



2 Corinthians 8:7-15; Mark 5:21-43 **Reverend Giuseppe Mattei (June 30, 2024)**

Jesus crosses over again, according to the gospel of Mark. He crosses over into a world of hurt, a world that is bleeding, dying.

Jesus is not in control: he doesn't (can't?) always decide what miracle he's going to do; when and how he is going to do it, and who is going to benefit from it. Today, we hear that Jesus did not expect to be performing a miracle on his way to do one.

A leader of the synagogue, Jairus, approaches Jesus and begs him to come and see his daughter who is at risk of dying. With this story, Mark tells us that not all Jewish leaders were against Jesus, and some even trusted his compassion and power to heal.

The story of a Jewish leader falling at Jesus feet and begging for a miracle is remarkable. The last time Jesus was in a synagogue and performed a miracle, people planned to kill him.¹

As he is on his way to Jairus' house, pressed by the crowd, an unnamed woman who has been bleeding for twelve years and spent all her wealth seeking medical advice and expertise, puts all her trust in Jesus. She has heard great things about him, but she does not want to inconvenience the teacher.

Due to her illness, she would have been regarded as unclean, not welcome in any crowd, much less coming face to face with this travelling healer. But she presses forward, as close as possible without being noticed, barely brushing her hand against the low hem of Jesus' robe. Power goes out of Jesus. She is healed. And he wasn't even trying!

¹ Mark 3:1-6

It's amazing to notice the woman's vulnerability, courage, trust, self-confidence, resourcefulness, patience, and resolution.

What keeps her hope up? Love of life? Surely, she has known distress, doubt, despair, loneliness. Was her stubbornness and determination to hold on to life a sign of her understanding that we each have a cross to bear and must grow in our trust that God provides what we need, most of all inner strength?

Is endurance through faith a sign of our connection with something bigger than us, Someone more powerful, a Divine Energy that will never let go of us, that claims us, that calls us beloved and pulls us closer to One and all?

Jesus finally makes it to Jairus's house. He is late. We can't be sure she'd have been alive if he'd ignored the woman grasping his hem. He would take his time later getting to Lazarus's tomb... The little girl has passed and if we read slowly, we can overhear the loud wailing of her family and neighbors.

Jesus could have spoken a word from afar. But he enters the home. He gets up close and personal. He takes the girl by the hand.

Feel your hands. Precious Lord, take my hand...

He speaks and onlookers recalled what he said in his and their native language, Aramaic, so moving that Mark, writing in Greek, records the Aramaic! "Talitha kum. Rise up, little girl."

The twelve year old girl stands up. Imagine the sound of the shock, the rejoicing, maybe more intense than the wailing just moments earlier.

And then, showing his immense compassion and understanding, Jesus speaks to her family: "Give her something to eat." She's been sick. She's got to be famished.

How many parents in Gaza are desperate to give their children something to eat? What sacrifices parents in refugee camps, in war-torn countries, in the crime-infested areas of the world wouldn't undertake so

their children might have something to eat, a decent life beyond surviving if at all?

Can the Church show the same compassion of her Master? Is the Church a resurrection story? Will the Church proclaim the good news?

Or have we forgotten what it means to follow in his footsteps, to be washed by his grace and fed by his mercy, to find rest in him?

If you sought comfort in material things and the satisfaction of the flesh and you are still bleeding, **try Jesus.**

If you pursued control in life and personal gain in ideologies and social standing and you are still bleeding, **try Jesus.**

If you pinned your hopes on economic philosophies and party ideology and you are still bleeding, **try Jesus.**

If you put your trust in physical dominance, “race” superiority, military power, and quickness of the tongue and you are still bleeding, **try Jesus.**

If you relied on human favoritism, religious piety, and class chauvinism and you are still bleeding, **try Jesus.**

May the Lord of new life strengthen us on our journey with renewed faith and hope for tomorrow. Amen.