We help those in need by offering a sense of being connected to something larger than themselves and maintaining a sense of community. We offer healing when we hold a hand, wipe a tear, or share a hug. We are part of the healing garment. And others can be part of the garment for us. May we have the strength to ask for help when we need it, give comfort when we are able, and trust that the treasure we seek, wholeness, is hidden right before our eyes.

Look at this table, look to the Word. Look to each other, Look to the font. There we find what we seek. Amen.