

# Jesus' Tender Mercies

(Matt 9:18-26)

(11/13/10, St Francis)

(Trinity 24)

## Introduction

We are still preparing for Advent, and we shall mention it later.

How many times did the Lord turn down a request for mercy? None. Here we have a request for the healing and then the raising of Jairus' daughter, and when on the way to restore her, a woman touches Jesus with the touch of faith. There is one miracle enclosed within another one, but they demonstrate different aspects of His ministry.

But also we have the teaching of salvation in these miracles, as we shall see, and the teaching that the Lord could not be made unclean, but that He made clean whatever He touched.

You may wonder what is uncleanness. In the Old Testament there were rules for worship and community that reminded the people constantly of their sins. If a woman had an issue of blood, she could not attend worship and was put outside the camp of the Israelites for a season, and the people were not allowed to touch death without being made ceremonially unclean for a period.

But here is Jesus who not only is not made unclean by the woman with the issue of blood but heals her, and is not made unclean by touching the dead daughter but raises her from the dead.

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And through it all is the majesty of the Lord, His grace to meet all needs, and notice that when He was called on, He immediately arose to go meet the need! Here is the Lord of glory who arose to go meet a human needs, but then that is why He came. We are to do the same with one another.

Have you noticed in the Gospels that the Lord is never taken by surprise, never in doubt as to what He should do, never overwhelmed by circumstances, but always meets the needs? He is never in a hurry, and never late. He is always serene, majestic, in control, demonstrating inherent power, radiating power like a large machine, calm in every storm of life.

The request comes, and the Lord is eager to meet the need. As He walks along the path, every footprint in the dusty road is being made by the great I AM, the One who has no beginning—and no end. He has entered time, not as its servant, but as its Lord. Time has no claim on Him, is not His master as it is ours, never causes Him to be in a hurry, never ruins His day as it does ours.

### I. Jesus Heals the Woman's Blood Flow

Picture this woman who had suffered for 12 years (tribes of Israel: 12 years here, Jairus' daughter 12 years old, 12 disciples, 12 apostles, the 12, 12 baskets left over after 5,000) with this blood flow problem, had spent all she had on physicians and was only worse (sounds like today!)! Put yourself in her shoes, and think of the constant public embarrassment of being unclean, of not being able to attend worship, and of some social ostracizing over the years. Can you imagine how frustrated she must have been?

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But Jesus was passing by in the midst of a large crowd, and she thinks that if she can only touch His garment, she'll be healed. This was a superstitious faith, a weak faith, but nevertheless a real faith. Her faith was really in Him, not in His garment, but she knew that He had something no one else did, and thus pushed through the crowd just to touch the hem of His garment.

But why didn't she wait a few hours, seeing that He was on a mission, or did she know? And would the Master stop to help her when He was involved in literally a life and death situation? Did He have time for her also in such a spur of the moment thing? One would have thought that this was the worst time possible for a chronic invalid to want help and for the Lord to take time to help her.

And Luke tells us that when she did touch the garment, the Lord said, "Who touched Me?" And the disciples said, "What are you talking about? See all the people? Everyone is touching you. Come on! What do you mean 'Who touched Me.?' " But the Lord said, "I felt power go out of me."

But this was not a power over which He had no control. We know that He controlled (and controls) all things. The point was that He knew someone was accessing Him by faith, and He was very aware of it, even as He is today!

Moreover, in His mercy He wanted her healing to be public so she would not be considered unclean anymore, so she could worship again and be received into the community again. This is in contrast to the next healing of Jairus' daughter, which He does in secret, even commanding the parents and disciples not to tell anyone!

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How many times did the Lord rebuke a woman in the Gospels? None. His mercies toward ladies is especially noticeable. So here the Lord responds gently, for she was afraid that she had been found out, and said to her: "Be of good cheer, **daughter**, your faith has made you well." Or better, "Your faith has **saved** you," proclaiming her as His now spiritual daughter, which made Him her spiritual father. But also it demonstrated to all concerned that it was not magic that made her well, not His garment, but He did in response to her faith! Indeed, all Christ's healings were done to demonstrate His greater ability to heal the soul! Perhaps she touched Him in secret because she was afraid of making Him unclean, but He made her clean!

We have here a **beautiful picture of salvation**, of a woman who had tried everything natural events would offer, but not only was she not better, she was worse. The best that man can do only makes matters worse. We can never deliver ourselves from our sins, no matter what we try.

Consider the parallel of this with **Martin Luther**, that great reformation scholar and former Roman Catholic priest. As Luther struggled with his sins in that cell in Erfurth, sounds of agony of soul and conflict with sorrow were heard nightly. What tears that monk shed, what prayers he offered, what lacerations of the body he inflicted on himself to chase away its lusts—all to no avail! On many occasion he was found nearly lifeless on the floor, bleeding from his lacerations to himself. But what of his sins? They were as vigorous as ever, and no physician of the soul was able to cure him, though he had spent nearly all he had! But one more physician he had not tried and that was at the eternal city Rome,

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where, amid its sanctities and miracles, he hoped to find the cure for his sins. As he climbed on his knees the wondrous stairs of Santa Scala, he remembered a text: **"The just shall live by faith."** He tells us that in an instant—like this poor woman—He was healed, that his burden of sin fell off, and he went from there rejoicing in Christ Jesus, putting no more confidence in the flesh. So it is the same with us.

Moreover, like this woman, there are many who must **hit bottom** before they can climb up, they must try everything else first, and after many years of finding nothing, then they are candidates to find Christ, the Great Physician. I've seen many people converted only after toiling long at counterfeits, for we are incurably in love with our sins and think that somehow we are different, that we can enjoy our sins with impunity, that there will be no consequences. **And only after years of consequences do we realize that we are incurably sick, and that only One can heal us!**

People will try everything before Christ. They will go to gurus, to psychologists and psychiatrists, though these have their place but not as a substitute for Christ, to false religions of all kinds, medications, will identify with the ungodly and their practices, and so on—anything but Christ!

This is especially true of young people, who have a sense of invulnerability, of immortality, thinking that sin pays good wages, but not the wages of death. And the youth are especially prone to this experiment of life. We must be like this woman, having exhausted all human means and all human hope, **come to the point of despair**, of saying, "If only I can touch His garment, I'll be healed. I don't deserve to talk to Him, to have Him consider my needs personally, but if only

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in some generic, private, secret, indirect way I can have access to Him, that will be enough!"

But then the Lord is so merciful that He will not allow us such luxury, but wants all the world to know that we are His daughters or sons! He does not mind being identified with us! That's what He came for!

Do you have someone you are greatly concerned for? Does it seem impossible for them to be saved? Perhaps they have not hit bottom yet, they have not tried all the world's deceptive cures, and it will only be when they have exhausted themselves in sinning that they will come to the Savior. But even if it is late in life, like the woman here, the Lord will still take them for His own and display them publicly for all to see! Such are the Lord's tender mercies!

There may be much rubbish in the faith of one who comes to Christ, like the woman here and her superstition, but if there is only a gleaming gain of gold in the large lump of faith, Christ will receive that soul with all its rubbish! If there is faith, He'll receive it; if it is weak, He'll strengthen it.

## II. Jesus Raises Jairus' Daughter

The Lord was teaching when a man, a ruler in a synagogue (Luke 8:41), came to Him to ask for help regarding His daughter. At first Jairus says his daughter is near death (Mark), but then she dies.

And this ruler in a synagogue was now exposing himself to scorn, for the Jewish leaders were now openly opposed to Jesus, but think how open his faith is in One whom the Jewish leaders despised. This must have taken great courage to con-

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fess the Lord publicly. So the woman who did not want to confess Him publicly, but feared greatly, was nevertheless publicly acknowledged by the Lord. But the man here who confessed his faith publicly, had a miracle in private with the Lord commanding not to tell anyone!

As He enters the house, the professional mourners are wailing with musical instruments, testifying to the fact of the girl's death. In Israel at that time, burial was very soon after death. But as soon as He sends them out, stating that she is not dead but asleep, they laugh Him to scorn. Those who doubted would not see His glory in this resurrection. He also dismissed them because they are not needed anymore, for joy incarnate has entered the house, and mourning cannot be done in His presence! So He only allows Peter, James, and John to enter, along with the parents. Not only does He speak to her to arise, but He takes her hand, indicating that He is not made unclean.

**Notice that He needs no preparation for this miracle, no time of prayer, no mojo or weirdness to accompany Him as with the occult.**

In the first miracle story, He demonstrates that He can take weak faith and use it. With the daughter, He demonstrates that He can create faith in her, for like Lazarus He raised, she was dead and so had no faith!

Here is a situation that is completely hopeless—death. Remember what a corpse looks and feels like: there is no smile, no laughter, only stillness, clammy, pale, a death-stare. The person cannot even call out for help; there is nothing he/she can do. They are cold to the touch, completely lifeless.

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And when Christ takes her hand, He demonstrates that He is Lord over uncleanness, and when He says to her, "Arise," He demonstrates that He has creative power in His words, for they are spirit and life. Just like in Genesis chapter one where God said, "Let there be . . .," so here He is creator in the flesh! Her eyes open, the light comes back into her soul, her smile is radiant, her body warm, her response vibrant as she is given back to her parents!

This miracle did not need to be made known publicly as it mattered little to the young daughter. Moreover, the friends and relatives would have known clearly anyway, having seen her dead and then alive. The parents would not have been able to contain themselves. Not only was Christ able to heal the woman with an issue of blood, but even worse—the dead! It was appropriate that this miracle came after the other one, or the issue of blood would have been anti-climactic. But now we see that Christ can cure the incurable and even raise the dead!

Likewise, in salvation, the Lord can take those who have worn themselves out in pursuing their sins, have given up all hope, give them instant cure. But even greater, He can take those who cannot hope, being dead in their sins, and give them life and faith!

### Conclusion

How did Jesus reveal God the Father in these two miracles? How does this prepare us for Advent?

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Jesus reveals God the Father only so far as He is true man, one with us. To the extent that He is not one with us, God is not revealed.

- If Christ did not have a human mind, God's mind is not revealed to us.
- If Christ did not have a human soul, God's love and passion is not one with us.
- If Christ did not have a human body, our bodies are meaningless and our suffering is meaningless.
- If Christ's humanity was not one with us at every point (except sin), at that point we do not know God, and He has deceived us.

We know God through the humanity of Jesus, and if that humanity was not real, God has deceived us.

In the Virgin Birth, Christ adopted our humanity from Mary to be one with us. His humanity was not created *ex nihilo* but *ex Maria* to be one with us; otherwise, He could not redeem us or reveal God to us.

In these two miracles, He reveals the mind of God to us by His human responses in verbal forms, saying how much He loves us. Moreover, in healing the woman with the issue of blood and in raising the dead girl, He identified with our bodies and soul's suffering, thus demonstrating God's compassion to us. He felt the pain and relieved it. If Christ were not fully God, He could not relieve the pain. If He were not fully man, He could not identify with us, understanding our suffering, identifying with it. If He were not one person, He

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could not bring the suffering and the cure together in one person who could understand and grant victory.

He would not deliver Himself, but gave Himself for us:

looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:2).

Did ever a man speak like Christ? Did ever a man act like Jesus? Did ever a man perform such miracles as He did? Yet all this was in preparation for His bride, the Church, even us, and He endured the Cross for His love for us, that He might make us His own. And consider what He did for each of these people, the woman and Jairus, and how sweet His presence was (and is!). To the woman, He was the public savior who gladly took her for His own, an outcast, one without hope, destitute, having spent all she had. Then she came to Jesus with just the thought of touching His garment, and the Lord not only healed her body but also the soul! Just His presence, just His touch and that indirectly, was all she asked, and He gladly gave it—and more! How can we not have our needs met with such a savior!

And with Jairus and his daughter, the Lord's presence was all that was needed in his home to raise his daughter from the dead. He spoke, and death fled. He touched the daughter, and she arose. Divine presence in human flesh! Nothing could stand in His way—nothing!

This same I AM who walked the dusty roads of Israel is also with us as He promised: "I will never leave you nor for-

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sake you" (Matt 28:18-20). His presence is enough for us to handle all the He brings into our lives.

So today we get so caught up in the details of life that we often forget about Him, thinking that He has forgotten us, that we need to fret over what will happen tomorrow, over the future, especially over our incomes and careers, our relatives, but He is already there. His presence is already there! And He is with us all the time.

Finally, do not be afraid to ask for the impossible, for our lack is His abundance and our opportunity is His omnipotence. **AMEN.**