

June 30, 2024 – Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

“Taking our Faith in the Lord Seriously” by Pastor Julio Romero

Gospel: Mark 5:21-43

²⁸ *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)*

I don't know if Jairus and the woman whose name is not mentioned in today's gospel story had heard Jesus say, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”, but what we know is that the burdens that these two people were carrying were not regular burdens; they were heavy, enormous, huge burdens. Just imagine living with a hemorrhage for twelve years and how debilitating, incapacitating, and isolated a person would feel. Especially in a society where if a woman had this form of bleeding, she would be judged unclean and unfit to be part of a communal life.

Imagine the burden that this woman carried upon her soul. The gospel says this woman had seen many doctors and endured so much under whatever treatment she received from them. The writer of this gospel also makes it clear that the many appointments and treatments had left this woman broke: she had no money left to pay for her basic needs. And she was not getting better but worse.

The burdens this woman had were indeed overwhelming. Then, as part of the same story, we are told of Jairus, a leader in the local Synagogue and of course a well-respected member in that community. He comes to Jesus with a gigantic, huge and heavy burden. It was one of those emotional burdens that presses your heart so hard that your chest is in pain; you feel short of breath and your whole being is in agony. Jairus' beloved little daughter, the apple of his eyes, who was only 12 years old, was dying.

So, as Jesus was getting off his boat, He was met by these two people. The Gospel doesn't say exactly why these two looked for Jesus' help. I don't think that they had heard Jesus' teachings about bringing all our burdens to Him to get much-needed rest. I don't think that either one believed Jesus was the Messiah, let alone God in human flesh. But there is one thing they both believed about Jesus. The story doesn't say it, but the actions of Jairus and of the woman tell us very loudly.

They saw God's Spirit at work in Jesus. They somehow knew that Jesus, despite being one of them, an ordinary young man from the neighbouring town of Nazareth, the son of a carpenter and of a poor woman named Mary, was a chosen one, a man of God with the power to heal, give and restore life. They believed this so much that the woman said to herself "If I just could touch the hem of His garments, I will be well", and she did. What faith she had in Jesus!

Jairus' daughter was dying, and as soon as he heard Jesus was near his house he ran to him, fell on his knees and said to Jesus, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live". What faith! It was that faith, the belief that God's Spirit was at work in Jesus, which led these two to take Jesus seriously.

In contrast to Jairus and the woman, there were those who didn't take Jesus seriously. The disciples, at least in this story, didn't take Jesus seriously. When Jesus asked them who in the crowd had touched His clothes, they kind of answered saying, "You must be kidding, there are so many pressing in on you, how can you ask us who touched you, how on earth are we going to know?"

They didn't take Jesus seriously. There were also those at the house of Jairus, the mourners who were crying, grieving the passing of Jairus' daughter. Jesus came in, and when He told them that there was no point in crying because the child was not dead but sleeping, they laughed at Him. Like the disciples, they didn't take Jesus seriously. But what about us? Do we take Jesus seriously? Do we seriously believe in His words, in His miracles and in His promise to bring all our burdens to Him, and receive rest in return? Or are we like the disciples and the mourners at Jairus' house?

I don't want to speak for all of you, but I think that there are times that, like the disciples, we don't take Jesus and our faith in Him seriously. But let me tell you this, I can say that I have lived long enough and been a pastor long enough to witness that when the time and the moment is right, we who believe Jesus is our Lord and Saviour, the Son of God, do take Jesus and His words and promises very, very, very seriously.

I cannot tell you how many times that when the dark clouds of life are closing in and the burdens are too heavy to carry on, is when people have told me that without their faith in Jesus, in His words and promises, they

would just have given up on life or broken down completely, not able to be themselves again and look at life with hope anymore. But because of faith in Jesus, in His words and promises, just like Jairus and the woman in today's Gospel story who took Jesus seriously, we find rest, life and peace in the arms of Jesus. And when we experience the miraculous power of Jesus in our lives, it feels so good that we don't need to be asked, be told or reminded to take our faith in our Lord Jesus seriously.

Let me tell you of a person I met the other day, someone who does take his faith very seriously. We were talking about how people tend to complicate and make things difficult for others. Then he said something that struck me deep in my soul: he said, "If people only knew what awaits us in the afterlife". I said to him, "you are a person of faith" and he said "Yes".

Then he went on to tell me that he had had a surgery and during the surgery, as he was under the anesthetic, he had an encounter with Jesus. He experienced the peace that many people who have had a near death experience talk about, but what made a big difference for him was the moment he spent with the Lord. He didn't elaborate on what the Lord said to him, but he truly got a taste of the feast to come and that changed everything for him.

The strange thing about the testimony of this person is that he was not even a believer, a disciple, or a follower of our Lord Jesus Christ. He went into that operating room not thinking of or praying to God. Now he thinks of the Lord Jesus all the time and relates to the matters of this world in terms of what is waiting for him in heaven. He does take the Lord Jesus seriously.

He also said that he doesn't like to talk about his experience because he thinks people will laugh or think that he is not mentally well, but he wouldn't be the first that people laughed at. People laughed at Jesus before he resurrected Jairus' daughter.

People who take the Lord Jesus seriously see the glory of God, like the woman in this Gospel who had suffered for so many years, and one touch of Jesus' garments healed her. Jairus' faith in Jesus paid unbelievable rewards for him and his daughter. These two people took Jesus very seriously. The question is, do we?

God's peace be with you. **Amen.**

