

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Today in our Gospel lesson we are presented with Good News of two healing miracles, a perfect text for a healing Sunday. As I was taught to do, I use this phrase, “the Good News” a good bit when preaching. The Greek word, *εὐαγγέλιον* (*euangelion*) literally means the “Good News” and is another way of saying the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the good news of who Jesus is and what he did. It is the “Good News” because its news that addresses some of the most serious problems that we face and are challenged with, such as sin, brokenness, hostility, and estrangement from God. Listen to how St. Paul informed the church in Corinth about the Good News:

Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand,

<sup>3</sup> For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, <sup>4</sup> and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures...(1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

The reason I am explaining the Good News is due to what I noticed in our Gospel lesson this morning about the peasant woman hearing about Jesus. I guess I noticed this because I mentioned this about this woman hearing about Jesus last week in a conversation, I had the pleasure to be part of. In that conversation I mentioned that the church is quick to look to the culture and all the disfunction, narcissism, and divisiveness and claim this is destroying our church. Other than telling someone they need to go to church or that they need to get right with the Lord...the church will quickly argue that it is very challenging and awkward to either invite someone to church or to share or to speak of the Good News with someone who has never “heard” it. The people of the church will say the culture out there is killing the church. But in actuality, we the church are doing a very good job all on our own.

We can rewrite all the laws we like, but what message are we sharing with those out there? We can hang the Law or the Ten Commandments in or on every building and all the classrooms we like...but if someone would even dare to read them or really discern them, sadly the reader feels compelled to become the enforcer of the Commandments and NOT a follower...they feel duty-bound because they assume and understand the Law is applicable to “THEM” and NOT me! Is this really sharing the Good News!

When we share grace or simply show courtesy or respect for others, then we are NOT simply telling others of the Good News, we are sharing the Good News! What is the “NEWS” we take from here and how do we share the NEWS of Jesus Christ? Today our lessons begin with Jeremiah, the traditional author of Lamentations, singing of the joy of the love of the Lord:

<sup>22</sup>The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,  
his mercies never come to an end;

<sup>23</sup>they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

Notice Jeremiah is not singing about *his* love of the Lord, he is singing about the Lord’s love that never ceases, whose mercies never come to an end, and whose faithfulness is great. When we talk about God, Jesus, or faith, for the most part, I am not saying always, but for the most part we

talk about God, Jesus, of faith from our own perspective and circumstance...God, Jesus, and faith, *IF* shared, are shared from our personal perspective and our own circumstances. What I mean by this is, when we share it sounds like, "The world would be a better place if people went to church, or believed in God." The church would be better if the world out there would do this or that...the "this or that" can be filled in with any political hot topic. Or perhaps when sharing we say, "My faith has gotten me through so much in my life." All these statements for the most part are true, but it seems to me that when we share God, Jesus, and our faith we talk about ourselves more or we complain or bash the world by stepping on it to make ourselves feel better and if you would see God, Jesus, and faith the way I do, you'll feel good too and our church would be the way it used to be.

We seem to only want to look back and then unintentionally tell of what God has done for me and we say nothing of what GOD DOES...or does for all. Think about it, salvation is not in our past, hope cannot live in the past, salvation and hope remain ahead of us. We gather, we worship, and we are thankful for the glory of the church, but we complain and wonder...why is no one coming to church? St. Paul reminded the Romans and us:

<sup>14</sup> But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? <sup>15</sup> And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" <sup>16</sup> But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" <sup>17</sup> So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:14-17)

How are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? The Good News is the news of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, who is the manifestation of God's love for us, who died to free us all from the condemnation of sin. This is the Good News!

By definition, the term "news" is noteworthy information received about important events or information not previously known to someone. It is also defined as the act of *telling someone* about something that has happened and may have an effect on them.

Here is my point to all of this. Within in this Gospel lesson this morning the focus seems to be predominately on the healing of the daughter of Jairus, who is actually raised from the dead. This resurrection story of this "little girl" sandwiches the healing story of this woman suffering from hemorrhages. We can wonder all we want about the miracles that take place in this lesson. But I want to take the focus off the miracles and focus on what is taking place in this story that seems to go unnoticed because of the miracles.

*ἀκούω ἀκούσασα* (*akouo akousasa*) are the Greek terms that not only mean to "hear" and "heard" the terms are also used in scripture to mean respond and obey. In this Gospel lesson, the crowds on the "other side" of the Sea of Galilee gathered around Jesus. Before the healing of the dead little girl and the bleeding peasant woman even takes place, I want to ask, WHY are the crowds gathering around Jesus? Jairus is a leader in the synagogue. At that time, Jewish leaders like Jairus disliked and even hated Jesus. This Gospel tells us that the chief priests of the synagogue accused Jesus of many things, (Mark 15:3). These leaders of the synagogue were angry with

Jesus for upsetting their traditions and laws. The Jewish leaders like Jairus looked down on Jesus for eating with sinners and associating with those deemed unclean or unworthy, all while claiming to be the Son of God. Here in our lesson today is a man whose position in the synagogue stands in direct conflict or we can say, stands on the “other side” of Jesus...WHY then, did he go to Jesus?

The Gospel lesson answers these questions in verse 27, and within this verse we learn that they all had one thing in common, the crowds, Jairus, and the peasant woman...they all *heard* about Jesus and this is why they sought him out. The law and tradition said one thing, but they are all here in the presence of Jesus Christ because they heard something about him, they heard of the “Good News.” All gathered around Jesus Christ experienced him and experienced what he can do. I don’t think the crowds came out to gather for no reason at all...they heard something, they heard something about Jesus.

Collegiality alone would tell Jairus to stay away from Jesus, but despite knowing the tradition and the law of the synagogue, Jairus heard something and went to Jesus to heal his little girl. Levitical law bound this woman to poverty and isolation. This poor woman is void of all human resources, family, friends, and finances, and she is cast out into poverty because the law says she is unclean...anyone who touches her or anyone she touches is, BY LAW, considered unclean. But she throws her fear aside because she heard something about Jesus. Do you suppose they may have said something after they experienced Jesus?

The crowds closest to the healing events of the daughter of Jairus and this woman saw what had happened, do you think they said anything at all? After all, they were all around Jesus in the first place because they heard something, do you suppose they in turn said anything for others to hear? The daughter of Jairus is raised from the dead, do you suppose Jairus said anything? The woman with a flow of blood is made well simply by touching Jesus...she had to say something so that she would not be judged as unclean...so yeah, she said something.

This Gospel lesson today, of course, contains wonderful stories of healing...no doubt. There are many factors that this woman and this little girl share that are very interesting and worthy of preaching about. But for me today, I think the Good News comes from the fact that every figure in this Gospel lesson today are gathered around Jesus because they heard something about Him. What then is the ethos or the essence of our gathering today? Why do we believe? Why do we have faith? Because we heard something! We heard something...we did not see something, we heard something! The Epistle to the Hebrews is a theological argument for the finality of salvation achieved by Christ and the anonymous author defines faith this way:

11:<sup>1</sup> Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. <sup>2</sup> Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. <sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible. (Hebrews 11:1-3)

Yes, the crowd, Jairus, his daughter, those in the house of the time of the healing, the woman, as well as all who experienced Jesus Christ, all SAW Jesus, but if no one said anything at all we would not be here and none of this would be in existence. When God created, God said something and it was heard and it was so...and it was good. All gathered around Jesus in this

lesson today, gather because they heard something, they saw and they in turn said something for others to hear. Our faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the faith in things unseen, rather we have a conviction for the things we heard about in Jesus Christ.

These marvelous miracles before us today in this Gospel were seen and I'm guessing, they were very easy to talk about and share with others back then. But the magnificence of miracles I believe are found in the simple insignificant things and probably not talked about or very little. My friend, and the best man at my wedding just passed away. He was one of the guys WGAL recently a segment on and labeled him as the "Strasburg Waver." If you saw it, my friend Tony was the African-American one. He would wave to the passing cars along the Strasburg Pike. To some this is a very simple gesture...but in the big picture it says, with the wave of his...a very simple gesture or greeting says...I find you significant and I will take a moment and recognize that.

Today before us, in our worship, within the shadow of these magnificent miracles concerning a body and blood within our Gospel, is a very simple gesture of bread and wine. In these simple insignificant elements, God says to each of us, I find you significant. We probably don't think much about this bread and wine...no, its not the body of a little girl being raised to new life, it is not the flow of blood miraculously being healed, but this body and blood that is before us is certainly miraculous. Presented to us today is another healing miracle...we are all raised and made well, healed of our infirmity of sin and death, and we are all here because we heard something about Jesus Christ and we believed. We heard, and we have faith in what we heard...that HIS presence is here...with us in bread and wine.

Today placed into our hands is the steadfast love of the LORD that never ceases. In this bread and wine is the Lord's mercies that never come to an end; the mercies that are new every morning we open our eyes and face a new day. Today in this bread and wine is the very miracle and conviction of our faith, the touch of Jesus Christ that makes us all well. Today, this is the Good News of Jesus Christ that perhaps others may want to hear...but how are they to hear unless they are told.

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen*