

Title: “Lives Restored”

Chris Ryan

Mark 5:21-43

6/27/2021

Service Readings: Lam 3:22-33; 2 Cor. 8:1-9, 13-15; Mark 5:21-43

Lesson: *The life that Jesus gave these women is indicative of the life that he offers us: He is interested in the health of our souls. He is interested in our eternal lives.*

Message:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

I'll pull back the curtain of my life just a little bit, this morning. From the time that I could remember, until I was about 12, I wanted to be a doctor. I remember sitting at the kitchen table one evening when I was about seven, practicing my signature so that it would be unreadable - just like a real doctor's signature was. I remember that every Christmas and every birthday would bring new models of anatomy that I could assemble. And by the time I was 12 I probably had a model for every major organ, most of the minor ones, and even some of the systems - and for each one I could name almost every major part.

If you were to ask me why this was my calling, I would have told you that it was simply because I liked to “fix” things. The attraction wasn't to the money or any possible prestige of holding a Doctor of Medicine degree; it was simply that I would situate myself in a position of healing others. Why I didn't follow through with that dream is a story for a different sermon, but this morning we will linger in this period of my life for just a bit longer and use it as a lens in which to view our Gospel reading.

Contained within this passage are two stories that include two sets of doctors who wanted to bring healing to these two very different patients. In the first, a young child is at the point of death and although Mark doesn't record the details, it seems clear that Jesus wasn't the first doctor that Jairus called on for healing. I can imagine that before this plea he gathered every physician he could find - spared no cost or effort - to save his daughter's life. And when all that failed, he turned to the only one left.

²² Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing [Jesus], he fell at his feet ²³ and implored him earnestly, saying, “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.” ²⁴ And he went with him.

His account is interrupted by a woman with her many years of suffering. Here Mark does describe the efforts that she went through to find healing - he doesn't leave it for us to assume. She spent years searching for a remedy, sparing no cost. And just like Jarius, the results of her efforts did nothing but leave her worse off. And so when all that failed, she turned to the only one left.

And a great crowd followed [Jesus] and thronged about him. ²⁵ And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, ²⁶ and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. ²⁷ She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. ²⁸ For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well."

The lives of these two patients were independent, both woven in parallel in the fabric of time, but independent until their encounter with Jesus. But it is in this moment that their lives become intertwined, interrelated, and not just to each other but also to him. *Especially to him*. When they experience Jesus, they experience the power of the Holy Spirit. And where there is the Holy Spirit, there is restoration and there is healing of the soul. And where there is restoration and healing, there is new life. And where there is new life there is life that is lived not in *independence* of Christ but in *unity* with him. We experience this unity through our Baptism. For it is when water is mixed with the power of God's Word, we share in the death and resurrection of Jesus. And in uniting us to him, he imparts forgiveness. And that forgiveness heals our soul and brings us the hope of everlasting life.

And so, this restorative unity with Christ is a major point of the message this morning and it is in dramatic contrast with the restorative work of the physicians. Even if they could have somehow healed these patients, their success would have been confined to nothing more than the physical healing. These women would have found restoration of the body but not of the soul. But we read that not even physical healing was to be found in the practices of these human doctors. Their hands, trained for service were found lacking. Their minds, filled with knowledge and wisdom of medicine were found lacking. There was simply nothing that these physicians could do to bring healing or even hope to their patients.

But lest you limit the inadequacies to just the physicians, remember, too that even the patients and their families failed. They knew that they were poor in health. They knew they needed healing. But they first turned to man instead of God. They first sought the power of science instead of the power of the Christ. Just like the doctors, they too tried to remedy their situation with human reason, human understanding. They too tried to remedy their situation independent from him. And as happens so often when a person wrestles control out of the hands of God, they found themselves worse off than before. And they turned to Jesus only when all else failed - when the end of life seemed imminent.

And finally, lest you limit the inadequacies to just the physicians and the patients, remember, too the role that we play in this master narrative. When do we seek an encounter with the power of Jesus? Is it at the first moment of need or the last? When we find failing health, do we say, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well" or do we say, "The garments of Jesus are not necessary, and healing can come through the efforts of my work?" It is true that we cannot physically reach out to our master physician and touch his garments, but we *can* reach out to him in prayer. We can call upon him to coordinate the events of his creation - the doctors and scientists - to bring about healing to our bodies. We can place our *first* call to him, our master physician, and seek his will. We can trust by faith that he will work his will, his desire, through those that he intertwines into our lives. And in this way, we too will experience the same restorative unity in

Christ that these two women experienced. It may not manifest itself in physical healing - that is dependent upon the will of God, but it will always manifest itself in soulful healing, and that is really what is most important. And we see this play out with both of these patients. Take the woman. After she calls upon Jesus he replies, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." He heals her soul first and then sends her off. He tells her that through faith she has been restored into unity with him. He then instructs her that she can now live life in peace. It is almost as an afterthought that he heals her physical disease. This plays out in similar fashion to the parents and the child. And throughout the pages of scripture, we find the order of Jesus' work the same: first he heals the soul and only after that does he heal the body.

And his work on the cross followed a similar pattern. Through his death our souls have been healed. We have been adopted into the family of God. And on the last day, when he raises us from the dead, we will be raised with a renewed, healed body.

And so, our message this morning is simple. He calls us to seek him first, to reach for his garments before reaching for the garments of others and to place our trust in his will and desire for us. And to trust that if his will be for our physical healing, he will send the doctors that will make us well.

Seeking Jesus first is difficult but it is what he calls us to do. Will you do it?

Please pray with me.

Lord,

You are the master physician, the healer of our souls. Send to us the Holy Spirit that in faith we will turn to you first for all that ails us. Into your hands we place our pains and trust that you will bring into our lives those who you will work through to bring about your desire for us.

In your name we pray.

Amen.