

Dear Friends,

Mark 5: 33-35

A little girl is about to die. Jesus is going to her with her father, Jairus. Jairus is desperate to get to his daughter. They need to get to his house as quickly as possible. Jesus however, has been stopped by a touch from the crowd which made power flow from him. He looks at all the people and wonders who has reached out to him. A frightened woman comes forward and falls on the ground before Jesus. She tells him "the whole truth".

How long does it take to tell the whole truth? The woman has gone over the story in her mind, time and time again. How she's lived with her bleeding; what it has meant for her; all those horrible treatments she has endured. Perhaps nobody else has ever really listened to her. But Jesus does. There is healing for her body in his touch. There is healing for her soul in his listening. And Jesus listens for however long it takes to hear her whole story.

And almost everybody in the crowd has a sense of awe. Something wonderful is happening. But how is Jairus feeling? It is urgent for Jesus to get to his little girl. He could come back to this woman. She's been bleeding for twelve years, a few more hours won't hurt. And she's not at the point of death like his daughter. And once she's healed, that's great, but let's just move on. Jairus is not used to having to wait while people like this woman get attention. Why is Jesus listening to every word she says about her miserable life?

But Jesus keeps listening and if Jairus tries to hurry him, Jesus gently but firmly holds him back while he keeps his attention upon the woman. When she's finished Jesus says to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease."

He calls her "Daughter." As Jairus is full of love for his daughter and wants life for her. So, this woman is God's Daughter. The world might call her "unclean," "cursed", "an outsider", but to God she is "beloved". She belongs to the family. God wants life for her.

Jesus says, "your faith has made you well." Yes, the power of God went from him to her. But Jesus draws attention to is what is already in her. She has faith. She has connection with God. She's in fellowship with God. God is living in her and she in God. The power of God is in her too. She is no helpless victim. She is God's strong partner in God's life-giving work.

And this faith has made her "well". The word suggests more than just the healing of the body. It suggests that she has been brought to full and complete wellness of body, mind and spirit. This is the salvation which Jesus longs to give to you and to the whole creation.

And Jesus says, "Go in peace." That's not go with warm, soothing, fuzzy feelings, in a bit of a trance. That's go at one with God, united with God. There may be trouble ahead. There may be stress and suffering. There may be tempest and storm but go with your hand in the hand of God who is with you, who is in you.

Jesus is breaking down the boundaries. He is creating a new community. With him, there are no insiders and outsiders. Those called unclean and cursed are announced to be clean and blessed. There are no divisions. All are one in him. Though we are many, we are one body.

But what about Jairus? While Jesus has been speaking with the woman, Jairus has seen some people from his house moving through the crowd, coming towards him. They clearly have something to say. Jairus hopes for the best but fears the worst. As they get nearer, Jairus can see, written on their faces what they have to tell him. When they are close enough, they confirm his terrible fear. They give their message, "Your daughter is dead".

God bless you,

Tony