

TRINITY NEWS

Lent III Stories of Two Daughters linked to the Healer from Galilee

I have been striving to touch the hem of Jesus' garment all of my life. The hem of his garment was a prayer fringe according to Luke's account of this healing. The woman touches the robe as if she is touching Jesus. It is a great act of faith after what she had been through. Jesus calls her "daughter", though he may not have been much older than her. Those around him became his family. This illness had been costly to her health, to her purse, and to her reputation. One of the worst parts of a prolonged health problem is that it begins to wear us down. Pain and discomfort take out outside the circle of what is deemed 'normal'.

Jairus is stepping out of his role as a synagogue official into being exposed as a vulnerable father who cries out repeatedly to Jesus. He forgets his composure and his pivotal role in the synagogue and begs for his daughter's life. He is taking a public risk of being accused of running after the latest wonder worker. Jairus meets the humble and yet immensely impressive figure of Jesus who may yet emerge as a potential Messiah or a firebrand revolutionary. But Jairus doesn't care. He can only think of his daughter. The woman on the other hand is preoccupied with her haemorrhage and its affect on her well-being. They were apparently meeting Jesus for the first time. First meetings are always initially a bit tentative.

Jesus hears the report from those who come from Jairus' house to tell him that his daughter has died. Jesus then says his first words to Jairus, "Don't be afraid, only believe." Jesus takes his inner band with him and enters the house. After entering he tells them that the child is not dead but sleeping. Despite their derision, he takes her by the hand and raises her. The Aramaic words *Talitha cum*, meaning "Little girl, get up", became embedded in the recalled memory of this event and added to its authenticity. The restoration of health and peace of mind in both instances overcomes both fear and disease. Jesus seems at ease in any situation where there is need and rejection. He comes to heal and refresh body, mind, and spirit.

Application: As a child I feared the darkness of death. I suffered from asthma and was considered 'delicate'. Like Jairus I became a religious leader with the burden of expectation that goes with such roles in any organization. Leadership is tough when the model is Jesus. He may be at ease with us, but we are not always at ease with him. **There is no record of him being ill in the Gospels.** He was conscious of the light of God in him and that promotes health when we perceive it and affirm it. He knew strain and tears and anger and suffering, but both his health and his energy are usually luminous and strong as far as we can gather from the biblical evidence.

The woman and the child are not named. They have names but only the male participants are named. Everyone has a name, but not all names are aired or given respect. The anonymity of the powerless erodes their standing and sometimes their self-respect. Here the woman experiences *shalom* for the first time in years and the child is fully alive once more. The child of the synagogue leader may come from a more affluent lifestyle than the woman with chronic bleeding, but we do not know. What they share is a need for the Healer to be with them. He is the link in their very different stories.

Healing is in a smile, in the touch of a hand, in tears shared, in mutual raucous laughter, in a look across a room that binds hearts in unblemished trust. It is in touching the hem of Christ's garment and feeling healing power surging from heaven, reviving and healing us. It is in facing an illness that does not go away and placing our hands in trust into the scarred hands of the Healer from Galilee. His scars blend with our own life-scars and ignite the flame of hope for another space of precious time. When we walk through the valley of dark shadows we do not walk alone. We are guided by the reassuring hand of the Light of the World. He came to a little girl one day in Galilee and grasped her hand and lifted her up into the light of life. "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

DIOCESAN CONVENTION MARCH 10-13

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

2 Chronicles 36:14-23; Psalm 122; Ephesians 2:4-10; John 6:4-15
