

A Sermon for 6th Sunday after Pentecost

June 30, 2024



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[Sixth Sunday after Pentecost – The Episcopal Church](#)

2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27; Mark 5: 21-43

Our biblical soulmate David is lamenting the loss of his great friends King Saul and Saul's son Jonathan, beloved by David. David can barely see through his grief. To have a soulmate from 3000 years ago is a comforting thing – I feel like I can reach out to him in sympathy. The beautiful psalm of lamentation is very moving. “Out of the depths have I called to you, O Lord.”

But I will leave David to his time, and move forward to 2000 years ago, and this strange story told in the Gospel of Mark. It is a complicated scene, with two major healing stories. This story-telling device is called framing: Mark starts one story, inserts another one in the middle, and then goes back to the original story to complete the event. The format is A – B – A.

The first story, A in our format, is about the synagogue leader Jairus. Jairus is anxious about his 12-year-old daughter who has fallen ill. He begs Jesus to come to his home and heal her. Jesus is on his way.

And then Jesus is distracted, part B in our format. A suffering woman has crept up behind him and touched the hem of his robe. She has been suffering from her illness for 12 years and no doctors can help her. Like Jairus, she believes in Jesus' healing power and thinks that just touching his robe will heal her. And, actually, it does.

But Jesus notices. He can feel power going out of him, and he looks around for the source. The woman explains her plight, and he takes pity on her. He says that her faith has made her well.

And then the story resumes Part A, going to Jairus' house to heal his daughter. When they arrive, everyone thinks the child has died, but Jesus is not deterred. He enters the house with the girl's parents and three of his companions. Jesus speaks gently to the child, saying, “Little girl, get up.” And she does.

What could have been a tragedy – no, two tragedies – are turned into moments of rejoicing. The woman who touched Jesus' robe has been healed, and so has the little girl. Just being near Jesus, just touching his robe, is enough to get the woman in touch with her faith, and her faith makes her well. Joining Jesus in the sick room at Jairus's house are six people: Jairus and his wife and daughter, and Jesus' three disciples Peter, James and John. In this concentrated community of faith, the girl can come alive again and be healed.

We trust in the healing power of Jesus in this community of New Life. You have been through a lot in your life as a united parish, through many joyous moments, and through many challenges. We come together at least once or twice a week, to worship God and to support one another. We like each other – this is a community of love. We may never be much bigger than we are now, but any size community can overflow with love and healing – look at the little community called together by Jesus to raise Jairus's daughter. We gather our community for worship and support, for discussing books, for enjoying fellowship over great food, for reaching out to those in need. There's an expression: "It takes a village," describing some small villages where the raising of children is a community project.

It happens right here – it takes a village, or rather, it takes this community, to bring us through the hard times and heal the whole community after especially difficult challenges. You had an experience before I arrived, and when I joined your community, I recognized that many of you were still traumatized by recent events. You had lived through a toxic time. But you came together in faith and love, and that has made you well.

Jesus and six people came together – a small community – and the faith and love among them healed the child. This small community likewise comes together with Jesus in faith and love, and healing happens here.

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to God from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. (Ephes 3:20-21)