

Healing Love

Mark 5:25-43

We have a healing story today. Actually, we have a healing story **within** a healing story. Our first story started in verse 21, a few verses before our reading, where we find out the leader of the local synagogue, Jarius, comes and tells Jesus his 12 year-old daughter is sick and dying. That first story is interrupted by the story of the woman with the hemorrhage for 12 years that touches Jesus in a crowd for healing. After this healing, Jesus continues on to Jarius' house for a second healing. We are going to focus on the woman who touched Jesus' robe today. So to begin, as we always do, let us pray together, e pule kākou: "Dear healing God, we all need to be healed. All of us. Everyday. Be our healer. Be our physician and guide. Amen."

Our healing stories today both are about healing **women**. One woman is a young girl, the other woman is poor and has nothing. Women were the lowest level of Jewish culture, especially women children and poor women. When these women are healed in our stories today, these healings signal Jesus is concerned about the lowest people in his society. The original hearers would have been amazed. Jesus is healing **women**? Young women and poor women? The original hearers would have been challenged to understand Jesus cared about **everyone**. But there are also some kauna clues here. The number 12 is used for both women in these stories, and when a Jewish story talks about 12 anything, we know this is a reference to the 12 Jewish tribes, and it is a reference to the story being about everyone. So this is not a healing story about just a young woman and a poor woman. These healing stories are about the lowest of the low, the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the captives. These healing stories are about...[pause] **us**.

To begin, we need to know that women who are "having a hemorrhage" is a Greek term for the monthly cycle. This woman's monthly cycle had been going on for 12 years. Now the ladies know this is not a nice thing, but guys, trust me, this is a huge deal. First, she must have been completely exhausted. Second, she was always ritually unclean. Jewish women could not go to the Temple when they were in their monthly cycle, and they could touch no one, not even their husbands. So we must understand that this woman is far more than just bleeding—she is an outcast because of this disease. She is ostracized, rejected, scoffed at, kicked, yelled at. And everyone avoids her like the plague. This is a horrible, horrible dilemma for her. She is desperate having spent everything to be cured, and still, she only gets worse. So, now she is so desperate that she devises a plan to sneak through the crowds and touch Jesus to be healed. She knows that by touching Jesus she will be violating the law—she knew she couldn't touch anyone. She knows that she will make Jesus unclean, but she thinks if she could just sneak a touch on his robe that he won't even know, and she will be healed, and all will be well. So she came up from behind and touched his cloak. She trusted God so much that she didn't even need to touch Jesus—just his cloak. And she was immediately healed. End of story, right. No. Not end of story.

Think about this just a moment with me. She touches Jesus, and is healed. Jesus did not know she was there. He did not know she needed to be healed, but she reached out and was immediately healed. God is always ready to heal us. God is always ready to make us clean and whole and pure again. So much so, that all we

need do is reach out and ask God for help. God is ALWAYS ready to heal us, always ready to send healing energy to us, always ready to cure us from those things from which we have struggled with forever. God is ALWAYS ready. It is **we** who need the trust and courage to reach out to God. It is **we** who, when we become desperate enough, finally reach out to God to be healed.

So, what did Jesus do? Well, let's look at what his options were. As a Jewish man, Jesus could have been very angry at this woman. It was strictly against the customs of the day for a woman to touch a single man. And certainly Jesus could have been even more angry that an **unclean** woman touched him, because now Jesus was ritually unclean. And he could have been angry that she stole something from him that was not hers, as the Greek says, the power of aloha went out from Jesus. But Jesus does none of these things. When she comes forth and admits, or confesses, what she has done, our story says she told "the whole truth." Sometimes the deepest healing that we can have is to just tell the whole truth. We are not told here what the whole truth was, but the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth also tells us that she repented, she confessed and told Jesus everything. And what did Jesus do then? The first word from Jesus' mouth is daughter. First, Jesus calls her Daughter. Jesus is not angry, instead of rejecting her, Jesus **takes this woman into his family**. She is now part of Jesus' 'ohana. This is huge. The truth set this woman free, and now she is in Jesus' family! Then Jesus goes on by telling her that her faith and trust have healed her. She trusted that God would heal her, and God did. Without words, she boldly reached out to God and God responded with the power of health. But then Jesus adds that she can go, now freed from suffering and in peace. [pause]

Time and time again, Jesus shows us that the greatest gift we can give to anyone is to really see them, to touch them, to see the world as they see it, and to experience the world as they experience it. The greatest gift we can give to anyone is to walk in their slippa, and struggle with the things they are struggling with. What we find, when we do this, is that **everyone** is struggling and suffering. Everyone's life is hard. Everyone is bleeding and hurting and struggling and needs little compassion and mercy. Everyone.

This is our call as Christians. Our call is not to try and fix people or change their minds or make them like us. In fact, our call is the opposite, to love **people exactly as they are**. God loves them that way, and we are commanded by Jesus to do the same. Jesus says Love one another. Jesus does not say FIX one another! Our call as Christians is to change **ourselves**—to change US, to open our heads and hearts to see the pain and struggle others are going through, and to have compassion and mercy on **other people** along the way. Our call as Christians is to extend healing love exactly the same way as Jesus did.

Be the presence of God in the world. Be compassionate. Have mercy on everyone. And let the healing love of God flow through **you** into a world that is bleeding and suffering. Amen.