

*Grace Lutheran Church, Uniondale, New York*  
*Lutheran Church of the Epiphany~ Iglesia Luterana de la Epifanía, Hempstead, New York*  
*Marianne K. Tomecek, Interim Pastor*

*Fifth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Proper 8B– June 27, 2021*

*Lamentations 3:22-33*

*2 Corinthians 8:7-15*

*Psalm 30*

*Mark 5:21-43*

*Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN!*

“Weeping spends the night, but joy comes in the morning. ... You have turned my wailing into dancing; you have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy. Therefore my heart sings to you without ceasing; O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever.” (Psalm 30:5b, 11-12.)

We can imagine the woman who reached out to touch the hem of Jesus’ garment singing these words of the psalm. We can hear Jairus, his daughter and the rest of their family and their whole community lifting up their voices in thanksgiving to the God of compassion who had returned the girl to them – to life.

The “sandwiched” account of Jesus’ healing of these daughters tells us of the curing of their physical diseases **and** the healing of their illnesses, their social ostracism from their communities because of their diseases. They were restored to life. Before Jesus’ intervention, the woman had been considered “unclean” because of her condition. She was shunned by everyone who was aware of her disorder. She couldn’t live with her family. Her state prevented her from bearing children, from giving life, which was a primary responsibility of women in her day.

Jairus’ daughter, although still a young girl to us at twelve years of age, was old enough at that time to be married. She was poised to give new life through becoming a mother. Her disease and then her death removed her from this role in the context of her family and society.

Jesus’ compassion in restoring them to their roles is the fulfillment of God’s promise that humanity should live life, and live it abundantly.

We learn of a solitary experience for Jesus in this account: someone being healed by his power without his having initiated the deed. This unfortunate woman, who could not have been poor because of all she did to try to be restored to health, she had suffered, she had spent all her money, she had not benefitted from that expense

and in fact, had gotten worse. She tried all of these paths to wholeness for as long as Jairus' daughter had been alive – twelve years. But then, she heard about Jesus and his works of healing, and she knew that if she just touched his clothes – an action prohibited by the purity laws because of her condition – she would be healed. But she had to do it stealthily.

When Jesus felt the power leave his body, he tried to learn who had engaged his potential. It might have been thought that he would be angry and would demand that the woman whose touch had defiled him be punished. But instead, Jesus calls her “daughter;” he creates a restored familial relationship for her, and he assures her that her faith has made her well. He adds, “be healed of your disease,” meaning that she should be restored to relationship with her family and her wider community for a full and abundant life.

Most of the healing Jesus did was for poor people; those who wouldn't have the wealth or social standing to seek even first century medical care. It is noteworthy that Jairus, a leader of the synagogue, sought Jesus' help. Even at this early point in Jesus' public ministry in the region of Galilee, the religious leaders of the temple in Jerusalem were feeling threatened by Jesus, so it would not have been advisable for a synagogue leader to seek Jesus' power publicly. It would create controversy for him.

Jairus had faith, too, and fell at Jesus' feet – he worshipped him – and he begged him repeatedly to lay his hands on his daughter to make her well and to allow her to live out her life.

Jesus might have told him to go to the physicians, but he didn't. He stopped his mission to go to Jairus' house. But then this new mission was stopped again by the intervention of the bleeding woman's touch.

Immediately after the woman had been healed, Jesus might have been relieved of his new call with news of the death of Jairus' daughter. But Jesus knew that this life could be saved, as well. He risked Jairus' anger for not having hurried to the house, and the ridicule of the people gathered to mourn the girl's death. He still needed to be secretive about his actions until it was time to be fully revealed as the Son of God. The conclusion of restoration of physical life to the girl, was to instruct her family to complete her return to their community by sharing a meal with her.

So what are **we** to learn about **our** vocation as followers of Jesus Christ, from these works of power? How should **we** embrace the love of humanity that Jesus embodied, to bring abundant life to the people whose lives we impact?

We might begin with considering how our lives are changing once again, now that we are returning to public interaction. Although I understand that things are different in other parts of the country, my experience is that, here in New York, people are continuing to use masks or not, as they are comfortable doing, and they do not insist that everyone else in their sphere do the same thing they do. But if we confront someone who insists on doing the opposite of whatever we're doing in maintaining personal distance or wearing masks – a not, that we take every step possible to defuse any conflict in that regard. Silence, in this area, might well preserve life, rather than risking it.

We also are confronted these days, more often than we'd like to think, by violence or abuse against others because of their heritage or cultural group. In those instances when we are actually present, offering a source of support for the person being attacked, or even just distracting the attacker's attention, while maintaining our own safety, is a life-giving approach.

And what about the almost daily political arguments that we hear these days? How to bring life to those circumstances? I must confess that I have trouble knowing how to approach defusing such arguments, because often I don't understand what motivates the positions being taken. I frequently find it almost impossible to see the logic of the views being presented. But it may be helpful, if we are faced with someone who insists on arguing with you, to work at maintaining calm, using deep breathing, and just asking open-ended questions (not cross-examination, "gotcha" challenges). If we are able to do so, it would be life-giving.

And finally, that we remember in all things and in all circumstances, that forgiveness is what Jesus Christ brings to humanity, so it is what we are called to do. The power of forgiveness in and of itself, is healing for the one forgiving, and it also can be sufficiently shocking to the one being forgiven, that it will cause them to stop in their tracks and think about what has occurred. For the power of forgiveness is life-giving, as well.

Jesus' goal, presented to us in the account of this day in his public ministry, was for the integrity of the person and the wholeness of the community, whenever possible. When experience, education, training, and knowledge fail us, prayer to our loving, compassionate God in Christ will not fail us. If words for prayer aren't

on our tongues, we know that God's Holy Spirit will give them to us. And, above all else, we can recall that "weeping spends the night, but joy comes in the morning." And in that knowledge is hope for the future.

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. C: AMEN