

East Durham Methodist Circuit:
On-line Service for 27th June 2021

Prepared by Rev Alf Waite and Bill Naylor
Reader (Video): Jim Murray

Theme: Close Encounters

Call to worship:

Good morning to everyone who might tune into our video or participate in worship via this written service.

Today we will be looking at the heart-warming stories of how the power of Jesus healed a sick woman and a fatally ill child as told in Mark 5: 21 - 43.

Lord Jesus, our hope and strength, may our minds be opened to what we hear, experience and encounter together today. **Amen**

A breathing prayer:

Dear Lord, whoever we are and wherever we might be we come to You in worship.

As we bow our heads, help us to clear our thoughts of every distraction, thinking only of You...

Pause for a few moments in silence, whilst thinking the name 'Jesus'.

Hymn: **Jesus shall take the highest Honour Chris Bowater **StF 356****

Jesus shall take the highest honour
Jesus shall take the highest praise
Let all earth join heaven in exalting
The Name which is above all other Names
Let's bow the knee in humble adoration
For at His Name every knee must bow
Let every tongue confess He is Christ God's only Son
Sovereign Lord, we give You glory now

**For all honour and blessing and power
Belongs to You, belongs to You
All honour and blessing and power
Belongs to You, belongs to You
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God Repeat from the beginning...**

Prayers of praise, thanksgiving, adoration and confession: adapted from 'Roots'

Eternal God, our creator, redeemer and comforter, we adore you for your incredible, life-changing love. A woman in the crowd, considered unclean, is called daughter. Parents are given back their beloved child.

You are mighty in power and yet so gentle. We adore you, and we raise our hands in praise.

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.

God of the streets and crowds of the world, we come to you in sorrow and shame for the times we have allowed prejudice to distance us from those you would have us draw close to.

Raise us up to love and serve you.

We bring to you the times when we have been too proud to ask for help forsaken prayer and been too distracted to help others.

Raise us up to love and serve you.

We acknowledge the times we have been quick to judge those we don't easily identify with and ignored those whose plight we have not taken to heart.

Raise us up to love and serve you.

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 with 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.

We ask these prayers in the name of Jesus who taught us to say:

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done - on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory,
For ever and ever.**

Amen

Reading: Psalm 30 A song for the dedication of the temple New International Version

¹ I will exalt you, Lord, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me. ² Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me.

³ You, Lord, brought me up from the realm of the dead; you spared me from going down to the pit.

⁴ Sing the praises of the Lord, you his faithful people; praise his holy name.

⁵ For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favour lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night but rejoicing comes in the morning.

⁶ When I felt secure, I said, "I will never be shaken."

⁷ Lord, when you favoured me, you made my royal mountain stand firm; but when you hid your face, I was dismayed.

⁸ To you, Lord, I called; to the Lord I cried for mercy: ⁹ “What is gained if I am silenced, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness?”

¹⁰ Hear, Lord, and be merciful to me; Lord, be my help.”

¹¹ You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, ¹² that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent. Lord my God, I will praise you forever.

Hymn: **Teach me to Dance** Graham Kendrick and Steve Thompson **StF 477**

Teach me to dance to the beat of Your heart
Teach me to move in the power of Your Spirit
Teach me to walk in the light of Your presence
Teach me to dance to the beat of Your heart

Teach me to love with Your heart of compassion
Teach me to trust in the word of Your promise
Teach me to hope in the day of Your coming
Teach me to dance to the beat of Your heart

1. You wrote the rhythm of life
Created heaven and earth
In You is joy without measure
So, like a child in Your sight
I dance to see Your delight
For I was made for Your pleasure...
pleasure

2. Let all my movements express
A heart that loves to say 'yes'
A will that leaps to obey You
Let all my energy blaze
To see the joy in Your face
Let my whole being praise You... praise
you

Teach me to...

Teach me to...

Reading: **Mark 5 vs 21 - 43** New International Version

Jesus Heals a Sick Woman and Raises a Dead Girl

²¹ When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” ²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ²⁵ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶ She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” ²⁹ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

³⁰ At once Jesus realised that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

³¹ “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ”

³² But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?"

³⁶ Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." ⁴⁰ But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!").⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this and told them to give her something to eat.

Meditation:

What do you think?

Bill Naylor

I've always loved this passage from Mark's gospel. It demonstrates the character and love of Jesus so well, the tenderness of Almighty God towards both a sick woman, fragile, frightened, quite possibly rejected by society and a young child on the edge of life. Neither had status or significant value in the eyes of the world at that time. How much has that changed today? As they used to say in the Exam Hall at school - "Discuss"!

But it's the crowd I want to talk about. You and me, in case you're wondering! Were they (and are we) an essential and positive force, or were they (and are we) a negative - an incumbrance? Or were they (and are we) just 'there' - part of the scenery and passive? Or maybe it's all three? What do you think?

Did the crowd carry Jesus forward, clearing any obstacles in His way as He followed Jairus to his house, or were they getting in the way, constantly causing Jesus to stop, like a crowd of paparazzi photographers and journos, jostling Him, getting in the way, shouting out to get His attention. Either way, you can bet they'd have been noisy! "C'mon Feel the noize..." (that's a Slade song - well I am a child of the 70s!) it might help you make your own mind up on this one.

But then, if they hadn't been there, the woman would have had no chance of approaching Jesus. Cloak pulled around her, headscarf partially covering her face, effectively disguised, the crowd was her cover, hiding her in plain sight. They positively **enabled** her encounter with Jesus, without them it just wouldn't have happened. Maybe someone recognised her and helped her forward. I'd like to think so, but I don't know... Definitely a positive though!

Now let's think of the crowd in the passive sense. Jesus always attracted crowds. After feeding the 5,000, He'd had to escape to pray. So there was always a crowd - it was just the norm. He was **the** pop star of His day. It's why the religious police had to get rid of Him. The woman would have known there'd be a crowd and Jairus wouldn't have

expected there not to be one. So was the crowd a good thing or a bad thing? Important or unimportant? Or was it just part of the scenery?

Or maybe it is all three! Good people and not so good people, some sincere some just voyeurs, the 'ooh aah' crowd.

What do **you** think?

And as part of the crowd today, how do you 'encounter' Jesus and 'influence' others to follow Him to Jairus' house?

Hymn: **Seek ye first the Kingdom of God** Karen Lafferty **StF 254 / H&P 138**

1. Seek ye first the kingdom of God
And His righteousness
And all these things shall be added unto
you Allelu, alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia
Allelu, alleluia

2. Man does not live by bread alone
But by every word
That proceeds from the mouth of God
Allelu, alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia
Allelu, alleluia

3. Ask and it shall be given unto you
Seek and ye shall find
Knock and the door shall be opened
unto you Allelu, alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia
Allelu, alleluia

4. Seek ye first the kingdom of God
And His righteousness
And all these things shall be added unto
you Allelu, alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia
Allelu, alleluia

Message: *Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed.*

What did you make of the crowd in Bill's meditation? How would you answer his questions?

It made me think about church, the gathered people of God for worship or fellowship. In the Methodist Church we are highlighting the 'Methodist Way of Life' which is a commitment to Worship, Learning and Caring, Service and Evangelism and as church we are to encourage one another in these areas of the Christian faith. The Christian faith is not a solitary experience, we work it out in community. The saying goes, "You don't have to go to church to be a Christian." True but not true but also a selfish comment. I say that knowing full well that there are those who don't attend church because they have been hurt.

You could say in our story the crowd was there for themselves. They wanted something from Jesus, or they wanted to know more about what He was saying. They wanted a Messiah to rescue them from the Romans and maybe this was the one.

Two people were freed from their desperation. Jairus from losing his daughter and an unnamed woman from shame and embarrassment. Both found healing but not without cost. Capernaum was just a small town in the time of Jesus just a couple of hundred people. So, for someone as well known and important as Jairus to come to this revolutionary was a risk of reputation locally and could have endangered the whole town if the Romans thought they were conspiring insurrection. For the woman it would be the fear of being seen, recognised because her story would be known in the town.

The healings in the Gospels, as the teachings of Jesus, are signposts to the kingdom of God. It would be easy to see them as the outcome or destination of faith. That is what Faith Healing is about, but Christian healing is about signposting to that new heaven and new earth promised in the end times. A foretaste of what is yet to come. Revelation 21 there will be no more death, or mourning or crying, or pain for the old things have passed away. Sickness and death threaten God's wonderful creation and Jesus is ushering in a new era. His life was heading to the cross where good and evil will meet in a decisive battle and good will win. Did win, because we know the ending in the resurrection of Jesus. If the crowd had not been there, we would not have been signposted to the truth. The true meaning and realisation of what Jesus came to do. To usher in the Kingdom of God where we can fully know how much we are loved, valued and precious in this life.

In the church we will find many reasons to be a part of it. You may remember the days of the Crusades like the Billy Graham Crusades or large rallies with visiting speakers. They made it easier for people to find faith. Some may have just been caught up in the moment but for some they came to the point of commitment because the Spirit of God has moved them to accept the truth of His love for them. You may have come to faith that way. These days most of the people who come to church want to be there. There is some measure of faith but as numbers in the church dwindle it is harder to be anonymous, to just slip in and find faith.

We are seeing in these two incidents, raising of Jairus' daughter and the healing of the sick woman, the exercising of faith and the cost of that. That faith may have come out of necessity or desperation and we do not know the long-term outcomes, but we can see the benefits of it. Jairus had his beloved daughter rescued from death and the sick woman was released from a lifetime of suffering and loneliness.

Why are you here? Why have you joined this service? Is it because of faith or to find faith? Wesley was told to preach faith till he had faith and then preach faith. True faith is a risk but one worth taking. Donald English in his commentary on Mark's Gospel says that "True faith is self-risking trust in Jesus." I think that is the best definition I have ever heard of faith. It highlights a serious personal continuing commitment in Jesus, not to a building or even an ideology but to a person who is the Second Person of the Trinity. Our saviour, redeemer healer and friend. We never know where that will take us. I can say with real assurance it will bring tremendous blessings but very real challenges and choices. Do you think I would be doing this if it were not for Jesus? Just as we see Jesus willing to give Himself for us, sacrificially, so we need to be willing to give ourselves for Him and for others that they may know the full measure of God's love. Then as we exercise faith, we too can hear those words: ***"Daughter (Son), your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed. Amen.***

Prayers of Intercession:

Take your time as you pray these prayers, bringing to mind people, places and circumstances. Let us pray:

Living, loving God, thank you for the world around us and the privilege of bringing our prayers to you for your world. We ask that you give us wisdom to be faithful stewards of your creation.

We pray that you will keep us mindful of those who live around us. That we might see each as made in your image and dearly loved by you. Be with those who are sick or sad, worried about anything, that you would increase their faith and that they might

receive from you the richest of blessings. For those who are nearing death that they will see you journeying with them.

We pray for the young as they grow and develop over the summer, that they would give a thought for you. We pray for those having to make life changing decisions that they might go forward with faith.

We pray for nations suffering from conflicts: for a cease of the on-going, seemingly endless violence in all its forms. Guide the leaders of the nations to govern fairly and graciously. Desiring the best for all under their care. We pray for our own country, as we move forward in the easing of restrictions, for wisdom and a caring heart.

We pray for the poor. We pray for the homeless. We pray for those who are newly arrived on these shores. May we with generous hearts minister to those in need, sharing our time, talents and treasures.

We pray for your church, that it will live and be governed by faithful people, faithful to your word and in worship of you. Give to your church a caring heart and release to it the gifts and resources it needs in this present age. We pray for the Methodist Church as Conference meets this week. For those being ordained into Ministry, that they feel you commissioning them and experience a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit for service.

We pray for those who we are particularly close to that you would watch over them and keep them safe. And for ourselves that you would give to us the gift of faith that can move mountains.

In the name of Jesus we pray.

Amen

Hymn: O Thou who camest from above Charles Wesley **StF 564 / H&P 745**

1. O thou who camest from above
the fire celestial to impart,
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart.

3. Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work and speak and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire
and still stir up the gift in me.

2. There let it for thy glory burn
with inextinguishable blaze,
and trembling to its source return
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

4. Still let me prove thy perfect will,
my acts of faith and love repeat,
till death thy endless mercies seal,
and make the sacrifice complete.

Blessing:

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore.