

Mark 5:21-43 **21** And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. **22** Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet **23** and implored him earnestly, saying, "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." **24** And he went with him.

And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. **25** And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, **26** and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. **27** She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. **28** For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well." **29** And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. **30** And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?" **31** And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" **32** And he looked around to see who had done it. **33** But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. **34** And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

35 While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" **36** But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." **37** And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. **38** They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. **39** And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." **40** And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. **41** Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." **42** And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. **43** And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat. (ESV)

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We all know, nowadays, that there's good touch and bad touch.

But have you noticed how the definition of 'good' and 'bad' keeps changing?

It used to be that grade school teachers could comfort a child with a hug -- but not anymore, it could be sexual.

Ironically, the Transportation Safety Agency has agents waiting at airports to touch your child and you all over.

Today's Gospel tells of a desperate touch and a resurrection touch.

Perhaps if we focus on touching in relation to our Lord Jesus, we can be helped to focus on good touch.

Part 1. Two Sad Stories

We have two stories in our Gospel today -- a story within a story -- sad stories of two women.

One is older than the other, but both are in great trouble: they are afflicted with terrible diseases.

The 12 yr. old daughter of Jairus is dying -- the older woman has been losing blood all 12 of those years that the young one has been alive!

Sad Point 1. Crisis!

Both women are in crisis -- the girl is at death's door. We read:

22 Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet **23** and implored him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death."

A terribly sad scene! This precious child of 12, her whole life before her, now dying.

The older woman has spent all she had on doctors who couldn't help her.

25 And there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years, 26 she had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse.

We've heard it all before, haven't we? We know about crisis.

People we know and those we don't know are diagnosed with serious illnesses, and with the way things have gone in the health care arena in our country, no wonder there are worries about how to pay for needed treatment and care.

What just happened at our Supreme Court has everybody analyzing -- what does it mean for that latest healthcare act of Congress?

Will it remain a political football? Will it be repealed? Will end of life care be rationed? What happens now to Medicare?

Some of us might be asking that today; the desperate woman had only one hope now.

Sad Point 2. Fear Takes Over

A dying girl -- a desperate woman -- do you want to know what's worse?

In their society, in the religious regulations of that time, both are untouchable.

Bleeding people, dying people, are "unclean" according to ritual law, and anyone who touches them becomes "unclean" as well.

Can you imagine how lonely they feel? how afraid they must have been?

No comforting touch -- no warm hand placed on a cool brow -- no reassuring hugs for a struggling soul.

Fear takes over; what happens then to trust, to faith in humanity, let alone faith in God?

Sad Point 3. Is This God's Punishment?

Remember that Jairus is a ruler of the Synagogue. He knew O.T. religion.

He knew the words spoken at Sinai when the Law of God was handed down about "visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children ..."

Was the girl dying because of something he had done?

Is something "sick" in his link with God?

What about the God-connection of these two women?

God is already "visiting" them, touching their lives, and the touch seems deadly.

Is this God's punishment?

Two Sad Stories: 1, Crisis; 2, Fear takes over; and 3, We ask, Is God's doing this?

Part II. God Is Actually Sending a Healing Touch

Point 1. What God Did Was to Send His Son.

God's Son, Jesus, had begun His ministry in Galilee near where He was born.

It is there that Jairus found Him, and there that our desperate woman touched His garment.

They knew that He was the One to go to.

22 Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing [Jesus], he fell at his feet ... Jesus ... went in where the child was. 41 Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!"

42 And immediately the girl got up and began walking

27 She [the older woman] had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. 28 For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well." 29 And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. (ESV)

What turned these visits, this visitation, into a healing instead of a punishing?

To find that answer we need to fast forward to the end of Mark's Gospel where we see Jesus on a cross.

It is there that He, God's Only Son, switches places with us, the children of our parents.

There on that cross **He** receives the deadly touch of punishment meant for us, and **we** receive the offer of His healing touch.

Point 2. "Faith" is the Word for How this Healing Comes to Us

What is faith? It is reaching out our own hand to receive the healing touch.

Jairus trusted that he would get help for his dying 12 yr. old.

The desperate woman believed that simply touching the hem of the Master's garment would be her salvation. And in both cases it came to pass.

When they told Jairus his daughter had died, Jesus said to him, **36b "Do not fear, only believe."**

When the desperate woman realized that her secret touch had been found out, she came "in fear and trembling" to Jesus and **34 ... he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace,..."**

Jesus told Jairus to switch from fear to faith; Jesus told the trembling woman it was her faith that brought her healing and peace.

You and I have come here again today to have our faith strengthened through hymns and psalms, Holy Scripture and the Lord's Supper.

I have here a poem by anonymous; I hope it helps deepen our trust in our Savior.

"The Touch Of The Master's Hand"

'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer

Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
But he held it up with a smile;
"What am I bidden, good folks," he cried
"Who'll start the bidding for me?"
"A dollar, a dollar, now two, only two
Two dollars, and who'll make it three?"

"Three dollars once, three dollars twice
Going for three..." but no --
From the room far back, a gray haired
man

Came forward and picked up the bow.
Then wiping the dust from the old violin
And tightening up all the strings
He played a melody pure and sweet,
As sweet as the angel sings.

The music ceased and the auctioneer
With a voice that was quiet and low
Said, "What am I bid for the old violin?"
And he held it up with the bow.
"A thousand dollars, and who'll make it
two?
Two thousand and who'll make it three?"

Three thousand once, three thousand
twice
And going, and gone," said he.

The people cheered, but some of them
cried,
"We do not quite understand --
What changed its worth?" Swift came the
reply,
"The touch of the master's hand."
And many a man with life out of tune,
And battered and torn with sin
Is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless
crowd,
Much like the old violin.

A mess of pottage, a life of shame,
A game and he travels on.
He's going once, and going twice,
He's going and almost gone.
But the Master comes and the foolish
crowd
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul and the change that's
wrought
By the touch of the Master's hand.

Reading IV: Anonymous
_____ For All the Saints, Vol. III, p. 892

Our Master, Jesus, has touched us; He has wrought His change in us so that we are now healed, all our sins forgiven by His cross.

God keeps sending that healing touch, the touch of the Master's Hand.

In the power of that touch we go back into our world again to tell everyone what He has done.

Never mind that we may not have got healing of our physical bodies, nor even a resurrection from the dead.

We have got the promise of eternal life in Christ. God has visited us with peace. Christ Jesus, our Savior, is God's final touch.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen