

July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018

Scripture:

Psalm 130

Mark 5:21-43

“Amazing faith, amazing grace.”

Mark’s Gospel more than any other book in all of scripture is fast paced.

Matthew begins with the genealogy of Jesus ----- Abraham was the father of Isaac --- Isaac the father of --- and this goes on for about 40 generations all the way down to Joseph and then Jesus.

Luke has at this foretelling ----- the birth of John the Baptist foretold ---- and then it’s the birth of Jesus foretold --- it’s chapter 3 before Jesus is even born.

And John well John begins with this mystical philosophical ---- “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made and so on...”

And I’m not discounting them or slighting them --- I love John’s Gospel especially.

But mark is totally different --- there is no genealogy ---- there is no foretelling --- there is no birth narrative ---there is no philosophical introduction --- Mark has no time for these he’s got to get to the point.

It’s almost as though he’s in a hurry --- some have even said --- he’s in a desperate hurry to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Mark wastes no time with extra words its’ straight to the point for Mark.

And it’s straight to the point in a hurry or most fittingly --- immediately.

Consider these phrases from Mark’s Gospel.

Chapter 1 verse 12 ---- “**Immediately** the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness.

And then from the next chapter verse 8 --- “**Immediately** Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking...”

And then chapter 5 --- verse 2 --- “And when Jesus stepped out of the boat **immediately** there met him a man from the tombs with an impure spirit.”

Verse 29 from our passage today ---- “**Immediately** her bleeding stopped.”

Also from our passage today ---- the very next verse --- verse 30 --- “**At once** Jesus realized that power had gone out of him.”

And then chapter 6 verse 45 ----- “**Immediately** Jesus made his disciples get back into the boat.”

And then verse 50 also from chapter 6 ---- “**Immediately** he spoke to them...”

And then in chapter 9 verse 8 --- “**Suddenly** when they looked around...”

And then in verse 24 from chapter 9 --- “**Immediately** the boys’ father exclaimed, “I believe, help me to overcome my disbelief.”

Immediately --- at once --- suddenly --- however it is translated the theme is exactly the same ---- things are happening fast.

Mark is in a hurry ---- time is short --- it’s immediately this --- immediately that ---- and it’s “at once” ---- and “suddenly.”

It’s as if Mark is saying ---- “You need to know this --- this Jesus of Nazareth ---- Saviour of the world ---- Messiah ---- anointed ---- Holy One -- - and you need to know it immediately.”

And of course what happens in Mark’s Gospel today happens --- “immediately.”

A woman who has suffered for 12 years ---- was healed --- and healed immediately.

A man whose daughter was about to die --- was healed --- immediately.

When I think of reading through Mark's gospel my heart rate practically doubles --- and our passage today is no exception.

Everything happens --- at once ---- suddenly --- immediately.

But before someone has a heart attack trying to keep up with Mark's pace.

Let's step back a minute and take a look at this passage.

It begins in remarkable fashion really.

“When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. He pleaded earnestly with him ...” --- that's how our Gospel reading today opens.

“When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. He pleaded earnestly with him ...”

Remarkable ----- local synagogue leader --- Jairus --- comes to Jesus out in the open where everyone can see --- amidst a large crowd --- and then he falls on his knees and pleads with Him.

This is no Nicodemus like interaction --- remember Nicodemus in John 3 --- -comes to Jesus at night so no one will see him.

Nicodemus creeps in to see Jesus by cover of night because he doesn't want anyone to know he is going to talk with this trouble maker from Nazareth.

Jairus on the other hand comes to Jesus not only in clear daylight --- but there is a huge crowd gathered around Jesus --- and not only this but Jairus falls at Jesus' feet ---- and not only this he pleads with Jesus to help him ---- and not only this he says my daughter is dying and I know you can save her.

He --- a leader in the synagogue --- he part of that same group --- religious leaders who will taunt and mock and try to trap and ultimately set Jesus up for arrest and execution.

Remarkable --- that this man would come to Jesus in broad daylight in the midst of a crowd and fall at His feet --- plead with Him --- and plead with him about saving lives.

Mark isn't just immediate about the words and actions in his Gospel he is also immediate with the message and the truth of the Gospel.

Jesus saves --- Jesus saves and Jairus knows this.

Jesus saves --- and the sick woman knows this.

And not only this --- but Jesus saves where no one else can --- hemorrhaging woman --- sick little girl.

Faith saves and grace saves.

Faith saves immediately here in Mark's Gospel --- and grace saves immediately here in Mark's Gospel.

“Daughter your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

That's what Jesus says to the woman who reaches up from the ground --- and manages to just graze His cloak.

First of course there is this whole interchange about who touched Jesus --- as Jesus felt power leave Him.

If you've ever thought it was all just easy going for Jesus think again --- it cost Him ----- it drained Him ---- it took from him every single time He helped someone ---- just as it costs us ---- tires us --- takes from us when we help ---- but we do it because He is the one whom we follow --- if he did so ought we to.

When we think our lives are difficult and trying --- think about Jesus on this day.

He's just finished calming a storm.

He's just finishing restoring a demon possessed man --- what we would call an exorcism.

And now here He is stepped off a boat and a huge crowd is gathered there to meet him.

And amidst this crowd is a high ranking official from the local synagogue who has fallen at His feet and is pleading with Him to save his dying daughter's life.

Jesus is very busy.

Calming storms ----- performing exorcisms --- crowds gathering --- heal me --- help me ---- save me --- save my daughter.

And were note even close to being done ---- as Jesus walks to save this man's daughter --- a woman ---- likely dragging herself along the ground with a trail of blood left behind her --- in a society where blood was hugely significant --- this blood stained woman reaches up in desperation and makes contact with Christ's clothing.

It's almost as though this happens in slow motion --- there is a crowd --- pushing and shoving no doubt.

Jesus is off in a hurry to try to save this young daughter of a local religious authority.

And then there is a sudden stop --- freeze frame.

Verse 30 ----- freeze frame ----“At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

Feeling that someone took some of His power --- Jesus stops and asks who touched Him.

His disciples find it absurd ---- that Jesus would even bother to ask this.

“You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘who touched me.’”

“You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘who touched me.’”

And yet this is exactly what Jesus did.

And then the next verse --- “But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it.”

“But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it.”

Jesus wanted to know who had done it --- who had reached out to touch His clothing.

This is a story all about amazing faith and amazing grace.

The amazing work and the amazing and saving presence of God --- in Jesus Christ.

Jesus wants to know who God has blessed with such great faith.

I can well imagine Jesus thinking to Himself ---

“Someone here has been blessed with great faith --- someone here in this large crowd knew that they didn’t even have to talk to me --- someone knew that all they had to do was reach out and touch --- not me but just my clothes --- someone here knew that if they just touched my clothing they would be healed --- someone here has been given great faith by God --- and I want to know just who this person is.”

Jesus knew there was someone very special to God in that crowd.

God blessed someone in that crowd with the spiritual gift of faith --- and Jesus wanted to know who.

And faith remember is a gift --- it’s not something we generate --- it is a gift from God.

1 Corinthians 12 starting at verse 7 says ----

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith...”

“To another faith...” ---- faith is a gift not an accomplishment or character trait but a gift from God ----- it is not something we do --- it is something we are given ---- it’s a spiritual gift.

Jesus realizes that God has put a very blessed person of great faith among this crowd ---- and kind of like the leader of the synagogue seeking His help --- this person of great faith comes from the least likely of places --- a woman --- a sick woman --- a sick and bloody woman.

And remember women bleeding in public was a huge no no --- huge no no in that society --- it was ritually unclean ---- it was frowned upon --- it would have caused great panic and alarm ---- there were all kinds of restrictions and limitations.

But God blesses her with faith --- and God in Christ blesses her with grace -- - amazing grace ---- and she is healed.

Amazing faith --- amazing grace.

Yes this woman is healed --- Hallelujah ----- but this is Mark’s Gospel --- we’ve still got this sick dying little girl on the go too.

That after all is where Jesus is headed ---- to help the 12 year old little girl.

Picking it up at verse 35 in Mark’s Gospel.

“While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

“Your daughter is dead --- why bother this teacher anymore” ---- they say to Jairus.

Imagine the possibility for despair here ---- this hemorrhaging --- this bloody low life of a woman has caused an esteemed leader’s daughter to die by

interrupting --- sidetracking ----- what we would now call high jacking the movement of this healer --- this savior --- this Jesus of Nazareth.

There very easily could have been outrage at what this woman's actions caused.

But then there is the next verse ---

“Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don't be afraid; just believe.”

The NIV translates “parakousas” --- as overhearing.

So it reads ----- “Overhearing what they said, Jesus told them...”

Another faithful translation of “parakousas” is “ignoring” --- not just “overhearing” but “ignoring” --- and so it reads

----- “Ignoring what they said --- Jesus told him ----- “Don't be afraid just believe.”

Jesus may have overheard and Jesus may have ignored ---- and Jesus may have overheard and then ignored what He overheard --- I think it's probably a bit of both --- but the ignoring part matters.

Jesus chose to ignore what they said --- that is was too late and there was no point anymore as the girl was already dead --- kind of reminds us of Lazarus doesn't it --- Mary and Martha thought Jesus was too late to save him too.

We often have to ignore much of what we hear --- people doubt all around us all of the time ---- people fret ---- people are full of fear --- and it can bring us down and distract us.

Jesus may have overheard what they were saying but He also chose to simply ignore them too.

The ignoring part cannot be overlooked lest we miss much of the richness of this interaction.

Belief ---- faith --- grace ---- are what matters here.

When something amazing and life giving --- grace filled ----- is about to happen there will always be someone --- at least one person ---- doubting



and fearful ---- saying something like --- “It’s too late don’t bother.” --- or --  
 --“It’s never going to happen don’t bother.”

It is never too late when Christ is present --- and it is never impossible when  
 the Holy Spirit is at work.

Jesus ---- ignoring what they said --- replied --- “Don’t be afraid --- just  
 believe.”

“Don’t be afraid just believe.”

When we do not fear --- when we believe --- we are blessed with faith and  
 we are blessed with grace --- and God moves --- and things happen.

This man ---- Jairus ---- this woman --- the bloody hemorrhaging woman ----  
 both knew that they needed an act of God to be helped.

The man wasn’t interested in a doctor he needed Jesus --- and he knew it.

The woman had already tried all the doctors ---- she needed Jesus --- and she  
 knew it.

They believed ---- and so God blessed them with faith --- and then God also  
 blessed them with grace.

When we believe --- we are blessed with faith --- and when we receive faith  
 anything can happen.

When we doubt very little happens.

When we believe we are blessed with the gift of faith ---- and then in turn  
 we experience amazing grace --- and act of God.

Belief is on us --- we have to choose to believe or not to believe.

Faith and grace are gifts that we are blessed with --- gifts from God --- gifts  
 only God can provide.

Ignore what they say --- Jesus is saying to the man --- ignore them ----  
 “Don’t be afraid ---- just believe.”

Jesus ignored the doubters ---- the faithless ---- the fearful people.

It's as clear as day in verse 36 from Mark's Gospel today --- "Ignoring what they said ----- Jesus told him --- "Don't be afraid ----- just believe."

"Don't be afraid ----- just believe."

When we believe --- which sometimes involves ignoring some of the foolish things other people say --- when we believe ---- when we choose to empower our belief to drive out fear ---- we are blessed with the gift of faith.

And when God blesses us with faith --- grace is never too far behind.

The hemorrhaging woman believed --- verses 27 & 28 --- "When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought ----- "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.""

"If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." ---- that's amazing faith.

Jairus believed ---- in verse 23 he pleaded ---- "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." - -- that's amazing faith too.

As unlikely a pair as ever ----- put their trust in Jesus and believe in Him.

And the result --- miraculous healings.

Amazing faith --- amazing grace.

And it all started with just a little bit of belief.

"If I just touch His clothes --- I'll be healed."

"If only He would touch my daughter she will be healed."

Anyone can doubt --- anyone can doubt --- we all do it.

Doubting is easy ---- it's cheap and foolish --- doubting asks nothing of us -- - it's easy and careless and lazy.

But to believe to accept the little bit of faith God may bless us with and then add belief and more belief and more belief --- only for God to dole out a little more faith --- and a little more faith and then a little more faith --- now that is something to celebrate.

We are called to believe --- not generate faith --- God blesses us with faith --  
----- it's a gift

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith...”

Believing that's our calling.

“Ignoring what they said, Jesus told him, “Don't be afraid; just believe.”

“Don't be afraid --- just believe.”

And ----

“Your faith has healed you go in peace ---- be freed from your suffering.”

And ---

“Little girl get up.”

This is Jesus in His own words today from Mark's Gospel.

“Get up ----- don't be afraid --- believe --- your faith has saved you and freed you from your suffering.”

This is amazing grace.

This ---- “Don't be afraid --- just believe.”

And this ----

“Your faith has healed you go in peace ---- be freed from your suffering.”

That's amazing grace.

As we sang together earlier --- we're going to add this song to our repertoire  
---- this is amazing grace.

When we believe --- when we truly believe that we need an act of God --- to  
save our daughter ---- to save ourselves --- to save our church ----- then and  
only then we experience amazing grace.

“This is amazing grace  
This is unfailing love  
That You would take my place  
That You would bear my cross  
You lay down Your life  
That I would be set free...”

And ----

“Amazing grace! How sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found;  
Was blind, but now I see.”

When God is at work anything can happen and anything can happen  
immediately ---- suddenly --- at once --- but we have to trust and obey ---  
and we have to believe --- and get out of the way.

Jesus in His own words ----

“Don't be afraid; just believe.”

“Your faith has healed you go in peace ---- be freed from your suffering.”

We already have all that we need ----- Jesus Christ.

We don't need to generate hype or --- work ourselves into some kind of a  
frenzy and call it faithfulness.

Ignore the doubters --- don't be afraid --- just believe.

God is so good.

And so awesome.

And so overwhelming.

He is ever around us inviting us to see into such a good and true and beautiful future --- we just have to trust and obey ---- believe --- give over and relax ourselves into his mighty arms and powerful saving embrace.

Amazing faith --- amazing grace.

“Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

To God be the glory.

Amen.