**5 Pentecost, June 28, 2015, 2 Sam 1:1,27; Ps 130; 2 Cor 8:7-15; Mark 5:21-43; Rev. Mary S. Trainor**

This past week, I had the opportunity to attend a Pastor's Conference in Door County with Scottish theologian, author, and musician, John Bell. Bell writes prayers and music prolifically, as well as preaches eloquently. He shared that when we look at all the many reasons why people go to church, there is really one main reason: it is for healing. Healing of all kinds of stuff, whether we are aware of it or not. In our Thursday worship service, Pastor Bell prayed a long healing prayer that he had written -- here are just a few of the intentions he prayed for that I was able to write down: "**healing from fear of death, of weary bodies, from hurt feelings, from minds that are not at peace, for those who are suffering from depression or dementia, healing for those who have suffered abuse; healing for those who have been hurt by religion; those who need healing of relationships, mending of love which has been fractured; for peace in the world, or growth and reverence for our planet, that we recognize that we are both stewards and servants**." Yes, there is a lot that needs healing, whether it be physical, emotional, cultural, mental, relational, environmental, or spiritual. Today, our Gospel passage particularly focuses on God's role in healing. We heard two healing miracles, one embedded within another.

The first story is about a man named Jairus, who was rich, had power and influence: he was someone who everyone paid attention to. When Jairus spoke, people listened. He stood out in a crowd, and indeed there was a big crowd that day. Jairus was used to standing tall while needy people fell at his feet, begging him. But today, we are told that when Jairus saw Jesus, he "***fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly***." Picture the scene: proud Jairus, dressed in royal, rich robes - down in the dirt crying out to Jesus, the carpenter who looked like a peasant. What made Jairus desperate? His beloved little daughter was ill, so ill that she was expected to die any minute. The love that Jairus had for his daughter transcended his pride, his pretences. How did Jesus respond? Jesus responded with a willingness to be led by Jairus through the crowd to his home, to the little girl. Jairus must have been so relieved, and yet still so worried and anxious - and in a big hurry.

The going to Jairus' home must have been slow, for we are told that "***a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him."*** Many in that crowd were bumping into Jesus. Yet, while they were going along, Jesus stopped and said, "***Who touched my clothes?"*** The disciples wondered what on earth had gotten into Jesus that He would ask this nonsensical question, in light of the crowd; they said, "***You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say***, "***Who touched me***?" But Jesus had sensed "***that power had gone forth from him***." Jesus, fully God and fully human, had provided His healing power to someone who had humbly and intentionally reached out to Him in the crowd for a specific reason: to be healed. This was not an aristocrat or a person who people respected; no, this was a person who was treated like a leper in that culture. She was poor, chronically and incurably sick, considered 'unclean.' This woman was socially isolated, she must have been depressed and full of shame. How did Jesus respond to her reaching out, touching His cloak? Jesus healed her, completely, immediately. She, like Jairus, fell at Jesus' feet....and then she told Him: "***the whole truth***" of her life and why she reached out to Him for healing. Right there in the crowd, she shared he joy and gratitude from having been healed. And Jesus-in-a-hurry was not so much in a hurry; He stopped and listened, and then spoke to her. And, what did Jesus-in-a-hurry say? Something truly astounding: He called her "daughter." This poor outcast was treated as family by the King of Kings, Lord of Lords with this one word of respect, caring and love. Daughter!

Then, we are returned to the story of Jairus' daughter, who has now passed away. Here again, Jesus says something astounding. He says to Jairus: ***"Do not fear, only believe***." Jairus has just found out his beloved daughter has died, and he is supposed to only believe! Are you kidding, Jesus? No indeed, He was not kidding. Jesus then went to the home, and with the child's parents entered the room where the little girl was laying. He reached out and touched her, which was no small deal. In those days, keeping pure and undefiled was very important -- and touching a dead person made you unclean. But, Jesus touched her and told her to "***get up***." And, get up she did - right then and there. Not only alive, but walking around and eating.

We learned much in this Gospel about Jesus and healing. It is a Gospel of contrasts: these people could not have been more different from each other. One is a rich and powerful public figure, the other is an outcast who has lost everything. One is a woman, the other a man. One approached Jesus publically, the other subtly. This is also a Gospel of similarity: both were people in great need, both had faith in Jesus as the Messiah, both involved Jesus' miraculous touch, and both were the recipients of Jesus' healing. Jesus does not have favorites, Jesus responds to all people who come to Him in faith with their needs, no matter what. This is a Gospel of touch: Jesus makes personal contact with us; this is about relationship. When we beg Jesus in prayer, it's not about bending God's will towards ours but rather about edging into a deeper relationship with Him. This is a Gospel of interruption: Jesus had a mission, a goal, a destination-- He was headed somewhere in a hurry, and was interrupted along the way. The word "interrupt" is a negative one in our culture; we don't like interruptions, they disrupt us, they throw us off balance, they get in the way of important objectives. Not for Jesus. Jesus is in the business of dealing with us with great mercy when we interrupt Him.

Jesus, our Savior, wants you to come to Him with all the things you need to be healed of too, whatever they may be. We are all broken in some way, and it is through our weaknesses that God's power is made perfect (2 Cor 12:9-10). Jesus always has time for you; do not hesitate to go to Him anytime, for anything. He always answers our prayers, in His way, in His time. Cry out to Jesus, fall to His feet at the foot of the cross, and His healing touch will bless you in surprising, astounding ways.

As Presiding Bishop-elect Michael Curry said yesterday, "**There really is a Jesus. We are part of the Jesus movement. And nothing can stop the movement of God's love in this world. Nothing."** Amen.