

THE 24th SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

November 4 2018 • D.M. Kerns

Isaiah 51:9-16
Colossians 1:1-14
Matthew 9:18-25

Standing...

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The word is out about Jesus.

He's known by everyone to be a Healer—
a Healer who heals for free.

In our Gospel lesson,
we learn that as the Healer goes to heal one daughter of Israel,
He's approached secretly by another.

Let us pray: May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord—our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Sitting...

“Jesus, what You've done for others—do for me.

If You could just touch my little girl, she will be healed, and live.”

This is what Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue—a very influential man, asks of
Jesus

as he lay stretched out on the ground before Him.

Jairus, the one responsible for teaching the people God's word had learned,
that the same strong Arm of the Lord spoken of in Isaiah
redeemed Israel from slavery in Egypt,
and redeemed Israel from the bondage in Babylon,
and would rebuild the people of Israel after their captivity...

That same Strong Arm was revealed in Jesus Christ.

And He would help his little girl.

St. Matthew indicate the girl is already dead.

Sts. Mark and Luke say she's on the verge of dying.

Regardless, Death is in the air...making Jairus' daughter unclean.

Jairus is there to ask the clean, namely Jesus,
to touch the unclean, namely his daughter.

Spoiler Alert:

Pay attention to who touches who—and what happens.

Well, Jesus does not disappoint. He goes with Jairus.

And as they travel to the bedside of his 12-year old girl,

large crowds—this gaggle of people—flock around them.

Their march though is interrupted.

There's this woman—a woman with more than an illness—more than a condition.

This nameless woman has a scourge.

For twelve years she's suffered from a flow of blood.

She probably doesn't even remember what it's like not to have to deal with this,
and my guess is, every time the bleeding started

she had to wonder if it would ever stop.

Commentators suspect a uterine hemorrhage—
but what do they know?

This scourge is slowly stealing her life.

It's consumed most of her savings,

but worse, it's kept her away from the Temple—

She was verboten to go where God promised to be present,
to pour out His mercy and His grace.

This scourge made her untouchable—as unclean as a leper.

Oh, there's no doubt she tried everything—

The doctors gave their solutions,
all for a fee of course.

Then there were the
homeopathic remedies,
solutions shared by friends,
clinical trials,
eastern medicine,
western medicine,
hemp, vitamins, essential oils...you name it.

Nothing worked,
and she kept getting worse.

But she heard about Jesus—

Jesus who chased demons from the demoniac,

Jesus who brought life to dead limbs,

paralyzed legs, and withered hands...

Jesus who brought healing to those consumed by fevers.

He cured lepers.

Image this woman's joy when she hears Jesus is passing through her town.

Faith comes by hearing, and when she heard of Jesus,
she put that tiny mustard seed of faith in Him, sight unseen, saying,
"If only I touch His garment, I will be made well."

She believed Jesus was powerful enough to do with a touch
what all the doctors had been unable to do in twelve years.

Now, I know... It sounds superstitious, but this woman is on to something.

She knows—just like Jairus knows—
that divine omnipotent power resides in Jesus.

So much so that when the clean touches the unclean,
the unclean becomes clean,
in that Jesus is not polluted by someone else's pollution—
it's just the opposite—
He completely removes their pollution.
But—what if the unclean—touches the clean?
Will it have the same effect?
She has faith that it will.

“If only I touch His garment...”

actually, one of four tassels (*tsitsith*) that hang from a square cloth worn by
devout Jews (see Deuteronomy 22:12).

“If only I touch that...”

But she's got to be quiet about this.
Nobody can know—not even Jesus.

But Jesus does know—though He's surrounded by others,
Jesus knows the touch of faith.
He loves faith,

and even though the woman sneaked up behind Him,
and He's on His way to raise a dead girl,
in the company of a distraught father,
He has time for her, even calling her, “Daughter.”
“Take heart, daughter, your faith has made you well.”
Or better translated, “your faith has saved you.”
Moreover, this scourge—
it's gone...
forever.

Again, You touch Him and His power comes out of Him to you,
in that He's not polluted by pollution—my pollution, or yours.

Our pollution comes from every place we turn,
from the pornography that we view,
to the adulterous relationships we have.
To the things we scheme, entice or force away for ourselves—
things which are not ours.
Not to mention our unclean thoughts,
which trigger our unclean tongues,
to speak unclean words,
and perform unclean deeds done in private and public.
It's pollution.
All of it.
We have touched unclean things,
and it's left us unclean.

But you see, that's why you've come here this morning...

When unclean people

reach out and lay their sins on Jesus—

their sins, their uncleanness—

it's taken away,

just like the woman's scourge.

His cleanness makes you clean.

His holiness makes you holy.

His Word,

His touch,

His love,

His truth,

His righteousness—

All of this goes out from Him to you.

Totally different from anything else

you can ever touch.

Jesus' touch initially came to you in those baptismal waters—

where Christ, "sanctified and instituted all waters to be a blessed flood,

and a lavish washing away of sin," (Flood Prayer) and in those baptismal waters

as we well, you were made a member in His Holy Church,

where He called you, "Son," "Daughter."

Jesus' touch came...

when at the outset of the service the Triune Name was placed upon you,

it'll happen at the end of the service as well.

Jesus' touch came when the Words of Absolution were spoken over you,

when His Law and Gospel were read and preached into your ear...

and what do you think happens when you come to the rail,

to receive the very body and blood of Jesus?

Beloved, the clean touches the unclean, rendering you

clean,

and now you belong. Your faith has saved you.

That's why you've come here this morning.

Well, the scene with the woman had to strengthen Jairus' faith—

his expectations have got to be soaring.

Jesus then enters Jairus' house to find folks

already gathered for the funeral.

But Jesus tells them the girl is merely sleeping.

Sleeping?

Indeed—that's all death is to Jesus,

and the only one to believe Him is Jairus.

After forcing all the unbelievers out,

Jesus does it again.
The clean touches the unclean—the dead—
and what do you know?
The little girl rises.

Folks this very same Jesus places His gentle, holy touch upon you here—
taking your scourge and making you holy.

And this very same Jesus
who walked with Jairus to raise his daughter
will one day stand upon the earth,
calling out of the grave all who have fallen asleep,
for He has promised to wake us up on the Last Day
so as to serve Him in
everlasting righteousness, innocence and
blessedness.

That is who He is. That is what He's promised. Faith clings to the promises.

The clean for the unclean. In the Holy Name of Jesus, Amen.

Standing...And now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.