



TOUCH POINT

## The Other Side – Touchpoint for June 26, 2024

### Mark 5:21-43 (NRSVUE) A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

<sup>21</sup>When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him, and he was by the sea. <sup>22</sup>Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet <sup>23</sup>and pleaded with him repeatedly, “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.” <sup>24</sup>So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. <sup>25</sup>Now there was a woman who had been suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years. <sup>26</sup>She had endured much under many physicians and had spent all that she had, and she was no better but rather grew worse. <sup>27</sup>She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, <sup>28</sup>for she said, “If I but touch his cloak, I will be made well.” <sup>29</sup>Immediately her flow of blood stopped, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. <sup>30</sup>Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my cloak?” <sup>31</sup>And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, ‘Who touched me?’” <sup>32</sup>He looked all around to see who had done it. <sup>33</sup>But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. <sup>34</sup>He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

<sup>35</sup>While he was still speaking, some people came from the synagogue leader’s house to say, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?” <sup>36</sup>But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the synagogue leader, “Do not be afraid; only believe.” <sup>37</sup>He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. <sup>38</sup>When they came to the synagogue leader’s house, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. <sup>39</sup>When he had entered, he said to them, “Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.” <sup>40</sup>And they laughed at him. Then 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. <sup>41</sup>Taking her by the hand, he said to her, “Talitha koum,” which means, “Little girl, get up!” <sup>42</sup>And immediately the girl stood up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. <sup>43</sup>He strictly ordered them that no one should know this and told them to give her something to eat.

### **Grace and peace to you from the Mystery in whom we live and move, and have our being.**

Whenever we go to the other side, we leave where we were. The Other Side can be a mystery. We are often led to the other side. No one can predict what will occur on the other side. It may be foreign to us or very familiar. In these moments we are faced with a decision to make. Do I embark on the journey of the unknown or do I stay where I feel safe? The other side was where the disciples who Jesus followers were to go. Perhaps Jesus, himself, was invited to go to the other side. They went as they were. I’m not sure what that meant but it sounds very spontaneous. Something had to be very intriguing for them to want to go to the other side.

Richard Rohr writes, “Mystics have plumbed the depths of suffering and love and emerged with depths of compassion for the world, and a learned capacity to recognize God within themselves, in others, and in all things. If we can read the mystics with an attitude of simple mindfulness, the insights and practices they share can equip us with a deep and embracing peace, even in the presence of the many kinds of limitations and suffering that life offers us. From such contact with the deep rivers of grace, we can live our lives from a

place of nonjudgment, forgiveness, love, and a quiet contentment with the ordinariness of our lives—knowing now that it is not ordinary at all!”

The mystic goes to the other side and leaves ego behind but most importantly, drops title, status and pride in the time of great need. When we leave ego behind we shamelessly reach to touch the cloak of compassion and leave our illusions of pomposity on the shore. Jesus’s followers must have been compelled by Jesus the Mystic. When Jesus healed the blind, they probably saw life differently than those who experienced a lifetime with sight.

When one is invited deep within oneself to go to the other side, it isn’t a journey to an extraordinary life. It is an awakening to the beauty of an ordinary life with extraordinary eyes of body and heart.

The invitation to go to the other side is a call to the thirsty. It is the symbol of a desert experience. We usually travel through the desert to get to the other side. We are guided in the thirsty transitions by the Spirit in the Desert.

Jesus invited others to get in the boat and go to the other side. What awaited Jesus were crowds full of curiosity. Among them were two people that would not let the crowd be an obstacle to their goal. The disciples were the audience, viewing life on the other side of humanity. In this story, the desperate ruler of the synagogue was called away from the shore of self-reliance and social status to openly beg for Jesus’s help. The ego of status was dwarfed by his love for his 12-year-old daughter.

The ailing woman broke free of the physicians’ painful, seemingly futile efforts and reached for the other side. She reached beyond her hopelessness and into the depths of love and compassion. Jesus, embodying God’s compassion, felt the power leave him, and she felt it, too.

The ruler must have faced great opposition in his desire to touch the master, and ask for help. But lowering oneself to the fringes where Jesus is, is where the most power resides. What drives the power of transformation?

Saint Augustine once said, “**The way to Christ** is first through **humility**, **second** through **humility**, and **third** through **humility**.”

I believe there are only two things which will draw us into transformative spiritual growth: desperation, and a personal moment of clarity; an acknowledgement of powerlessness met with humility. These awakenings inspire a choice for humility. It is, I believe, the only thing that will heal our country. Debate leads to demise. Humility leads us to a new way.

For both the woman, and for the ruler of the synagogue, it was desperation that brought them to humility. I suspect this is true for most people, unless they would prefer to die in their pride.

Rohr’s book *Breathing Under Water*, on spirituality and the twelve steps, quotes English poet W.H. Auden as saying, “We would rather be ruined than changed. We would rather die in our dread than climb the cross of the present and let our illusions die.”

What a powerful act of faith to fight through the crowds of onlookers and shamelessly touch the cloak of compassion!

For the humble who are willing to lose face, those willing to distance themselves from the need to be right, the need to be in control and the need to be enough, healing is within reach. The most important healings: intimacy, strength, joy, transformation, and a movement to the other side. The Other Side is where a

community with fellow pilgrims resides. Those who we relegated to another shore due to status, race, physical and mental challenges, immigrant status, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification and politics, etc.

Perhaps we all are suffering from a cultural blood disease that is beyond a physician's, politician's and priest's practice toward the perceived unclean. Perhaps it's those who need to act with humility and reach for the cloak of their fraught condition who are on our shore wielding their power differently than Jesus did... those who cannot feel the gentle tugs on their three-piece suits and Abercrombie jeans. Perhaps it's the politicians, preachers and CEOs ruling from a place of pomposity. Where are those who show humility and a willingness to crawl through the crowds to touch the cloak of compassion? Where are those who have been complicit, or downright obstacles, to those who want to get in the boat and leave their shores of illusions?

Humility guides us to the other side. It moves us to the other side of our perceived realities and numbed psyches.

If we were to travel to the other side, we would find daughters in pain, suffering from "physicians" who abide by the laws toward the designated unclean... those who have no cure and who are emotionally bleeding out... those who wait for someone walking by who has the compassion and authority to meet them on the other side. To feel the pain when humility draws them to reach boldly through the gawking crowds, who are curious, but have no engagement with Spirit.

The one who reaches out to God with awkward and unabashed abandon will experience power that both person and God feel intimately. Jesus says, "My daughter, you are healed." He would usually address those he spoke to, those living in the margins as "Woman," a greeting of respect and honor. He addresses this woman as "daughter"! He met her suffering with the compassion of a father. He embodied the father who in his faith, sought out Jesus to heal his daughter. Maybe we should see each other as the precious sons and daughters of God.

We see many sons and daughters on our life journey who are in pain. Will their cries and protests be debated like a crowd of opinionated onlookers, or will we choose to be touched? Will our attention to the outside world be in tune enough to feel the power leave us, to feel engaged and compassionate? Will we be personal advocates or opinionated obstacles?

What I'm seeing in these stories is the power that awaits on the Other Side. How humility-led engagement with Spirit causes awareness. It's not just to the hurting brothers, sisters, daughters and sons in the world who touch us, it is an amplified awareness of beauty and awe.

Finally, it appears the dips and dives on the journey to deeper listening, more meaningful connections, inner healing and a life of fulfillment, are worth the humility it takes to reach unabashedly for the hem, cloak and fringes of Spirit. Whether guided by desperation or led by a deep desire, the power of humility flows and is felt mutually by us and by God.

**Amen.**

## Opening Songs

### **Be Still**

(The London Fox Taizé Choir)

Be still, know that I am God

### **You, Lord, Are in This Place**

(Keith Duke)

You, Lord, are in 1)...this place. 2)...my heart. 3)...my mind. 4)...my life.  
Your presence fills it. Your presence is peace.

### **Bible Passage**

*(A passage takes us from one place to another)*

### **Touchpoint**

*(Where God's story touches our life story)*

### **In the Arms of God**

(Tony Alonso, Marty Haugen, Michael Joncas)

*Refrain:* Come and rest in the arms of God. Leave your worry and fear.

Make your home in the heart of God. God will dry every tear.

For the burden you carry will fade within God's care. Come and rest in the arms of God.

1) Gentle is God's way and humble is God's heart. God's love will light the way that leads to peace. Surely you shall see God's goodness and God's grace. Rest now in God's embrace.

*Refrain*

2) Do not be afraid. God heals the broken heart. Through grief and disbelief God still remains.

God and God alone will be your soul's true rest. Fall in the arms of God. *Refrain*

3) You are not alone, for God is always near. Come place your doubt and fear within God's care.

God will give you rest, and soothe your weary soul. Dwell in the heart of God. *Refrain*

## The Meal

### **The Lord's Prayer (Our Father)**

(The Scottish Festival Singers)

### **Benediction**

### **Sevenfold Amen**

(The Emmanuel Quartet)