

## **Gravity: Grace as Fear: Faith**

**Let us Pray:** May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be for your glory, O Lord, my Savior and Redeemer. **Amen**

The past two Sundays Jesus has told us what the kingdom of God will be like. He has rebuked the wind, stopping it's blowing and calmed the sea with just the sound of his voice. Jesus said to the disciples, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?". The disciples still did not understand who he was.

Fast forward to our Gospel, Jesus and the disciples have arrived back on the side of the sea where primarily believers of Judaism lived. He is surrounded by crowds of people who have heard of his miracles and hope that he will be able to performs miracle for them.

A rich synagogue leader, Jairus, came before Jesus. He fell at his feet and begged him to come and heal his 12 year old daughter, who was close to death. As Jesus went with him, the crowd pressed in slowing their progress.

In this crowd was a woman who had been hemorrhaging for 12 years. She fought her way through the people, with the hope that if she could touch the hem of his robe she would be healed. She knew that she was taking her life in her hands. She was considered an outcast, unclean of society. She reached out.....touched his robe.....was healed.

As this unknown woman touched his robe Jesus felt the power leave him. Looking around he asked, "Who touched my clothes?" Knowing she was healed she came forward. This unnamed woman was afraid, but told him the whole story of her 12 years of isolation. He said," Daughter, your faith has made you well, go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

As this transpired, Jairus received news that his daughter had died. They told him not to trouble Jesus further. Hearing this Jesus said to Jairus, " Do not fear, only believe." Jesus followed Jairus to his home and He sent everyone else away except Jairus and his wife. Taking the daughters hand he said,"Little girl, get up!" She got up, no longer dead, but alive, and her parents were amazed.

This gospel of Mark today is a story intertwined in story. It teaches us that Jesus meets the needs of suffering people regardless of what society believes. That was hard to do in His time and it is equally hard in ours. We are constrained by gravity and fear, but as people who profess to be Christians we should be freed by grace and faith.

In these two stories Jesus shows us how to give God's grace unconditionally here on earth so that Faith in God can grow. I wonder about the two characters in our story today, did the grace of their healing bring them to a relationship with God?

Jairus and his daughter were tied to this earth by the gravity of status, friends, wealth, power, position in the church and town. As a leader in the synagogue did Jairus tell everyone what miracle this man from Galilee did for his family? The unnamed woman had nothing but, was now freed by this grace to start living a new life and hopefully show grace and hope to others. Did she listen and follow Jesus? She had room in her life to let grace enter, without fear, so that faith could grow. Did these things happen? We do not know.

We do know what is happening today. Read Facebook, Listen to the news. As I look at our empty churches today and listen to people call those of us who attend church hypocrites, I wonder how can we change it? Fear is being promoted by people of the church instead of faith, and love. Fear of people who are not their ethnicity, who do not hold their same opinions, who do not have their same social status, are not married to or love the same gendered person. Fear of women who have had abortions or who have had in vitro-fertilization. The evangelical church seems to be taking on all these subjects that are tied to the law of our world. Filling up their cracks and leaving no room for grace and faith. We who are saints and sinners have brought judgment of others into our churches and into our families instead of offering grace and the promise of God's love and forgiveness that is renewed every day.

I know as a teacher that children in my classes were afraid of being judged by their peers, or their parents, teachers, and churches. Sometimes they would come to my office for a safe place to work out situations, to have a class where they would not be judged. Yes no matter what they received a listening ear, forgiveness if it was needed, help and love. That is what everyone needs.

Jesus offered unconditional love. When asked what the greatest commandment is, he responded, " You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." and a second like it: " You shall love your neighbor as yourself." He did not say just those people that you are like and that look like you and have your same political beliefs.

I learned a long time ago that I am a sinner. Thankfully, I also learned that I am also a saint. More sinner than saint I am sure. I ask forgiveness of God every night for those sins that I have committed during my day. Those sins that I know about and those that he knows I committed and that I don't know that I did. I do this so that there is still room in my heart for God's grace to enter in. So that I can pass that grace on to others in my love and belief in Jesus Christ. I know that he has proven his love for me in so many ways. So who am I, and who are you, or who are we as a church not to offer forgiveness everyday to others?

Do you remember in the old days when we all had to dress up to go to church . We had to sit and behave . If we didn't the mean lady would glare at us? Mom would get embarrassed and we would get in **trouble**. Well I think that Jesus was really glad that that we were there with all our imperfections. I think he preferred us with our imperfections because we were open to receive his grace and we were not weighed down by the gravity of the world.

As true saints we should never lose sight of our sinfulness. We need to accept that others are also saints and sinners too. We are all tied to God by our Baptism and we are his children. Precious in his sight. He does not want to loose a single one of us. So think of sinning this way. When we sin we cut the string that ties us to God. God then ties that string back up again with a knot, shortening the string and drawing us closer to him. He is a forgiving, loving Father.

Our stories are connected just like the two women in the Gospel today, and yet all our stories are different. We all need to exist on this earth, held here by gravity. We should not let the laws and needs of the earth separate us with fear. As members of the church we should show others Grace and look at the each other, Saints and Sinners through glasses tinted with grace. Putting our best foot forward with Gods faith in us to show all his children Love.

May we like Jesus, retie those strings and draw each other closer. Amen

