**Sermon Jesus Healing**

 **Part of this reading was for many years left out of today’s lectionary offering. I can only surmise the nice people putting the Lectionary together thought it wasn’t appropriate to be read out loud in our churches. Then more recently, another group of nice people working on the Lectionary readings decided this portion of today’s reading should be included. I’m grateful this decision was made. Leaving out one whole section of the Lectionary cuts out a story concerning a sick woman seeking healing from Jesus. The woman’s story offers much for us to explore.**

 **Jesus had just crossed the sea again and when he stepped out of the boat found himself surrounded by a crowd of people. As he walked along, a woman reached out and touched his clothes. She said to herself, “If I but touch his clothes I will be made well.” The first thing I noticed in this story is the woman’s faith. Her absolute belief Jesus could make her well just if she touched his clothes. I’ve thought about her deep faith and wondered how any of us could arrive at such a strong faith. I’ve reached out in the middle of the night saying to Jesus, “I know you can heal me, even if I just imagine touching your clothes, if I have enough faith.”**

**The woman in this story was healed physically, which is a marvelous gift for anyone who experiences physical difficulties. Yet my sense of healing runs in many different directions. Of course, I would love to be healed physically, right now in this very moment. Yet usually healing doesn’t happen for many of us in an instant. Physical healing can be a slow and arduous process, taking time and work on our parts to bring back all our physical capacity.**

**Healing has other meanings for me. The strength to ask Jesus for healing, and the will to do the necessary work to regain physical health. Sometimes we may never regain physical health, and physical death looms for all for us at one time or another. Yet illness can bring the quiet time necessary to understand the depth of what healing may mean to each of us. It may mean walking in the knowledge Jesus is always with us. It may mean becoming centered enough in ourselves to hear the words of comfort Jesus always offers us. I have a deep sense of what the Navajo people believe concerning healing. For them healing occurs when our soul is healed. Then our body may die tomorrow, but we are healed if our soul is in balanced and at peace.**

**The woman in this story has a lot to teach us not only concerning deep faith. She also can teach us the importance of humility and bravery. As she reached out and touched Jesus’ clothes, he immediately said to his disciples, “Who touched me?” His disciples answered him, how can we know, there are so many people pressing in on you. The sick woman who touched his clothes could have simply walked away and disappeared into the crowd. Yet in fear she approached Jesus. Even though she was experiencing the kind of fear when someone is so afraid they are trembling. This deep-seeded fear is hard to overcome. Yet the sick woman did overcome it and told Jesus her truth.**

 **It took a great deal of bravery and humility for the woman to fall down before Jesus. She had to be brave and humble because she didn’t know Jesus. She had only heard of his healing powers. He could have been angry, but Jesus was not angry with her. He knew the intent of people’s hearts, and he was only ever angry with hypocrites. He knew the intent of this woman’s heart and he knew she was honest and needed his help. He said to her, “Daughter your faith has made you well, go in peace, and be healed of your distress.” What a remarkable savior we have. He heals people who others would ignore. How wonderful it is to know the depth of his love.**

**The story of the woman who needed healing is the part of the reading left out for many years of our Lectionary. Here is the part left for us to hear through years without hearing the woman’s story who sought healing from Jesus. A man named Jairus fell at the feet of Jesus asking him to come and heal his little daughter. But according to some people in the crowd, Jairus’ daughter was already dead. Jesus said to these nay sayers, “The child is not dead, but only sleeping.” He then healed the child, by saying,” Little girl, get up.”**

**Do you remember the story of Nicodemus and how different Jesus treated him than the two people in today’s Lectionary reading? Nicodemus snuck off to see Jesus in the cover of a dark night.**  **He was a powerful Pharisee, who wasn’t supposed to mix with the motley lot that followed Jesus. Jesus could see the nefarious reason Nicodemus had come to see him. He realized this man was only a curiosity seeker. Jesus never gave any answer to Nicodemus he could understand. Unlike Nicodemus, Jesus saw into the heart of the woman who needed healing and Jairus’ heart who feared for his little daughter’s life. Jesus helped these two without question.**

**We always need be honest with Jesus. We can’t bargain with him, plead with Jesus, get mad with Jesus for not healing us in the time we have allowed for our healing, for what we want. We can’t say something like, “If you heal me, I will devote my whole life to you.” The only way to pray to Jesus is with an open herat and faith. I remember part of a movie because it’s such a good example of bargaining with Jesus. In the movie a man was drowning, he called out to Jesus and said, “I’ll devote my whole life to you if you save me.” Halfway to the shore he said, “I’ll devote half my time to you if you save me.” When he reached the shore, he didn’t even say thank you to Jesus. He just walked away and continued to live his life as he always had.**

**Today we’ve heard the story of two people who had open hearts and faith and truly desired Jesus’ healing power. One because she had been sick for an exceptionally long time. The other for his little daughter. Yet we can’t pray to Jesus simply for what we want or think we need. We pray to Jesus because we love him and find peace through our prayers. If we’re healed or receive what we’re asking for, doesn’t change the truth we pray to Jesus because we love him and we know he loves us. Amen**