

Proper 8
Year B

2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27

Psalm 130

2 Corinthians 8:7-15

Mark 5:21-43

+++ In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Back when I traveled frequently, I developed coping mechanisms to move through the noise and visual distractions of airports, particularly when going from one gate to another to make a connection. I got into a “zone,” almost tunnel vision, very focused on where I was going and how many minutes I had to get there. If I was running late, nothing short of a collision with another person or an object would stop me.

In Mark’s Gospel we read about collisions of a different sort. Jesus, Jairus, the disciples and the crowd are traveling from the seaside to Jairus’ home because his daughter is dying. As they walk quickly through the crowd, Jesus feels someone touch his clothing. He notices. He stops. He asks the question—“who has touched me?” The disciples want to keep moving —after all, the daughter of an important man was dying! Doesn’t Jesus realize that they need to hurry? Instead of hurrying, Jesus looks around and sees the woman who touched his clothes. The woman who knew she would be healed.

Both she and Jesus know what happened, yet they stop and acknowledge it. Jesus and the woman share in the experience of the woman’s healing.

Her world filled with twelve years of illness, separation, and destitution collides with the gift of health and wholeness, the gift of salvation. She is restored to her community. The kingdom of God is here, and Jesus shows us what it looks like. And the woman knows what it feels like.

Jairus learns that his daughter has died while they are in transit. Mark doesn’t tell us what Jairus’ thinks of their encounter with the woman who was ill for as many years as his daughter has been alive. We can only imagine. When Jesus tells him not to fear, but to believe, Jairus doesn’t turn and ask Jesus to leave, but continues on to his home with Jesus and the disciples.

The presence of the mourners does not dissuade any of them from their original plan—to heal the girl. Peter, James and John enter the girl’s room with Jesus and her parents. Jesus does not hesitate. He reaches out and touches the girl while commanding her to rise. The girl, once dead, is raised. She is restored to wholeness and reunited with her family.

Illness and death have collided with the gift of salvation. The kingdom of God is here, and Jesus shows us what it looks like. Jairus, his wife and his daughter know what it feels like.

We, too, know what the kingdom of God feels like. In the midst of life changes we never see coming, job loss, illness, the death of a person we deeply love, our lives are rocked. Then someone reaches out to us, sits with us, brings groceries to us, really sees us, touches us. In those moments, we know what the kingdom of God feels like.

On our journey together, sometimes we fear, sometimes we doubt. We have moments when we beg Jesus for healing or reach out, in hope, to touch Jesus' clothes. We share with each other what the kingdom of God looks like, and here and now, on earth as in heaven.

Jesus commissions us to bring hope and the healing love of God to others—no matter who they are, no where they live, no matter what their circumstances.

As we are rushing through our busy lives, it can be easy to “get in the zone,” to focus so much on our own destination that we miss the moments that allow us, perhaps even require us to offer God's hope to others.

With so much going on in the world, tunnel vision can become our coping mechanism, preventing us from standing with, or even seeing, those whose lives are closely linked with ours, the immigrant, the poor, the stranger, the homeless, and the lonely.

When we are “in the zone” we cannot see the pain of those who are isolated because of illness, aging, religion, or other life circumstances, including the happenstance of where they were born. To prevent ourselves from being overwhelmed, we may shut out the cries of the children of God who are separated from their families, from their communities and from hope because of violence, oppression, and fear.

When I slow down at the airport, I see the tears, the grief, and the joys of those in the airport around me. I see the children of God.

For when we stop, widen our view and truly see the image of God in each person and act to preserve the dignity of every human being, we too, find ourselves restored to the community that God created and is creating. Only when we stop to acknowledge the children of God who are suffering, can we do the work of healing together. Only when we acknowledge the need for healing and play our part in that healing, will we, like Jesus, be able to truly show the world that the kingdom of God is here.

Through our lives in community, we know what the kingdom feels like and what it looks like. Jesus shows us that we must carry those experiences into a world that is desperate for hope, wholeness, and restoration.

Through prayer, relationship, and action we open the doors of pain and suffering to the hope of a healing collision with salvation. And each time we reach out to share God's hope and love with an ever-growing circle of God's children, we ourselves will be touched and restored.

AMEN.