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## Touching Jesus

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TEXT: Mark 5:22-42 (NASB1995)

One of the synagogue officials named Jairus came up, and on seeing Him, fell at His feet and implored Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death; please come and lay Your hands on her, so that she will get well and live." And He went off with him; and a large crowd was following Him and pressing in on Him.

A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse— after hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak. For she thought, "If I just touch His garments, I will get well." Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction.

Immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that the power proceeding from Him had gone forth, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My garments?" And His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" And He looked around to see the woman who had done this. But the woman fearing and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction."

While He was still speaking, they \*came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?" But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, \*said to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid any longer, only believe." And He allowed no one to accompany Him, except Peter and James and John the brother of James. They \*came to the house of the synagogue official; and He \*saw a commotion, and people loudly weeping

and wailing. And entering in, He \*said to them, "Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep." They began laughing at Him. But putting them all out, He \*took along the child's father and mother and His own companions, and \*entered the room where the child was. Taking the child by the hand, He \*said to her, "Talitha kum!" (which translated means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl got up and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely astounded.

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Dear friends,

Grace and peace are always for you from God, our Father, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

There's a story told of four men that went fishing at a secluded lake in northern Wisconsin. Their routine was to fish all day, have supper and a few beers, play some poker, and then every night they went to bed about 10:00 and got up before dawn for more fishing. One of them, who we'll call Joe, was the first to his bunk one night. He was exhausted and snoring within a few minutes. Then one of his friends had an idea. He got Joe's wristwatch off the dresser and changed the time to 4:45. Then they all got together and changed their own watches, including the alarm clock to 4:45. The alarm was set to go off at 5:00 a.m. or just 15 minutes later. Then his friends, the conspirators, turned off all the lights, took off their clothes and went to bed. Fifteen minutes later, when that alarm clock went off, they all got up, shuffled around and made the grumbly, miserable sounds the people usually make in the morning. One of them put on toast and put the coffee on. The only truly miserable one, of course, was Joe. He sat on the edge of the bed, shaking his head and moaning. He kept looking at his watch and complaining that he felt like he hadn't gotten any sleep. "I must be getting old," he said, as they went out, dropped anchor, and began fishing. Every few minutes, Joe would glance at his watch, look at the eastern sky and say, "What time are you got?" "5:40," someone said. "Boy, it's dark," Joe would say. And a little later: "What time have you got?" "6:00," another friend would answer. Then Joe began to be concerned. "Shouldn't it be getting light soon?" By this time, his watch said 6:40 a.m. Joe just stopped fishing. He sat there staring into the darkness. Finally, his voice cracking and genuine terror, he cried out, "I'm telling you, something's wrong. It's not getting light out today. It isn't getting light." "It's the end of the wooooooorld," his buddies hooted in laughter. "Doesn't matter," said one of them, "because the fish aren't biting anyway." It was then

that Joe caught on to their prank. He took it rather well, although they did have to wrestle an oar out of his hands that he intended to use as a club.

People, there are times in all our lives when we feel soul-crushing terror. "Something's wrong, it's not getting light." St. John of the Cross referred to it as the "dark night of the soul." We all experience it, where we need dawn's light to give us hope. We need Jesus the Son [sun] to rise with power to help us.

In our story today from Mark 5, the man named Jairus knew that kind of darkness. He came to see Jesus. Imagine him running, fighting through the crowd, and he falls on the face at the foot of Jesus and pleads with the master, "My little daughter's at the point of death, come and lay hands on her, so she may be well and live." Now, is there anything more helpless, a more desperate feeling, than having one of our own children be critically ill? Is there ever a darker time than that? Jairus was a man in deep emotional pain. His little girl was dying and he didn't know what to do. We know Jairus was desperate because he came to Jesus for help. You see, Jairus was the ruler of a synagogue, and all his colleagues and religious leaders would not look well on the fact that Jairus invited Jesus into his home to heal his little girl. They'd be shocked. He would be humiliated. After all, what credentials did Jesus have? Where had he gone to school and by what authority did he heal? Jairus couldn't say, but none of that mattered at that point. The only thing that mattered was the health and well-being of his daughter. Jairus was a desperate man. There was not a stitch of pride left in him. He was no longer concerned what anybody thought. He only knew that his daughter lay dying and he had to do something. What did he do? He turned to Jesus. He begged Jesus to come to his house to lay hands on his daughter. He asked for Jesus' touch and he believed that Jesus could make her well.

It's interesting, as Mark tells it in chapter 5, that there's a story within the story: one story layered on top of the other, of a woman with a flow of blood who had this physical ailment, hemorrhaging, for over 12 years. According to Hebrew law, this woman would have been considered unclean. There's no mention of any man in her life to provide or protect, and she would have been a social outcast because of her illness. The story is told that she had tried every remedy, gone to see multiple physical doctors, she had literally spent all her money, all her resources. But she was no better, only worse. She was bankrupt, spent, at the end of her limit without hope – hard to envision the future. Have you ever had those moments? Have you ever wondered how you

could go on or what the solution was, or how you could ever emerge from the darkness of the valley you're traveling in? But this woman now heard about Jesus. And she said, "If I can just touch his garment, if I can just touch his clothes..." Imagine her, then, with the crowd around Jesus moving in a parade toward Jairus' house, she pushes through the arms and the legs and the bodies. She swims through the people until she's close enough to Jesus to reach out and touch the hem of his robe. "If only I can touch him, I will be well."

And immediately she's healed. It's like a power surge that flows from the body of Jesus, and she knows she's been healed. And Jesus stops the parade in mid-step and says, "Who touched me?" The disciples are incredulous, "You see the crowd around you, it's absurd, Master. What do you mean, who touched you?" But Jesus knew that healing power had flowed from him. And the woman comes before Jesus shaking like a leaf falls before him and tells them the story. And Jesus says to her, "My child, don't be afraid. Your faith has saved you. Your faith has made you well. Go in peace." What a beautiful story for us to consider.

But now back to Jairus: before Jairus and Jesus can make it to Jairus' house, as Jesus is still conversing with this woman who had received the miracle healing, the household servants come to Jairus and say, "We have bad news. Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher, the master, anymore?" "It's too late," they're saying. The situation is now beyond hope. But when Jesus heard the news, he placed his hand gently on Jairus' shoulder, speaking to this terror-filled father. "Don't be afraid, only believe." When they arrived at Jairus' house, they found people weeping and wailing uncontrollably because of the death of his daughter. But Jesus asked them what feels like an insensitive and irrational question: "Why are you making such a commotion and weeping? This child isn't dead, only sleeping." With that statement, the mourners begin to laugh, what an absurdity! They laugh and mock Jesus: clearly they did not believe in Jesus. But Jesus was undeterred, unmoved by their laughter and unbelief, he went alone with the girl and the parents and some of his disciples, and he spoke life to the dead girl. The Lord of Life spoke new life into the girl. "Little girl, rise up. Get up." And immediately, the girl who had been dead rose and began walking around. It was an astonishing miracle.

In the same way, Jesus does call to each one of us who might be trapped in darkness or who feel as if something has died in our life. In those moments where we feel helpless, he calls us by name and says, "Rise up. I'm here." All of us do have points of crisis. We

reach the end of ourselves, our resources, our capacity, and in our desperation and despair, we panic. Is it our farming operation, our finances, our business? Is your marriage struggling? Are you concerned for your children? Are there some other struggles of life too powerful for you to face in your own strength? Maybe you haven't prayed to God for years. Maybe you've ignored God a good deal of the time and take God for granted. Maybe you've pushed God to the edge of your soul as if God has very little relevance to daily life or real life until a crisis comes that exposes our limits. I encourage you to know and believe. Wherever you're at in your relationship to God, pray to Jesus, pray in faith, reach out to him. Jesus has promised in John 6, "The one who comes to me I will never cast out."

Jesus praises the faith of the woman who touched him and also Jairus. Both Jairus and the woman with the hemorrhage of blood tangibly reached out to touch Jesus. What were their motives? How much did they understand? Was it just superstitious begging? Regardless, Jesus' power transformed their circumstances with the healing of the body, the restoring of life, the resurrection of the dead. They didn't have an intellectually complete confession of Jesus as the savior, the Messiah, the Lord, the son of God. But in spite of that, when people turned to Jesus and reach out to touch him, our Lord Jesus honors all who come to him. He promises to hear us. He desires to bless us. And he loves to heal, restore, and give us new life. Jesus is the sunrise of the dark night of our soul. We come to Jesus, but there's no need to stir up his compassion, earn his mercy, help him to understand us, or make him willing to help us; only to come touch our Jesus. And when faith touches Jesus, he willingly flows with power of grace to bless us and love. He restores us to wholeness. And he raises the dead to new life. He raises us to new life.

All of you basketball fans may remember a famous professional basketball player named Larry Bird, a great star for many years for the Boston Celtics. During his retirement party in the Boston Garden, former Celtics coach K.C. Jones told that during one game he was diagramming a play on the sidelines, only to have Bird interrupt him, dismiss the diagram, and say to the team, "Get me the ball and get out of the way." The coach, Jones, responded to Bird, "I'm the coach, I'll call the plays." And then Coach Jones turned to the team and said, "Get Larry the ball and get out of his way."

Sometimes in life, that's what we need to do in prayer. We need to turn to Jesus, put the circumstances or the difficulties of the despair in his hand. We either ask Jesus to touch

us or we touch him and we put our lives in his hands. Jesus gives us the courage and hope to live. Jesus is the sunrise on the dark night of our soul.

Amen.