

In both of these two stories Jesus is interacting with women: the twelve year old daughter of Jairus and the woman who has been bleeding for twelve years. It is very likely that when the Gospel of Mark was put together (about 70 C.E.) both of these stories were known to the people of The Way, Christianity was called, The Way. Why is the story of Jairus' daughter cut in half? It must be that imbedding the story of the woman who had been bleeding for twelve years reveals something— something about God and faith and life.

In these stories it is likely that the cloak Jesus is wearing has 613 fringes or tassels. Each tassel represents one of the 613 laws in the OT. One of the 613 laws says that a person that is bleeding is unclean. There can be a difference between unclean and sinful. If you are sinful you are unclean but there are ways of being unclean that are not sinful. Bleeding or contacting someone who is bleeding isn't sinful but it renders you unclean; unable to come to the temple, unable to offer sacrifice, unable to worship God. It is one of the 613 tassels on Jesus cloak that the woman touches.

I don't know what law the tassel she touch represented but there is a 1/613 chance that it is the very law that rendered the woman unclean, unable to worship God, unable to practice faithfulness in community. Immediately when she touch Jesus' cloak she is healed. The power of God is unleashed, or goes out. What does the power of God look like? Is it a power that condemns or separates or dominates. NO, the power of God servers, brings people into community, heals and brings wholeness. And I got to tell you this power of God, you better watch out,

the power of God goes where it will, not even God can fully control it.

This law that has labeled the woman as unclean for twelve years, part of that law labels anyone who comes in contact with her unclean, for a period of time. When the woman touches Jesus, according to the law, Jesus becomes unclean. In this story it isn't the law or labeling who's power prevails; Jesus' power wins. If you think of power as electric. The uncleanness of the woman is believed to flow to Jesus, but the flow of power is reversed, Jesus power removes or takes the uncleanness, restores wholeness, heals, brings her back into community.

Have you ever had a sick child or spouse or loved one? A few years back we were over at our friends in South Minneapolis for supper. We had just arrived, we were in the back yard talking and the kids are playing. Iris was riding a tricycle, she turned a bit sharply and kind of went over, but she was right by the garage and caught herself. I had turned back to the adult conversation thinking an incident had been averted, when I saw Iris coming toward me, doing the silent cry, with fear in her eyes. There had been a small piece of the metal siding sticking out from the garage that her small hand laid open by. This was not life threatening, but it wasn't good. So we piled back into the car and headed for the hospital during rush hour. I'm a really patient person, but waiting in traffic was excruciating. It was painful, it hurt inside my body to be moving so slowly. I get that sometime people don't get all the way to the left when turning left and consequently

block everyone else from going straight, but that evening I had no patients.

The other story in our reading from Mark puts a dad in the position of asking Jesus to save his daughter's life. He says she is at the point of death. So the dad and Jesus go to the young girl. And a crowd comes with. And then Jesus stopped, and while surrounded by a crowd, asked, "Who touched me?" I'm a dad and I've never quite been in this exact same situation, but you imagine? If I'm Jairus I don't want to walk, I want to be at a dead sprint, carrying Jesus. Instead Jesus stops and talks to this woman who's been bleeding since my daughter was born. This woman that has spent all her time and money seeking life. Jesus stops and saves her. The Greek word is *sodzo*, is translated as heals but it is really about salvation, life from death. By putting these two stories together we learn something about the life of faith. The life of faith is about being on the road with Jesus. We are walking with Jesus, following The Way. We haven't reached the destination and we don't know what is going to happen. We trust the promise that has been made. We trust Jesus, but were not there yet. It's like the psalmist says, "How long oh Lord?"

Yesterday there were forty some people in the Fellowship Hall for seven hours, that flew by. It was hard work, but it was good work. We told the story of the shared holy history of Peace Lutheran. We talked about the vulnerabilities that face Peace Lutheran both internally and externally and set up three experiments focused on the top three priorities from the CAT survey. As we outlined our history we identified the different periods or

eras and easily named them all except our current. We came up with words like discovery, exploration, reinvent, disorientation, germination; but none of these words fully worked for the group. It's because we're on the road with Jesus. We believe the promise, but we don't know what is going to happen. A mentor of mine used to say, "Stand there, don't just do something." It's not that we at Peace are or have been inactive, we are attending to our future. Looking for what wants to be released. Listening to the stories about the past so they can teach us lessons about our core values. We know that there are going to be changes and all change, even if it is good, involve loss, and we're going to acknowledge that. And we are doing these three experiments. We aren't saying these are permanent solutions. We don't know exactly where we are headed yet, but we got these experiments that encourage innovation, these are learning opportunities that will likely lead to greater clarity.

People come to Jesus and Jairus saying, "Call off the procession, it is too late, your daughter is dead." But Jesus continues and people laugh at him. Jesus goes into the house and takes the dead girl by the hand. You know what else makes you unclean? Touching a dead body, it's another one of the 613 laws. Now we know or at least we wonder—the last time Jesus encountered and unclean person, the woman was saved, out of death there was life—could it be with this girl, too? Could it be with me? And the answer is the same every time, Jesus takes us by the hand, "Little girl, get up." My child I am here, filling you with wholeness, bringing you back into community, bringing you salvation and life. Amen.