

Twelve years. Try to remember back to twelve years ago. That was 2009. Looking at photo albums from 2009, Faith celebrated many things. Pastor Munding celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. We had a church picnic at Goose Island. Youth from St. Paul Grafton helped out with VBS. We had a Lutheran Hour float in the parade. Some major renovations took place: the parking lot was resurfaced, windows were replaced, we installed the handicap bathroom, and we did some landscaping on the Main Street side of the church. In some ways, twelve years can seem like not that long ago. In other ways, it can seem like an eternity. As we approach our Gospel lesson for today, twelve years is a key marker of time.

Twelve years. Imagine one of the happiest days of your life. Holding your newborn daughter in your arms for the first time. A baby is a ray of hope. With a newborn you have so many hopes and aspirations for the future. What will this girl be like when she grows up? Will she look like her mom or her dad? What hobbies and games will she like to play? In twelve years imagine the many firsts: first solid food, first steps, and first words. All of this must have been on Jairus' mind as he approached Jesus and begged him saying, **“My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live.”** Jairus' twelve-year-old daughter was ill to the point of death.

Twelve years. **“And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years,”** Imagine one of the worst days of your life: bleeding that started unexpectedly and didn't stop. That was the situation with the woman with the flood of blood. This flow of blood would make her ritually unclean. She could not go to the temple, she was ostracized and separated from the rest of society. She **“...had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse.”** Doctor after doctor trying their best, and still no luck to repair her condition. Imagine the hope as each doctor tried his treatment, but that hope dashed to pieces as things actually got worse.

Our translation refers to this ailment as a disease, but that's not a strong enough word. This same word is the same word used to describe a whip. This disease wasn't just a chronic annoyance, it was a scourge. It was as though this woman lived life with a demon in the corner holding a whip, yet she didn't know when he would strike next. Sometimes the anticipation is worse than the pain itself.

Twelve years. I know many of you have worked or currently work at some of the local hospitals here. What a job to be one of the receptionists at Mayo or Gundersen! You get to see a parade of people, some having the best day of their life, others having the worst. One day a young lady is admitted and leaves with a baby later in the week. Another day an old couple comes in and later that week you see the husband leaving alone: the wife died.

Twelve years. In the past 12 years, twenty-eight funerals for members of Faith Lutheran Church. Between Pastor Munding, Cumming, and me, countless

hospital visits. The sting of death and the scourge of disease is still alive and well these many centuries after our account from Mark's Gospel takes place.

I've been with you at the hospital. I've visited your homes. I've been on the phone praying with you. I've visited your loved ones as they were dying. I've gotten called out of bed in the middle of the night and I've gotten up with the dawn to drive to Mayo Rochester.

You don't need a theological degree for this text to resonate with you. You just need to be a human. I'm willing to venture a guess that you have a loved one who has died. I'm willing to venture a guess that you know people who have chronic diseases. It's likely you know somebody whose body is not as in good of shape as it was twelve years ago. Maybe you're that person who has a chronic disease. Maybe you're that somebody with a frail body.

What can we learn from this text? We learn **IN SICKNESS AND DEATH JESUS SAVES THOSE WHO CLING TO HIM. I. Jairus and the woman entrusted their burdens to Jesus.** What do the woman and Jairus have in common? They had the audacity to approach Jesus. Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue, and he had quite some courage to approach Jesus. Jesus was quite a controversial figure by this point, and Jairus could get in trouble with some of the rabbis and pharisees back home.

The woman had to wade through a mosh pit of people. Do you remember before Coronavirus? Picture the Oktoberfest grounds, or a 3<sup>rd</sup> street bar on a Friday night, or a concert at the La Crosse center. She waded through that and **"...came up behind [Jesus] in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well."**" Both the woman and Jairus had the courage to put themselves out there, entrusting their burdens to Jesus.

And in both cases, we see that Jesus heals them. Jairus' daughter is raised, and the woman's bleeding stops! What does Jesus say? **"Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."** Your faith has made you well. You could also translate this as: your faith has saved you.

Thus, **II. We entrust our burdens to Jesus.** Jesus is the great physician of body and soul. This is as true today as it was true when He walked this Earth. The Lord is calling us to be bold in our prayers as we pray for those who are dying, as we pray for those who are sick, or we pray for anyone with any need. Jesus promises to hear and He promises to answer our prayers.

Jesus as the great physician of body and soul doesn't mean that we tear up our insurance cards and cancel our gym memberships, it means that we seek out the best medical care we can find as well as take good care of the bodies that our Heavenly Father has given us.

A husband hired a sand sculptor to make an anniversary gift for his wife. It was a beautiful, intricate sandcastle. The only problem is that the sculptor made the

castle at low tide. The husband had time to show the wife the beautiful work of art, they had a chance to get pictures and open a bottle of champagne, but eventually the tide started to roll in.

The husband made a heroic effort to stop the tide. Forming walls of sand, digging trenches around the sandcastle. The wife made field adjustments to the sandcastle, repairing towers that started to crumble. Nonetheless, the tide continued to rise, and the sculpture was lost to the ocean.

We are not unlike a sandcastle. We can seek out the best diet and exercise regimen to fortify our bodies. We can hire the most adept doctors and professionals to build walls and trenches around us, but the tide is still rolling in. There is a day that the sandcastle will crumble. There is a day that each and every one of us will die.

That is why it is so important that each of us calls upon the one who has tasted death and yet rose again. That is why it is so important to trust in the one who healed the sick, raised the dead, and cast out demons. That is why we are to trust the one who bore our sicknesses and diseases even as he was whipped, tortured, and crucified for us. When our castles turn to sand, trust in the one who is our refuge and strength.

III. Jesus promises to save those who cling to Him. This salvation was accomplished as Jesus died and rose for you. Beaten, bloodied, and drained on the cross, the Son of Man suffers alongside you as you face your own trials, sicknesses, and sufferings. He is with you in the operating room. He is with you in the doctor's office. He is with you as you say your final goodbyes and when the casket lowers into the ground. He knows pain. He knows suffering. He knows death.

He experienced all those things so that He could defeat them. His resurrection proves that this physician has a solution for sickness, suffering, and death. Even as He promises to be with you in pain and suffering, so too He will raise you up on the last day with a body that is freed from chronic pain, from disease, and death.

Until then, He invites you to seek Him out, just as Jairus and the woman sought Him out. Look for him where he can be found: in the Word and Sacrament. Keep coming back to this place. Keep hearing from the man who healed Jairus' daughter, who healed the woman with the flow of blood, and daily and richly provides you with everything you need to support this body and life.

Twelve years. Twelve years in the future will be 2033. Who knows what Faith Lutheran will be like by then. As we consider our own lives and where the Lord will take us in twelve years, let us continue to cling to His promises that He gives us in His Word, and let us trust in Him always as our great physician of body *and* soul.