

THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

June 30, 2024

HEALED

and the willingness to be changed

by Drew Downs

What is the healing but changing? We often treat it like changing back to a previous state. But we can't. Our bodies won't let us. They only ever change in the process.

When we lift weights, we stress our muscles, tear them, and then they heal as new, stronger. Not as before. Different. Changed.

How often do we seek, not to be healed, but to time travel? To a time before, when our

bodies cooperate and moved differently. To a life we lived that isn't now. That isn't with these people around us, these responsibilities, that older face in the mirror.

I wonder if we would be more satisfied with our own sense of healing if we simply acknowledged that change is necessary? That we are called to love people as we are? To live in these frail forms for a time, embodying joy? And to simply live?

ORDINARY TIME

2024

WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

Mental Health

Most of us don't notice a mental health crisis until something happens. In our families, neighborhood, or church. At least when the one in crisis isn't us.

There's a chasm between the two, isn't there? The one living it and the one on the receiving end—of discomfort or, as in our case, property damage.

As a church with a building downtown in a city with some of the highest rates of poverty, drug abuse, and homelessness in the state, whose homeless population is rising and mental health resources are not, I'm sure the first question we might ask is "what can we do about this?"

Our first step is always prayer. For our neighbors and community, health and joy. And part of prayer is putting that intention into action, learning about community resources and opportunities. Engaging with people who are suffering and with those who help them.

We must also look further down the metaphorical river. At the engines of mental illness, which includes poverty and homelessness. At the agencies at the community, state, and federal level that work with mental health, homelessness, employment, and poverty, and help increase their capacity to help our neighbors.

We need advocates and community engagement. To help the people who need assistance with their mental health now and to prevent the next crisis from building up.

With love,
Drew

ORDINARY TIME

2024

FOR SUNDAY

Proper 8B

June 30, 2024

Collect

Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Reading

Mark 5:21-43

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet 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." So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

ORDINARY TIME

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?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." 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. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Reflection

We read these two healing stories together so that they can share in their teaching—in this case, about Jesus's healing and the people's expectations. In one, the disciples try to discourage Jesus from figuring out who healed themselves by touching him (!) and in the other, a leader who hopes to save his daughter hears discouraging words. It seems that Jesus has other plans than our rational expectations for him.

Both stories are improbable, reflecting the expanding scope of Jesus's power than most like to imagine. In one, raising a girl from the dead. And the other, even more shockingly, without *his* intention—but *hers*. She made herself well. The mechanics are immaterial—like the placebo effect, we can be healed, not by drug interactions only, but by the power of belief.

How might we see belief so innocently and intentionally as these two coming to Jesus for healing and finding in him far more than that?

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