

Sermon 7-1-2018
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
By
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Every name has a meaning. Names have various roots that reveal something deeper. For example, Christopher means "bearer of Christ", so it's really not a surprise where I ended up. When we were coming up with a name for our first child, when she turned out to be a girl, Grace was really the only option. Plus, her middle name was already picked: Both of her grandmothers have the middle name Ann. I remember standing in a Barnes & Noble looking over the baby books, and I picked up a name book, because I'm always interested in that stuff, and I was interested what Anne means. Anne means "grace". There was no way she was getting away from that. Names especially mean a lot in the Bible. When someone is named, there's going to be a meaning behind it, that reflects into the story that they are involved in.

Today's reading from Mark is no different. Besides the usual suspects, Jesus, Peter, James, and John, only one other person in the story gets a name, and it's not either of the two people who were healed. It is the father of the girl, Jairus. The name means "God enlightens". That means that Jairus is someone who is going to be enlightened by God. He is going to receive knowledge about what God is doing and how God is doing it, and he's going to experience it twice right in front of him. He must already have a foretaste of the feast to come, because he is the one that comes to Jesus. He has a daughter who is sick. He needs Jesus to come to her. And Jesus comes. He actually heard Jairus' cries. He came to Jesus because he knew that he could do this healing, but on the way, Jesus ups the game.

All of a sudden, as Jesus, Jairus, and the crowd are working their way to Jairus' home, Jesus stops. He says, "who touched my clothes?" Jairus' first response is probably "who cares? Let's get back to my daughter." But then this woman falls at Jesus' feet and confesses that it was her, and the touch healed her. And Jairus gets enlightened. Jesus didn't even know he was healing, and he healed! That's how powerful Jesus is. Jairus begged and pleaded, and all this woman had to do was touch him, without him knowing, and she was healed. That, too, is enlightenment we need. We often believe that we need to cajole, exhort, entice Jesus to do something. We do pray to him, and praying is important for our life of faith, and letting God know what the concerns in our life are. But there are those among the church that feel like we have to convince God to do something out of his self-interest. We've got this assumption that God doesn't *really* want to help us, so we've got to move him to do something, or do everything in our power to do it ourselves. That is the fundamental doubt of humanity: God doesn't really care.

But God *wants* to heal. He *wants* to free. Merely touching his clothes heals. But soon after this, Jairus gets enlightened again. People come from his house and tell him his daughter has died. Welp, that's it. Just more reinforcement that Jesus really doesn't care, that he

really doesn't want to heal, because if he had, he would have gone faster, on my timeline, and healed my daughter. But now, there's no hope. It's over. He doesn't care. And all Jesus has is some seemingly empty words: "Don't be afraid; just believe." OK, real encouraging there. He even tells that to the whole crowd gathered around Jairus' house, and he gets laughed at. We even laugh at God, because death seems pretty permanent.

But those who laugh, including us, in our doubt, forget one tiny little detail: God is in the business of resurrection. Jesus enters this house, and resurrects this girl. As much as the woman on the way could reach out and touch Jesus, this girl can't do anything. She's dead, and Jesus brings her life anyway. And Jairus gets enlightened again. Not only does this Jesus have the power to heal the sick, he has the power to raise the dead. This should explode our brain, and our hearts. Whether we reach out to him, or he reaches out to us, he wants to heal. He wants to give hope. He wants to give faith. He wants to give life. And it's more than a want. He does it. But he also does it in his time, in his way. Because he knows that any healing this side of heaven is only going to be temporary, because we will have to be paid the wages of our sin. The bleeding woman still dies. Jairus' daughter still dies, again. Both of these healings are temporary, and what Jesus is ultimately after is the eternal. That's why he goes to the cross. He dies, so that death may die. He is raised from the dead, so that you may be raised from the dead, never to die again. That's the eternal work that Christ sets out to do and does. And thanks to Jesus, Jairus, the Scriptures, and the giving of the Gospel, we have been enlightened. Now that we have been raised from the dead, let's have something to eat. AMEN.