

Parish of Central Exeter
4th Sunday after Trinity 27 June 2021



Crossing Barriers

Our Gospel reading this morning includes the healing of Jairus's daughter and the woman with a haemorrhage. The reflections on this reading are from Sheila, and the intercessions are from Jess. Many thanks to you both.

Welcome everyone.

Preparing for worship

We gather:
a community of faith in God's subversive world.
We gather to celebrate
that no darkness can extinguish light,
to remember
that love will always be more powerful than death,
and to trust that
peace will always be stronger than violence.

We gather,
people of faith in the light of God's world.
Welcome to worship.

(written by Cheryl Lawrie and posted on [hold this space])

Opening Prayer

They risked it all to come to him:

Jairus,
risked his pride,
kneeling to a carpenter,
begging for his daughter's life,

The woman with the blood risked
shame and disgrace
heaped upon her
by the crowd.

O Christ,
we are just like Jairus.
And we bleed like the woman.
We want to touch you

with the faith
you give
us.

Gathering Hymn

'Jubilate' – a short but joyful hymn of praise.

Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nukqkr29DP8>

Call to confession based on the Gospel Reading.

God calls us in our lives to take a risk,
to be like the woman in the gospel
who reaches out to Jesus for healing for herself;
or the father who risks the scorn of others
to bring Jesus to his dying daughter.
Let us ponder for a moment the places in our lives
where we may resist turning to God for healing and change.

(silence)

We confess our weaknesses.

When we resist your call to open our hearts to allow
the freshness of your grace to enter:

God have mercy.

When we close our eyes to your new and unexpected possibilities
of healing and reconciliation.

Christ have mercy.

When we let fear overwhelm us,
and cling to the security of what we know
instead of risking new steps toward your freedom and justice:

God have mercy.

Assurance of Grace

God's mercies are fresh every morning.
In Christ God offers forgiving grace
and welcome into a community of trust, abundance, and hope.
Let us give thanks for the mercy of God,
and pass the peace of Christ in community among us.

(written by Rev. Susan A. Blain, and posted on the Worship Ways website.)

Psalm 130 (NRSV)

Waiting for Divine Redemption

A Song of Ascents.

¹ Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

² Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications!

³ If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?

⁴ But there is forgiveness with you,
so that you may be revered.

⁵ I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;

⁶ my soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.

⁷ O Israel, hope in the Lord!
For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
and with him is great power to redeem.

⁸ It is he who will redeem Israel
from all its iniquities.

The collect for today

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.

Worship music

'Through all the changing scenes of life.' Sung here by the Scottish Festival singers. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBkorDtz1nU>

New Testament Reading

Mark 5: 21-43 (NRSV)

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

²¹ When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered round him; and he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet ²³ 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.' ²⁴ So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵ Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶ She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷ She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ for she said, 'If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.' ²⁹ Immediately her haemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰ Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' ³¹ And his disciples said to him, 'You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, "Who touched me?"' ³² He looked all round to see who had done it. ³³ But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.'



³⁵ 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?' ³⁶ But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, 'Do not fear, only believe.' ³⁷ He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹ When he had entered, he said to them, 'Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.' ⁴⁰ 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. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, 'Talitha cum', which means, 'Little girl, get up!' ⁴² And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. ⁴³ He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.



Reflection

Last week Mark showed the disciples frightened with the ferocity of the storm while Jesus slept in the boat. They then saw Jesus creating peace and calm over the winds and waves and were questioned as to their lack of faith in Jesus. Who is this person they are following? Next Mark (5:1-20) takes the action into Gentile territory where Jesus meets and heals a man with an unclean spirit who was living among the dead before returning to Israel. Here we find crowds jostling to hear Jesus teach and meet two very different but equally desperate people who reach out to Jesus for healing.

First comes Jairus, a respectable member of the community with his role as leader of the synagogue, who threw status aside as he fell at Jesus's feet and begged him to visit his home and lay hands on his daughter who is dying. Mark records no words here, only the response that Jesus (and his disciples and the crowd) makes in following Jairus towards his home. Then he brings in another unnamed character, a woman who once had status - since she had had money to spend on doctors - but now she was poor and outcast from society, as her chronic bleeding had lasted 12 years and she was no better. She risked shame in being among the crowd, but like Jairus she had heard about Jesus and was desperate.

She may well have said Psalm 130 regularly, crying out to God, and now hoping beyond hope that if she just touches Jesus' cloak she will be healed. As she does this, she is aware of a change within her body and Jesus too is aware that power has left him - he has been touched in a special way, among the hustle of the crowd. (An experience we have not been

accustomed to these past months!) He does not want to leave the work half done but must meet the person who had trustingly reached out to him, so he stops and asks for someone to come forward. In trepidation she approaches, also falling down before Jesus to tell her story. He restores her status as a member of the community by calling her 'daughter', praising her faith and trust in him before sending her on her way in peace and wholeness. She has put her hope in him and experienced the 'steadfast love' of the Lord and his 'great power to redeem' – more phrases from Psalm 130.

What Jairus has been thinking while all this was going on can only be imagined, and his fears that this delay would bring sorrow for his family would have increased, when people arrived with the news that his daughter had died. Jesus encourages Jairus to continue to trust him and chooses just three disciples to accompany him into the house. He dismisses the mourners, wanting to have only her parents and the three disciples as witnesses. This shows compassion to the parents and the daughter, there is no need for a media spectacle. He is gentle with her and calls her to awake, and life is restored. Jesus does not want a fuss made, since he is not interested in shallow belief. There are other miracle workers and healers travelling around the countryside, but he is on a different mission, creating a new community based on a relationship of trust with himself.

Jairus and the woman crossed social and religious barriers in approaching Jesus, while he did the same in welcoming an unclean woman and touching a child who had died. Today we may think what barriers prevent people today from meeting Jesus or finding out more about Christian faith or being part of a Christian community. How can we improve our welcome to people? We may also think about the hidden illnesses that affect people's health and those who live with chronic conditions. Can we be more sensitive and aware, showing God's love and compassion for all?

Intercessions

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father:

Almighty God, when the waves of life threaten to overwhelm us, forgive us when we blame you or others for our troubles. Teach us to find you in the storms of life and give us the faith to believe that you always bring calm and peace.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Everlasting God, we pray for all Christians all around the world. We particularly ask for your protection for Christians who are persecuted because of their faith. We pray for our parish, for all who worship and work with us and for all the many strangers who share these spaces.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Loving God, as we see the brokenness of our world we pray for healing among the nations, for a fair distribution of vaccines and of medication, for food where there is hunger, for freedom where there is oppression, for joy where there is pain; that your love may bring peace to all your children. We pray that the leaders of all the nations will work together to meet the challenges facing our world.

We pray that we and all the people of our country will continue to act unselfishly to reduce the risk of coronavirus spreading more widely and having an adverse effect on so many lives.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Holy God, we thank you for the joy of human love, and for all those among whom we live and work. We especially pray for those among our friends and families who do not know you or whose faith has been shaken. Help them to see that we have you as an anchor to help us withstand life's problems.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Merciful God, when our lives feel chaotic and desolate because of illness or other problems, help us to hear your holy word, for by that word your son calmed the storm. In a moment of silence, please pray for anyone you know who is in particular need of our prayers today. Help them to put their trust in You and, if they are sick, in the knowledge and skills and care of those who are treating them.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Loving God, we pray for those saddened by the death of someone close and dear to them, either recently or at this time of the year. Help us to find the comfort of the Holy Spirit within us and the fellowship of the parish family around us.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Gracious God, help us to know that the one who calmed the waves, the one who healed the woman and restored to Jairus his daughter, your son Jesus Christ, is present with us day by day and that he cares for us and can calm the waves of our lives. And help us to trust more fully in you in all that we are involved with in the week ahead.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Loving Creator we honour you,
and we honour all that you have made.
Renew the whole world in the image of your love.
Give us what we need for today,
and a hunger to see the whole world fed.
Strengthen us for what lies ahead;
heal us from the hurts of the past;
give us courage to follow your call in this moment.
For your love is the only power,
the only home, the only honour we need,
in this world and in the world to come.
Amen.

Paraphrased by Sarah Dylan Breuer

Affirmation

It takes little faith to see the sacred in the extraordinary.

To have faith the sacred is in the ordinary, though,
takes courage to believe the mundane can be enough;
that grace can emerge
even through the dull,
the slightly disappointing,
the not quite right,
not quite as we intended,
not really what we hoped;
the clumsy,
the awkward,
and the imperfect.

Let your act of faith be
to let what you do be enough.

Let what you do be enough...

(written by Cheryl Lawrie, and posted on hold this space.)

The Peace

If alone, smile and hug yourself (God does). If otherwise, share the Peace as appropriate.

A short Spiritual Communion

The Book of Common Prayer reminds us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', even when we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.



Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

O God,
help me to trust you,
help me to know that you are with me,
help me to believe that nothing
can separate me from your love
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

An offertory prayer

We may not be in church, but we can still offer ourselves and our talents to God.

Blessed are you, God and creator of the universe,
as we offer you our activities, thanksgivings and our life.
We present ourselves, and our world, as we are and as you can make us,
for everything in heaven and on earth is yours,
and of your own do we give you. Blessed be God for ever.

Because there is no Breaking and Sharing we can have only Spiritual Communion with Christ. I'm sure you can find a way to use a few minutes of silence or conversation to enjoy this, and make it a sacramental moment.

As we prepare for communion you might like to listen to Nigel and St David's Choir singing 'Wait for the Lord.'



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M89oWjtOk&feature=youtu.be>

Giving thanks for Christ's death and resurrection you may wish to say

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

Post Communion Collect

Eternal God,
comfort of the afflicted and healer of the broken,
you have fed us at the table of life and hope:
teach us the ways of gentleness and peace,
that all the world may acknowledge
the kingdom of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Commission & Benediction

You call us to be
your light
in the darkness,
your voice
in the wilderness,
your hope
for the hopeless.

You give us
strength
in our weakness,
peace
and gentleness,
words
and boldness,
to proclaim
more of you
and of us, less.

(by John Birch, and posted on Faith and Worship.)



Go, confident in the knowledge of God's steadfast love for you,
assured of the healing touch of Jesus upon you and
emboldened by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit within you.

(written by Moira Laidlaw, and posted on Liturgies Online.)

Closing Hymn

'All my hope on God is founded. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4zX9xZCN0o>

