

## Salvation in the Presence of God

Mark 5:21-43

The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, June 28, 2015

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

I really dislike disputing translations. I really do. I fear that if I correct this translation or that translation, you dear laypeople will begin to doubt your Bibles. I want you to read your Bibles and so I do not want you to doubt them. And I suppose that what I am about to point out to you is translated the way that it is so that you do not misunderstand what it means, but I think by doing so we wind up misunderstanding what it means.

What I am talking about is this: when Jairus goes up to our Lord and asks Him to lay His hands on his little girl so that she may be made well and live what Mark records Jairus saying is that he wants Jesus to lay His hands on Jairus' daughter so that she may be saved. What Jairus wants for his daughter is salvation. He is just like Lucas and Rosie this morning. What they want for their daughter is salvation. What Jairus wanted for his daughter was salvation. He wanted Jesus to come and save his daughter from death.

The woman who was subject to bleeding for twelve years, she also wants salvation. When she is thinking to herself about what she is about to do, she says to herself, "If only I touch His garments, I will be saved." What the woman wants is salvation. The translation says that she wants to be made well and that is true. But if the woman subject to bleeding for twelve years is made whole then she is saved. She is saved from her illness which is nothing other than a prelude to her death anyway. She had been to see many doctors. She had spent all her money on them. They did not make her better. They did not save her. Eventually she is going to get worse and worse until death.

Jairus wants salvation for his little girl. The woman wants salvation for herself. They both want this salvation from Jesus. Jesus grants it to them both.

That explains why our Lord behaves the way that He does.

Jairus comes up to our Lord and tells Him that his little girl is at the point of death. Jesus doesn't even need His divine powers to know that the little girl is at the point of death. Jairus has told him. Out of compassion for Jairus and seeing his faith our Lord starts making His way to Jairus' home.

Then the woman subject to bleeding for twelve years touches Jesus' garments. Power goes out from Him and heals her. Jesus can feel when power goes out from Him and so He stops in the crowd and asks, "Who touched me?"

I agree with the disciples. With all these people pressing on Him, how could He possibly know that one specific person had touched Him deliberately? But Jesus knows when power leaves Him and so He asks, "Who touched me?" He even looks around until finally the woman comes forward and tells Him everything. Jesus assures her that her faith has saved her. He tells her that she has salvation. And while all of this is going on Jairus' daughter dies.

Now our Lord knew that Jairus' daughter was at the point of death. He knew that the woman had been healed, but because she is part of the crowd pressing upon Him she is certainly not at the point of death. Why does He delay going to Jairus' home to talk to this woman knowing all the time that the little girl was at the point of death? Would it not have been better to have told the woman, "I'll get back to you while I handle this other more critical case"? Isn't that what they do in emergency rooms? Don't they treat the critically ill and then attend to others who are not so ill? Why then does our Lord defy this common sense to stop and talk to the woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years? Why

does He offer her comfort while the other person is dying? Why does He tarry so long with her that the child does in fact die? Doesn't the Lord care? Doesn't He care that one lives and another dies? Why does He heal the woman and let the child die?

Because He is the Lord who raises the dead. He is the Lord who gives salvation.

I have made this observation before, but it is vitally important if we are going to understand our Lord and His ministry. Death is not content to remain at the end of our lives. Our death creeps into our lives even before we die. For some people death creeps up slowly upon us. For others it creeps up quickly. But death creeps up on all of us.

Here is what I mean. Eventually someone is going to tell us the disease that will take our life. At the time when they tell us this we do not know whether or not it will take our life even though it will. Because we do not know whether or not it will take our life we cry out to the Lord for healing. Other people cry out to the Lord on our behalf for healing. We know that the Lord can heal and is willing to heal from accounts of the healings that our Lord performed. We cry out to Him and we cry out to Him, but since this is the disease that takes our life we slowly waste away and die. That means that we were dying the whole time. And it also means that the only reason that disease exists at all is because death exists. If death were not a part of the world, disease would not be a part of the world either. If people never die, they never get sick either. The two are linked. The one leads to the other. The fact that we recover from some of our diseases is to let us know that diseases are not in control. The Lord can turn them back. And when we recover from our disease we are recovering from a little advance death that was upon us which is an indication in advance of the Last Day that our Lord raises the dead.

Now let me get to the point I want to emphasize. If death did not exist, then diseases would not exist either. Since death exists, diseases and other things that take our lives also exist. Therefore the woman who was subject to bleeding for twelve years was subject to a slow death for twelve years. She saw many physicians, but instead of getting better she got worse. She was dying. She was dying just as surely as the little girl was dying. From the Lord's perspective they are both in the same boat.

Death also keeps us out of the presence of God.

It is helpful to read the book of Leviticus. I know it is not thrilling reading, but it is nevertheless helpful to read it. In the book of Leviticus God commands that women like the woman who was subject to bleeding for twelve years was banned from the temple. She could not approach the presence of God to worship Him. She could not approach the presence of God to receive His blessings. She could not approach the presence of God simply to be with Him. The reason is that her flow of blood is a disease that indicates that death is upon her. She is losing fluid. God therefore commanded that no such people approach His presence at the altar in the temple in order to worship Him. She was banned from the presence of the Lord.

Jairus' daughter is no different. If she dies, she will not be able to approach the presence of the Lord at the temple. She will not be able to worship in His presence. She will not be able to stand in His presence. That is the problem with death. It puts you outside of the presence of God.

This should not surprise any of us. Sin puts us outside of the presence of God. The wages of sin is death. Therefore death is the result of our sin. Therefore if sin puts us outside of the presence of God, then death does so as well. This is why God told Adam that on the day he ate of the fruit of the tree he would die. Once Adam ate of the fruit of the tree he fled from the presence of God. He could no longer stand in the presence of God. He could no longer walk with God in the cool of the day. He was dead. He was cast out of the presence of God.

So God has made these two women outcasts. He has cast them out of His presence. One is cast out by a death that was slowly overtaking her. The other one was cast out because of a death that swiftly overtook her. They both died. The wages of their sins had come upon them.

Even the psalms ask, "Who praises You from the grave?" The expected answer is no one does.

But Jesus is the God who raises the dead. Jesus is the God who has come to atone for our sins. Jesus is the one who has come to wash our sins away in His blood. Jesus is the one who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus is the one who takes away the death of the world.

When the woman touches our Lord's garments, she defiles the Lord. God commands that a woman who has a flow like hers defiles the garments that she touches. Therefore she has defiled the Lord by touching Him. That is why she is so afraid to admit that she was the one who had touched Him. She is afraid of His wrath. She fears what He might do to her now that she has defiled Him. Instead of condemning her, our Lord blesses her. He tells her that her faith has saved her. Her defilement is transferred to Him. That means that her defilement is no longer on her. Since her defilement is no longer on her the flow of her blood is healed. She can feel within herself that she is healed. Since she is healed from her defilement she is now able to stand in the presence of the holy God. She is able to worship Him without fear. She is able to do so because of Jesus who took her sin and death away.

In the book of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, God instructs His people that when they touch a dead body they are defiled. The defilement of death is upon them because they have touched a dead body. In Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, God prescribes certain ritual washings that remove this defilement. So when our Lord enters the room where the dead girl is and when He takes her by the hand, her death defiles Him. All of the sin that has caused her death is now transferred to Him. Since her defilement is taken away by the Lord it is no longer on her. Once the defilement of her death is removed there is nothing to keep her from standing in the presence of the Lord and so she rises from the dead. Just like the woman that our Lord healed, she is able to stand in the presence of the holy God without fear. She is able to worship in His presence. Both of these women may now walk with God in the cool of the day which Adam had forsaken.

This is why our Lord treats these people the way that He does. There is no difference between the woman who touches His garment and Jairus' daughter who died. The Lord takes away their defilement by taking away their death. In doing so He by definition must take away their sin. He takes their death and defilement on Himself and it will later kill Him. He will die outside of the presence of God because He took their death and defilement away. His death is the result of God's laws given in Leviticus and other places that makes us clean and fit to stand in the presence of the holy God and worship Him without fear. That is why our Lord tells the mourners, "Don't be afraid, only believe."

Now what about you? You have death upon you. You are diseased and aging and dying. Your sins are taking their toll upon you. You are defiled in the same way these two women were defiled.

And the Lord has touched you. When you come forward to eat and drink the body and blood of Christ, He comes down from heaven to touch you with His body and His blood. I realize that you eat it, but I am talking about contact for now. You will have to read the book of Leviticus yourself to know what eating His body and drinking His blood means. For now suffice it to say that Jesus has touched you. He has touched you just as surely as that woman grabbed His garments. He has touched you just as surely as He took the hand of the little girl. That means that in the Sacrament of the Altar Jesus takes your defilement away. He takes it upon Himself and it kills Him. For the women His death was coming because He took their defilement away. For you He has already died because He takes your defilement

away. Jesus is not interested in time when it comes to raising the dead. That is why the Sacrament of the Altar forgives you of your sins. It is Jesus touching you and taking your disease and death away. This is why Paul writes to the Corinthians and tells them that a number of them have died because of their misuse of the Sacrament of the Altar. Here Jesus is taking your defilement away. Here Jesus is taking your sin away. Here Jesus is taking your death away.

Now just like Jairus had to wait for Jesus to talk to the woman and get to his house before Jesus raised his daughter from the dead so also we must wait for the resurrection of the dead. The resurrection of the dead does not come all at once, but it does come. Sometimes we go to a funeral of someone who died in Christ while someone else in Christ is healed. That does sometimes happen. That is what happens when you stand before the Lord of heaven and earth. He deals out His blessings in His own time, but He does deal them out.

You will rise from the dead. It is inevitable. It is just as certain as the resurrection of that little girl is as soon as our Lord takes her by the hand. You will rise from the dead. And just as our Lord restored the girl to her parents so also when He raises you from the dead He will restore you to those who you love who had died in Christ.

When Jesus raises you from the dead on the Last Day there will be no more diseases. We will finally experience what Jesus has done for us in removing our defilement. When Jesus raises you from the dead you will never get sick again. In fact none of the signs of decay will be upon you. Your hair will not gray. Your skin will not wrinkle. Your eyes will see and your ears will hear. If you were lame in this life, you will walk. If you were paralyzed in this life, you will be restored. If you were mutilated in your death, your body will be restored to you. Everything will work. Nothing will be broken. There will be no physicians there. Physicians will be just as useless at the resurrection as they were to the woman who had been subject to bleeding. There will be no hospitals or nursing homes there. None of those things will be there because there will be no death and it is only death that causes those things to be. There will be no funeral homes there. None will be needed. There will be no cemeteries there, no caskets, and no graves. All of those things will be unnecessary.

This resurrection is coming to you on the day when the Lord returns. Oh come, Lord Jesus, come, and heal us for we are sick unto death!" And you already know the Lord's answer to that prayer.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.