



Sunday Reflection

in the Charges of St Margarets, Renfrew
& St Johns, Johnstone



For Sunday 30 June 2024

Pentecost 6

**The Rector will preach at St John's
& at St Margaret's:-**

In our need we may come to the God who cares for each one of us. We will find faith, love, mercy and healing.

"Do not fear, only believe." Mark 5:36

An illustration to set the scene

As she'd become a toddler, Dan's daughter Maisie had developed a mind of her own, so it seemed.

She was at that willful age when she would wriggle free of her father's hand and head off at speed, with a determination that both impressed and terrified her father.

One day, when Dan and another dad friend were walking along the street with their children, Maisie suddenly took off.

Dan looked a head and to his horror saw that she was heading towards a busy road junction.

Something automatic kicked in and Dan broke off the conversation with the other dad and darted after the little girl, bringing her to the ground with a rugby tackle.

It was only when he was standing up again, dusting himself off, that Dan realised that everybody in the busy shopping precinct had stopped, and there had been a collective intake of breath.

Dan breathed a prayer of thanks and carried on.

Today's Gospel teaching

In today's Gospel reading we meet two people who are desperate.

They both have to push on through social barriers that would stop them reaching Jesus.

Jairus has his social standing to worry about.

People like him simply do not go seeking out itinerant Galilean preachers.

But Jairus falls on his knees and begs Jesus repeatedly, **"Come and lay your hands on her."**

His love for his daughter triumphs over his social standing.

Next, we meet a woman who has to deal with the fact that her issue of blood makes her ritually unclean, and anyone she touches will become ritually unclean, too.

She should not touch Jesus, but her faith and desperation work together and she breaks through this social constraint.

Many people are brushing against Jesus, but she really touches him, somehow connecting with him through her faith.

She is scared that she will be told off for her breach of the purity rules.

Instead of rebuke, she is told to, “go in peace, and be healed of your disease”.

Both Jairus and the woman exemplify an active faith which overcomes social disapproval, breaking through to the heart of God.

For Jairus, things take a severe turn for the worse when people come to tell him that his daughter is dead.

He has crossed the social barrier; he now has the barrier of believing in the face of all the evidence to the contrary.

Jesus inspires him with the powerful words, **“Do not fear, only believe.”**

At Jairus’ house, Jairus’ faith is mocked, but the master takes charge of the situation; people are ushered out, and a miracle occurs.

Jesus demonstrates his remarkable, caring love still further when he tells her parents to give her something to eat.

Jesus has faith, he is in charge and he is a person of compassion.

Finally, we can note that these two people came to Jesus with their pressing personal needs.

We are so often told not to think of ourselves, that it is joyfully refreshing to see how Jesus receives these two individuals warmly and meets their needs.

How can we apply the teaching to our own lives?

There are often barriers when we seek Jesus.

What will people think?

In this and other Gospel stories it appears that social expectation and the kingdom of God are frequently, if not always, in conflict.

We have to get over the hump of disapproval to get to Jesus.

Preferring the approval of people to following God's leading creates a barrier to God's work in our lives.

Both Jairus and the woman are driven by personal need.

In Christian circles we are encouraged to not think of ourselves.

Others do indeed matter, but we do, too.

Jesus cares for us and does not turn us away.

Jairus has to keep on believing even when things take a turn for the worse.

Just as in the true story in the illustration, in life we sometimes have to **"hang on in there"** even when things look bad.

In these stories we see the mercy and love of Jesus shining through.

We see Jesus' peace and healing for the woman and his supernatural love for Jairus and his family, followed by his simple care when he tells them to give the girl something to eat.

"Do not fear, only believe." Mark 5:36

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