

THE FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – JUNE 27, 2021
MARK 5:21-43

“What if there is not enough money?” This is Monica’s question. “What if there is not enough money?” Monica feels so vulnerable. In her mid 70’s she is now alone. Monica’s husband just died. She keeps asking, “What if there is not enough money?”

The irony is Monica has more money now than she has ever had in her lifetime. Yet she feels so vulnerable. What if there is not enough?

A bit of history: Monica is a child of the Great Depression. She knows poverty, hunger, and how it is to find just enough to scrape by.

Late in her teens, she marries. Monica and her husband are both working, and it is enough. As years progress their income increases, and so does their standard of living. It is the American dream come true. Life is good. There is enough, even though sometimes more would be better.

Now, it is the latter days of life with her husband's lengthy illness stressing their budget. There is major surgery...not once, but twice, before the dreaded cancer comes and claims his life leaving her alone.

Now, all those memories of times when food is scarce come back to Monica. How will she live? As a child she watches the elderly of her family live in desperate poverty because they can no longer work. How will she pay her rent? How will she buy food? Can she afford a car? What if she becomes ill like her husband?

You need to know she has the income of his full pension, Social Security, savings, and a bit more. She has more money, more income, than ever before in her life.

But she is afraid and feels vulnerable. Will she hold it all together? Monica is very anxious.

Monica is a contemporary example of the three folks who comprise our gospel lesson today. Jairus, the woman with a hemorrhage and the twelve-year-old girl are all vulnerable and perhaps even desperate.

Like any father, Jairus is deeply concerned about his dying child. He is so desperate that he comes to Jesus begging for help. Notice Jairus doesn’t even spend a moment on niceties or bargaining. He goes right to begging. He can do nothing else. His child is close to death. Who of us would not be as desperate as Jairus?

Next, we meet the woman with the hemorrhage. She has been ill for twelve years. She is being mistreated. Who of us would not be as desperate as this woman if we had an illness for twelve years and are being mistreated? Who of us would not feel just as vulnerable and needy as she does? Little wonder she takes a chance and touches this man, this one who heals. The culture

of her time forbids her to do this. It is an outrageous act on her part. But she does it. And she is found out! And she is healed.

Finally, there is the twelve-year-old girl. On the edge of becoming a woman. Just about to mature into a new dimension of life, it seems death will steal her away. And she is not even aware. It is left to her father to be anxious, to feel helpless. And so he is. Others have given up, but he persists. She is healed. The healing is sealed as Jesus instructs them to give her something to eat; a clear sign she is well.

There are those moments when each of us feels like one of these four people. Perhaps we are anxious like Monica, fearful we cannot hold life together as our days draw short. Or perhaps we are the parent feeling helpless as our child struggles with health issues. Perhaps we are like the woman plagued by illness. We know how it is to feel so vulnerable. And there's the young girl. Perhaps you face, like she did, a death before you get a chance to complete that "bucket list" you have created?

There are moments we realize we are so vulnerable. Some days we work hard and manage; then along comes an illness, a financial crisis, or some other challenge and there is simply no way we can hold it together any longer.

Certainly, death itself is the final challenge. Our gospel lesson today reminds us as Jesus healed the woman and child and as he relieved the desperation of the father, Jesus heals us as only he can. In the cross, Jesus, vulnerable himself, dies to grant us new life, forgiven life. In the cross Jesus dies to give us healing we have no other way. At our most vulnerable, at our most desperate, Jesus heals, giving us new life in death.

So, we affirm these things: God brings healing in Christ. Second, by the grace of God we are hopeful. We have a future. And this is the third affirmation: while we do not know what the future holds for us, we know who holds us for a future yet to be: Christ our Lord holds us. We need not be anxious or afraid, we know who firmly holds the future for us. Amen.

- Pastor Robert F. Holley