



**Reflections & Prayers for Sunday
27 June 2021
The Fourth Sunday after Trinity**



www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Contents

Reading for this Sunday	p. 2-3
Reflection	p. 3-5
Prayers	p. 5-6
Parish Prayers	p. 7
Church Opening times	p. 8

Readings for this Sunday

You may want to find your Bible and read the lessons set for this week:

Lamentations 3: 22-33

Psalm 30

2 Corinthians 8: 7-end

Mark 5: 21-end

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered round him; and he was by the lake. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet 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.' So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, 'If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.' Immediately her haemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' And his disciples said to him, 'You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, "Who touched me?"' He looked all round to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.'

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?' But overhearing what they said,

Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, 'Do not fear, only believe.' He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, 'Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.' 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. He took her by the hand and said to her, 'Talitha cum', which means, 'Little girl, get up!' And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Reflection from Anne Edwards

We all make choices. Choices mean consequences. Sometimes those choices are very simple – sometimes life-changing. Some choices are crucial: saying 'yes' when we hear God calling. In Mark's gospel we read of two people who made life-changing choices. They turned to Jesus.

I suspect we all know these two stories in this chapter 5 of Mark's gospel. So I want you to take time to read them again, and ask yourself this question: "What have I never noticed before?" And then put yourself into the shoes, first of Jairus and then the woman, and try to feel what they might be feeling as they summon up their courage to approach Jesus.

(Take a break from reading this whilst your thoughts expose their feelings, and only return to this text when you're ready. Of course, this is not something we'd be doing sitting in church listening to the sermon – so take your time: five minutes, half-an-hour, half a day if necessary! And then, only then return to the writing below.)

Where is Jesus? He's "by the sea" with a "great crowd" gathered around him. How do you think he's feeling? I don't suppose we often think about how he feels, except perhaps when he was in the Garden of Gethsemane, on the cross, and even back to new life after the resurrection.

Who is Jairus? He is one of the "leaders of the synagogue". He is a person of considerable importance – one of the most important and respected men in the community, and no one would have expected such a man to go to Jesus, let alone fall at his feet. Jairus no longer cares about what others may think – he is desperate to see his daughter kept alive, healed by this man Jesus about whom so many are talking.

And then, as Jesus and the crowd begin to make their way to Jairus' house, an interruption! The crowd has no idea why Jesus stops suddenly! "Who touched my clothes?"

Who is this woman? She is a woman with no name, a woman who's spent all her money on doctors trying to find a cure, a woman of no importance in the community. In fact no one would have gone anywhere near her. Her condition, in their eyes, would make them unclean, and they would have to go through the whole rigmarole of cleansing themselves if they'd been touched by her. (See Leviticus 15: 25-30)

We've experienced lockdown during these days of Covid-19, and found it hard in many different ways. She'd been in lockdown for 12 years. What were you doing 12 years ago? I'd been living in Harpenden for about 18 months!

She is desperate – she emerges from her isolation and joins the crowd. There are so many of them they don't recognise her. Their eyes are on Jairus and Jesus. She just wants to touch his clothes and then run away back to where she feels safe, in the hope that something will happen.

Can you imagine her shock, her surprise? Is she imagining this feeling of change?

There are two "immediately" here in the story – for the woman her "haemorrhage stopped"; and for Jesus he was aware "that power had gone forth from him".

As I read this again, I don't think it had ever struck me how much it cost Jesus to perform these miracles – no wonder he used to spend nights in prayer (conversation) with his Father.

Now she comes forward "in fear and trembling and fell down before him", and pours out her whole story. What will Jesus say or do? The relief she must have felt as she hears his words: "Daughter (he gives her status), your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease." Her lockdown is over – she is released back into her community to reclaim her life. We know no more of her, but if we look at the story of the woman at the well in Samaria (John 4:7-26) we can perhaps picture her rejoicing! This woman's faith, almost certainly mingled with doubt, gave her the courage to turn to Jesus. It's important to recognise that faith does not mean certainty!

But what of Jairus? How would he be feeling whilst all this was going on? He must be in an agony of impatience. He knows every second counts. Has this insignificant woman cost him his daughter's life? Then he gets the news he dreads most: his daughter has died! I

can see him sagging to the ground, having to be held up by his friends, who tell him there's no point in troubling the teacher.

Jesus reassures him: "Do not fear, only believe." I wonder what was going through his mind whilst he and Jesus, followed by the crowd, make their way to Jairus' house. I suspect he had little idea what was going on. Can you imagine it? They make their way to where the child was laid out. Then those gentle words of Jesus: "Talitha cum" (little girl, get up!) This is one of few occasions when the Bible translators quote Jesus speaking in Aramaic.

This passage is a story of contrasts: the despair of the mourners and the hope of Jesus; the unrestrained distress of the mourners and the calm serenity of Jesus.

In this story Jesus is reassuring Jairus and us: Don't be afraid, he says. God's love is not that small. There is enough for the woman and your daughter. There is enough for all.

Both stories came about because Jairus and the woman turned to Jesus and reached out: one with words, the other stretching out with her hand.

I don't know where you are now after you've spent time with these two stories, these two people who found themselves passing through time from then to now, but I hope that you will remember there is enough of God's love for all, and no matter what your situation reach out to Jesus like they did.

Prayers

The Collect for the fourth Sunday after Trinity

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy;
increase and multiply upon us your mercy;
that with you as our ruler and guide
we may so pass through things temporal
that we lose not our hold on things eternal;
grant this heavenly Father,
for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Eternal God,
we adore you for your incredible, life-changing love.
A woman in the crowd is called daughter.
Parents given back their beloved child.
You care enough to heal those considered unclean.
You care enough to ensure a fragile child is fed.
You are mighty in power and yet so gentle.
God our creator, our redeemer and our comforter,
we adore you,
and we raise our hands in praise singing,
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Amen.

Lord Jesus,
you restored the woman with haemorrhages to her community
and the stricken child to her parents.
We thank you for restoring our relationship
with you and one another
through your forgiveness and grace.
As we step out in thankfulness,
may we also reach out across barriers
to give and receive,
to restore and to heal in your name. Amen.

Lord Jesus,
we give you thanks, Lord,
that your healing ministry transcended cultural and social barriers.
We pray for a cleansing of all prejudice,
and for those whose illness or situation distances them from others.
We pray especially for the mentally ill, the homeless,
for refugees and all on the fringes of society.
May they, and all creation, know your healing and accepting love,
and may we all reach out where we can,
in your name. Amen.

Generous God,
thank you for speaking to us.
Help us to reach out for your love,
and to share that love with others. Amen.

Parish Prayers for the week ahead

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer:

Sunday	The Church of Pakistan (United)
Monday	The Diocese of Cochin – The (united) Church of South India
Tuesday	The Diocese of Coimbatore – The (united) Church of South India
Wednesday	The Diocese of Colombia – The Episcopal Church
Thursday	The Diocese of Colombo – Extra Provincial to the Archbishop of Canterbury
Friday	The Diocese of Colorado – The Episcopal Church
Saturday	The Diocese of Connecticut – The Episcopal Church

In our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:

Sunday	Parish of Stanbridge (Deanery of Dunstable)
Monday	Parish of Studham (Deanery of Dunstable)
Tuesday	Parish of Tilsworth (Deanery of Dunstable)
Wednesday	Parish of Toddington (Deanery of Dunstable)
Thursday	Workplace Ministry Chaplains
Friday	Parish of Totternhoe (Deanery of Dunstable)
Saturday	Parish of Whipsnade (Deanery of Dunstable)

For the homes and families in:

Sunday	Wensley Close, West Common
Monday	West Common Close, West Common Grove
Tuesday	West Common Way, Westminster Court
Wednesday	Wheatfield Avenue, Wheatfield Road
Thursday	Wheathampstead Road, Willow Court
Friday	Acacia Walk, Aldwick Road
Saturday	Alzey Gardens, Aran Close

The Sick:

Claire, Sue, Christine, Hermione, Karen, Chris and all whose names are entered on our St Luke's Cell Prayer List.

On their year's mind:

Derek Burton, George Palmer, John Russell, Margaret Munt, Margaret Sanders, Edward Rigby, David Morley, Angela Best, Patricia Angus, Richard Hoare.

Church Opening times

Other services / in Church congregation

- Evening Prayer on Wednesdays at 5.00pm
- Sunday 9.30am Parish Eucharist
- Short family service on Sunday 18 July at 4.00pm

Private Prayer

- Saturday opening (in addition to Sunday), 11.00am – 4.00pm

Church at home:

We are delighted to produce each week these printed papers. If you would prefer not to receive these papers each week, please let Julie in the parish office know. If you are aware of others in the parish who would also value the opportunity to worship at home in this way, do please contact a member of the Ministry team or Julie (Parish Office Tel: 01582 712776).

A reminder... of this phone service:

Daily Hope – dial 0800 804 8044 for prayer, reflection, music and worship services from the Church of England. A weekly service is available from 9 am every Sunday.