

St Philip and St James Anglican Church  
Palma de Mallorca Spain  
27th June 2021  
The Fourth Sunday after Trinity  
Theme: Faith in a Hopeless Situation.

Text: Mark 5:21-43

Introduction

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
Today is the fourth Sunday after Trinity and the theme for my sermon is **Having Faith in a Hopeless Situation**. The gospel reading for today combines two miracle stories, the healing of the woman suffering from flow of blood for 12 years and the raising of Jairus' daughter from death. Miracle stories in the gospels have a common pattern to follow; first, there was the description of a crisis. This was not an ordinary crisis that can be solved easily. It was a difficult crisis that needs divine intervention. For example, in the two miracle stories, the first crisis was the flowing of blood for 12 years. The woman had endured much pain and had spent all her fortunes on physicians. The problem was not getting better but worse. In the second miracle story, we read the report that came to Jesus that the daughter of Jairus was sick and she eventually died. Again that was a crisis beyond human solutions. What was left was to bury her. The second pattern of these miracle stories was the solution proffered by Jesus Himself. And thirdly, was the reaction of the onlookers. This is the same pattern that we encounter in today's gospel reading.

**Exegesis of the Text**

After the dramatic exorcise of Legion earlier on in the Gentile territory, Jesus crosses the Sea of Galilee to the Jewish side where he performs two miracles. Both stories center on healing. In the first story, we read Jairus pleading with Jesus for the healing of his daughter. Jairus is an official of the synagogue meaning he is a person of authority in the Jewish society. Probably his functions were to arrange services, appoint readers and preachers and preserve order. He comes to Jesus in this official capacity; he comes as a desperate father to plead for his little daughter who is at the point of death. Jairus' love for his daughter makes him into a beggar. His dignity is cast aside; his pleading is expressed in his whole body, fallen at the feet of Jesus. Such is the quality of his desperation and such is the quality of his faith in Jesus. Just by coming to Jesus, Jairus acknowledges that whatever authority he possesses is surpassed by that given to Jesus. Jesus says nothing, he promises nothing. He goes with Jairus and the crowds press forward into the new drama. The walk to Jairus' house is interrupted by a secret sufferer. Have you ever walked with someone who is greeted by almost everyone in the street? How do you feel with walking with such a person? In verse 24, the path to Jairus' house was interrupted by a crowd. Mark then inserts the story of the woman suffering from the flow of blood. Mark loves this sandwich technique especially when narrating a larger narrative. In biblical interpretation, we call this technique, intercalation. Such a technique heightened the tension of the developing drama, one that will have its climax in Jesus' greatest miracle in the Gospel of Mark. This woman like Jairus, she is desperate and in a hopeless situation. She had

suffered from the flow of blood for 12 years and had endured much pain and marginalization. She heard about Jesus and she silently sneaked through the crowd and touched Jesus' cloak. She is healed instantly. This secret exchange of power creates the opportunity for dialogue. Jesus feels it and asked who has touched my clothes? This was a senseless question to the disciples, hence the response, the crowd is pressing on you, how can you say who touched you? Little did they know that this was not an ordinary touch? There was something spiritual in the touching. She believes that Jesus will make a difference in her life. She comes forward in fear, falls down at Jesus' feet and tells the whole truth. Her first coming to touch Jesus' clothes brought healing. Her second coming in open and honest response to Jesus' invitation brings her the assurance of salvation and the offer of peace. The affliction of 12 long years has stopped but that good news is interrupted by messengers from Jairus' house with the sad news that the life of the little girl has come to an end. Jesus' delay has proved fatal. The messengers do not address Jesus but they address only their superior. However, Jesus overhears it. He urges Jairus as he did to the woman, do not fear, only believe. He allowed only three disciples and the father to go inside the house. For him the child is not dead but asleep. He lifted the girl by his hands and pronounced the healing words, little girl, get up. The girl immediately got up and began to walk. Both stories have happy endings but that is not always the reality of life. Not even our most earnest pleas always result in the answers we desire.

#### Application

Almost all of us must confess ailment: be it physical, spiritual, psychological, or interpersonal that aches for

restoration. Where do we go when we get into the situation?  
From today's gospel, we learn that we should not lose hope.  
Even when in a situation that appears hopeless, we must not lose hope. I like the statement from Paul, **“More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Secondly, we also learn about the importance of faith in Jesus. In today's stories, the subjects of the stories were in a hopeless situation but they put their faith in Jesus and this necessitated healing. It is by having faith in Jesus that we are even delivered from what appears to be a hopeless situation. May the almighty God bless us All. Amen.**

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