

Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 30 June 2024 - The Fifth Sunday of Trinity

Lectionary Readings (depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on)

Wisdom 1.13-15 and 2.23-24; Canticle Lamentations 3.23-33 or Psalm 30; 2 Corinthians 8. 7-15; Mark 5. 21 - 43

Homily

Today's homily has been written by Canon Jan Payne, LLM; 5folds Benefice

There are some parts of all the Gospels that ask as many questions as they answer, and which also give you goosebumps if you really stop to think about them. The Gospel reading today is, for me, one of those.

To start with, we are gifted two stories in the passage in a kind of Biblical sandwich. Let's remind ourselves of what happened. We start with Jairus and his daughter, we fit into the middle a woman with a serious bleeding disorder before we catch up again with Jairus. As always, Mark wastes no time in his narrative, and we are caught up in the rush to make it all happen. If we stand back and imagine the scene, we see Jairus, a leader in the Synagogue (so an important man) come to Jesus to seek help for his daughter, an action that would have taken a bit of courage. Already Jesus was gathering a reputation for his teaching and actions causing those in authority to start to question what they should do with him. An awkward visitor, maybe, for local Synagogues, so for Jairus to have Jesus arrive on his patch might well be helpful for his daughter but the longer-term consequences were less appealing maybe?

However, as anyone who has ever cared for a seriously sick child knows, the ability to reason and weigh up the odds are often cast aside in the urgent desire to find a cure in order that a child might be well again. We have no reason to think it was otherwise for Jairus. Here is his little girl now approaching her adolescence, sufficiently sick she might die. Jairus would have heard rumours already of the incredible things Jesus seemed to be capable of doing, so he comes to seek help.

The two men, accompanied by Jesus's own followers and an ever-growing crowd set off the leader's house. As they pass by the crowd a woman, beset by permanent bleeding, touches the hem of Jesus's cloak as it billows out. There were many rules and regulations in Jewish law concerning bodily fluids and for a woman to have been bleeding for 12 years would have made her a social outcast. Not for her a friendship group and, quite possibly, alienation too from her family, never mind the effects such illness would have had on her personally. As with Jairus, for this woman to have a chance to engage with Jesus was truly, for her, the last hope.

She was confident she didn't need a full 1:1 encounter with Jesus, just to touch him would be enough and so she catches the hem of his cloak, and, in an instant, she is healed. She knows she is, she can feel it – she is transformed. Someone else knows it too and that, of course, is Jesus as he feels power go out from him. Yet he has to ask who has touched him? The woman comes forward and tells her story and he assures her that her faith has made her well again. He sends her on her way in peace and free from suffering. That must have stirred the crowd as nothing short of amazing.

This distraction from the journey to Jairus's house cannot have lasted long but Mark takes us straight back into the action as messengers arrive to say that the little girl has died. Jesus has other views on the subject. Taking only Jairus, Peter, James and John with him, he continues onto the house. On arrival he dismisses the professional mourners already in situ. Adding only the girl's mother to the group he has assembled, Jesus enters the room where the supposedly dead child is lying.

"Time to get up little girl" he says to her, in Aramaic, *Talitha koum* – and she does. Ever practical, Jesus orders food for her and Mark's telling of these two remarkable stories concludes and we are not permitted to know what happened next. Both short, concise and to the point but each leaving us almost breathless from the encounter and with questions that extend beyond the stories themselves.

The common factor to both is faith – faith and belief that Jesus really can make a difference and make the seemingly impossible happen. The stories of healing by Jesus and the stories of the raising of people from the dead are extraordinary and can be hard for us to comprehend and accept. We may know, only too well, that in our own lives there have been many times when we have prayed earnestly and sincerely for others to be healed and made well and, perhaps, even to be spared from death, yet it has not happened. Alternatively, we may know of situations where miraculous healing has seemingly taken place. It can be puzzling why some prayers seem to be answered and not others.

Ultimately, none of us has the mental capacity to understand the dimensions beyond our comprehension in which God works, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We are called, like the woman and Jairus, to place our implicit trust and faith in Jesus, the great teacher and healer. To offer to him all that we would wish to see changed – and then to believe that it can and will happen but, maybe, not always in our time or place. Mark's narrative is an assurance of what is possible and whilst his examples are ones we can readily identify with, we are called to hold firm to our faith, our situation and put our trust in Jesus to answer our prayers – but it is not always easy and, especially so, when we cannot see the answer at the time.

Seeing the woman being healed, when he was just concerned about his daughter, Jairus would perhaps have wondered if there would be enough of Jesus to go round to help his child as well as the woman. Jesus's actions reassured him that there was – and they reassure

us too. There is always enough but in God's time and God's way and that can be hard for us to accept.

It all comes down to holding onto Jesus as did Jairus and the woman – to believe implicitly that he can and will hear us when we call on him. When you think it all through, as I said at the start, it's exciting and goose-bump time!

Ways to Engage all Generations

When different generations are gathered together in worship there is an opportunity to build relationships and to encounter God in our conversations as we build relationships and learn from each other no matter what our ages, stage of life or faith and for all present to feel included. Adding some wondering questions to the service at an appropriate moment can help to do this.

Wondering Questions: Some wondering questions that may help to engage all generations to ponder and explore during the talk, service or during the week may include (three or so) of the following style of questions:

- I wonder what your favourite part of the story/passage is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder how Jairus felt or I wonder how the woman felt when healing happened?
- I wonder how you feel about these stories of healing?
- I wonder what we can learn about God in this story?

Suggested intercessions

****Please ensure that anyone named publicly in the intercessions has given their permission for that to happen. Not everyone wishes to be prayed for in public.***

Loving God, we thank you that we can come to you to ask for your healing hand to be laid upon those we know who are sick or troubled at this time. We pray today for any known to us who are in any kind of need, mental, physical or spiritual. We pray for **[..... you may like to insert names from your community here]* and others known to us at this time who are sick. Comfort them with your presence, that they may know you walk with them and will meet them in their times of difficulty.

Lord in your mercy – hear our prayer

Almighty God, we give thanks for your church on earth and, this weekend, we pray especially for the men and women who will be ordained as priests or deacons at Ely Cathedral. May each of them be blessed by the gift of the Holy Spirit in their lives and ministry as they live out your calling. We pray for the parishes in which they will serve and for those who will guide and train them after ordination. *[If your church is to welcome one of those being ordained, you may like to pray for them by name.]*

Lord in your mercy – hear our prayer

Heavenly Father, as the General Election takes place this coming week, we pray for all who have offered themselves as candidates, for their families and friends and those who have campaigned on their behalf. We ask that the polling stations will be peaceful and the media coverage fair and appropriate. Give wisdom to all who will cast their votes to make an informed choice and, to the newly elected, national government, integrity, honesty and a genuine desire to serve our nation.

Lord in your mercy – hear our prayer

Comforting God, look with compassion we pray on all who are bereaved at this time. Give them peace and comfort in their sadness and may they find hope in the faith we profess. We pray for those who are nearing the end of their life and for those who watch and wait with them. May all who have died rest in peace in your eternal kingdom.

Lord in your mercy – hear our prayer

Finally, we pray for ourselves – for our many and various needs. Caring God you walk with us through the highs and lows of our lives. Be with us now and receive our prayers, that we may never feel alone. May we always be safe and secure in the love you give to us, a never-ending love that comes without any conditions attached.

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

Suggested hymns/songs

10,000 reasons (Bless the Lord O my sou)
All my hope on God is founded
Be thou my vision
Blest are the pure in heart, for they shall see our God
Faithful One
How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In Christ alone my hope is found
Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom (*Taize chant*)
Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy
O worship the King
Such love
The splendour of the King
What a friend we have in Jesus
Will you come and follow me

Activities to accompany the service:

If you are looking for resources to accompany the service for engaging younger children, then there are lots of online resources. The following free to access/download resources may be useful starting points:

- <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/>

- <https://www.faithinkids.org/>
- [reflectionary.org](https://www.reflectionary.org/) – lectionary-based resources
- [engageworship](https://www.engageworship.com/) – in particular 'Area 52' for lectionary-based material
- <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>
(weekly@lectionary resource)