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SCRIPTURE

Mark 5:21-43

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

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. 25 Now 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 she was no better, but rather grew worse. 27 She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." 29 Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. 30 Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" 31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" 32 He looked all around to see who had done it. 33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. 34 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, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" 36 But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." 37 He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. 38 When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. 39 When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." 40 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. 41 He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" 42 And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement.

DEVOTIONAL

Kathryn Ophardt, MDiv Student

“Do not fear, only believe.” This is such a bold commandment. I find myself often overcome by fear: fear of instability, fear of uncertainty, fear that what hurts us will be with us for the rest of our lives, or fear that what we have today may not be there tomorrow. There are fears of individual concerns like the failing health of a loved one. There are fears of the health of the world, plagued by war, injustice, and abuse of nature. Yet, Jesus calls us to have faith rather than fear.

Jesus encounters several suffering people in this passage: the woman who suffered hemorrhages for 12 years, and the parents of a child whom they thought to be dead. Jesus healed them all, not just of their physical afflictions, but also of their fear. It is easy to focus on the healing in this story, but these are also stories of damage already done. The woman had already suffered for more than a decade, and the child was already thought to be dead. These are not stories of how having faith protects us from suffering. Rather, they are stories of how having faith liberates us from the fear that things will never get better.

Since reading this passage, Jesus’ words, “Do not fear, only believe,” have echoed in my ears. I pray that they echo in yours today, begging you to name not just your fear, but to also name your faith. How might God be inviting you to let go of a fear and to hold fast to faith today?

PRAYER

God, you are so bold. Help me to live with boldness today, to embrace the faith that you have given me and to let go of the fear that afflicts me. Amen.

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