

Daily Discipleship

Sunday, June 26-July 2 (B) – Mark 5:21-43

The Choices of Discipleship: *Faithfulness or Faithlessness?*

Focus Question: *How does your faith propel you into action?*

word of life

“But overhearing what [the people] said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, ‘Do not fear, only believe.’” Mark 5:36 (NRSV)

Read Mark 5:21-43

This longer passage contains two powerful stories of faith-filled people who seek Jesus at desperate times in their lives. Jesus responds to them by meeting their needs. Those who witness the interaction between Jesus and those who come for healing are filled with awe and amazement.

The first story is of a leader of the synagogue named Jairus. His daughter is dying, so Jairus finds Jesus, falls at his feet, and begs Jesus to intervene by providing healing. The request is a simple one. He asks only for Jesus to lay his hands on his daughter, for Jairus knows the touch of Jesus will bring healing.

1. *What is surprising about this part of the story?*

Jesus responds by going with Jairus to his home. But while they are traveling, a nameless woman who has been bleeding for twelve years joins the crowd. Like Jairus, this woman is desperate. Due to the ritualistic laws of the day, her bleeding means she is considered unclean and can not interact with others in normal ways. She has spent all of her money on doctors, but her situation has only worsened. Yet, she believes if she can only touch Jesus, she will be healed.

2. *Imagine what this woman’s life was like as one ostracized by others.*

This woman touches the robe of Jesus and is healed, but Jesus realizes some of his power has left him. What follows is a fascinating discussion with the disciples. Jesus begins looking for the person who has been healed, but the disciples are baffled at Jesus. With such a large crowd, why would Jesus be concerned about a single person who touched him? Yet the woman knows she is the one guilty of taking his power without his permission. She falls down before Jesus, confessing her transgression. As one unclean, she should not have been mingling in the crowd. Most certainly, she should not have intentionally touched someone, making that person unclean. Yet, instead of reprimanding her, Jesus commends her faith and blesses her with peace.

3. *What is surprising about this part of the story?*

As Jesus is still speaking, someone breaks into the crowd to announce the death of the daughter of Jairus. It seems while Jesus is healing one person, another dies. Yet, Jesus reassures Jairus, “Do not fear, only believe.” (Mark 5:36 NRSV) Jesus moves from crisis to crisis, traveling to the home of Jairus. People are weeping. All hope seems lost. When Jesus tells the mourning crowd that the girl is not dead, they laugh at him. Jesus is not deterred, but goes directly to the young girl, taking the girl’s mother and father with him. Jesus holds the girl’s hand and proclaims, “Little girl, get up!” Amazingly, she is healed.

4. *Imagine the father’s range of feelings and thoughts throughout this whole ordeal.*

5. *What is the role of faith in these stories?*

6. *What can we learn from these stories?*

word *among us*

Glen hasn't been feeling well, but he hates doctors. He refuses to make an appointment. Glen believes Jesus will heal him. Time and time again, he'll say, "Who needs medicines when you have Jesus?"

1. *What would you say to Glen?*

There is the classic story of a man shipwrecked on an island. He spent his time praying for rescue. A helicopter passed overhead, but the man had his eyes closed in prayer. A boat came next, but the man kept his eyes closed in prayer. Finally as he nears his death, the man cries out to God, "Why didn't you come and rescue me?" God replied, "I did. I came by helicopter and boat, but I couldn't get your attention."

In the stories from the Gospel of Mark, these faith-filled people did not stay home and remain passive. They believed in the power of Jesus to change their lives and life-situations. Their faith in Jesus propelled them into action.

2. *As faith-filled people, how active are we in bringing about solutions?*
3. *Jairus and the nameless woman actively pursued Jesus to bring results. What might we learn from them?*

La Tasha has tremendous faith. When her 95-year-old grandmother became ill, La Tasha began spending every waking hour praying for healing for her grandmother. She believed if she could only demonstrate faith like the bleeding woman in Mark 5, her grandmother would be healed. La Tasha was shocked to hear about her grandmother's death. How could her beloved grandmother possibly die? Where was Jesus? La Tasha became depressed because she felt so guilty. She was haunted with, "What if. . .?" La Tasha was convinced her grandmother died because she did not have enough faith for healing.

4. *What would you say to La Tasha?*
5. *What is the role of faith in bringing healing to someone?*

The Bible passage describes two individuals with deep faith in the healing actions of Jesus. Their stories end in positive results. Yet sometimes bad things happen to faith-filled people. At those times God can seem distant. Prayers do not seem to get answered as we want. Doubts can eat away at our faith.

6. *How do you keep the faith during difficult times?*
7. *How might you encourage someone who is losing faith in Christ?*

Prayer

Healer of the universe, heal the wounded places in my life. Amen

Dig Deeper

Matthew 9:18-26

last word

Take time this week to identify those places in your life needing the healing touch of Jesus.



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June 26-July 2 (B) Page 2 of 2