

Where Does it Hurt?

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²¹ When Jesus had crossed again in the boat^[1] to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. 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 hemorrhages 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 hemorrhage 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 around 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^[2] 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.

These are two powerful healing stories. In one, a distinguished congregational and community leader begs Jesus—repeatedly—to heal his sick child. In the other, a woman who is shunned because of her chronic illness takes Jesus’ healing power without asking.

What both people have in common is they are enduring excruciating pain. Every parent and grandparent hurts for Jairus as he pleads for Jesus to save his 12 year-old daughter. The woman’s pain is also extreme—she has seen every doctor, they have tried every trick, she has endured every indignity, nothing works; she also endures the pain of social isolation because of her sickness.

The story sets us up to see what Jesus will do for the respectable citizen and his daughter. But that drama is interrupted by a woman who takes the initiative to approach Jesus from behind even as the crowd is pressing in around him. Her urgency to be healed is more fierce than any polite convention. Without permission, she touches the hem of his cloak. She takes healing power without asking. Jesus says to her, “*your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be whole.*”

These words Jesus uses interchangeably. Made well is saved. Healed is wholeness. You hear it, right? The healing here is physical, yes. But the kind of healing given here is more than physical, it is social and emotional, relational and spiritual. There is, in this healing, a re-situating of this woman's life into a new world. In this new world, her body is connected to her community and her spirit is joined with the Spirit of God that binds all things together in harmony. This is healing as wholeness. It peace, shalom.

In the case of Jairus' daughter, she is healed also, but something happens before that. Jesus addresses the fear that consumes all of us when our loved ones are sick. "Do not be afraid," Jesus says. That, you should know, is Easter language. Do not be afraid. Even in sickness, there a greater power at work than the sickness. There is a hidden wholeness that those of us in the prison of fear cannot see. "Do not be afraid," he says to the man. "Rise," Jesus says to the girl. And she does. And so will he. And so will we.

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Health is about our bodies, our bones and joints and vessels and cells. Health is also about our brains, the chemistry inside them and how we use them to think about ourselves and others. Health is our connection to the natural world, through what we ingest, the air we breath. Health is the work we do. Health is relationships to family, friends, neighbors. Health our social covenant—are we free, are we cared for? Health is love, given and received.

Chances are at any given time, we are not well. One of our members said to me, when I asked her this question, "where does it *not* hurt?"

With health being so wide-ranging, there's a good chance that at any time in our lives, something hurts. Something new. Or something very old. It's hard to share these hurts with each other. We're afraid that we will be judged. That people expect us to be "buttoned-up," "put together," "self-sufficient," and God forbid we be seen as "needy."

But we need to share our hurts. Having the courage to share what hurts can open us to deeper and more wonderful sense of what it might mean for us to be healed, to be whole.

In that spirit, In the safety of this space, listen to your fellow members, who are brave enough to share with you their responses to the question, "where does it hurt?"