

I heard a noise from the cat – a wailing sound. The next thing I knew he was vomiting up hairballs. Yuk! Now I have a weak stomach and so does Beth who was home for just a few hours. Sue the one I always rely on in this sort of an emergency was at work. So gagging all the while I managed to get the mess up off the carpet.

Beth said, “I could never do that.”

And I said, “If you have children someday you will learn to do a lot of things you thought you could never do.”

Maybe it was like that for Jairus that day. On his knees, begging Jesus for help. Mark tells us that Jairus was a leader in the synagogue – an honored man, an important man. But like some street bum he fell down at Jesus feet begging. Repeatedly.

This was not some polite request, but desperation. “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her so that she maybe made well and live.”

Repeatedly. As if Jesus did not listen to his plea the first time, or the second or the third. But finally Jesus agreed – he went with him.

You know what it is like to be in congested traffic – his daughter was dying – every second was precious. But everyone wanted something from Jesus – reaching, touching, begging. Every step of the way the crowd was pressing in on Jesus.

Lost in the mass of people was a woman. She should not have been there. She was ritually unclean, prohibited by the law of God from coming into contact with others. For she had a flow of blood. For twelve years she had been suffering in this way. The doctors took her money – increased her pain but helped her not at all. And I am sure that the folks down at the synagogue would have told her they were praying for her had she been allowed to be among them. Maybe Jairus would have even quoted some scripture to her – something like our first lesson

today: It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. But she was done with obeying the laws that isolated her. She was done with the waiting. She was in the crowd – touching the holy man, Jesus.

When she touched him she was healed. Healing in him was greater than contamination in her.

Who touched my clothes? Jesus asked.

She fell down before him and told him the whole story.

It took some time. A little girl was dying but Jesus was stopped for this outcast. This nobody. This woman.

When Jesus had heard what she spoke he called her daughter. “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your disease.”

But even as he spoke it they came to Jairus with these words: Your daughter is dead.

If you had been Jesus whom would you have chosen – the dying daughter of an important man or the used up wreck of a woman who had been suffering for twelve years. If you had to choose would you choose one of our daughters all clean and scrubbed and bright or those children dragged from shelter to shelter by a mother addicted to drugs. I know how often I think there are some who are just beyond hope – lets take care of the ones who are not yet ruined. Let’s keep our money at home – take care of our own. But Jesus stopped for the woman.

But you know the rest of the story – how with Jesus it is never too late. He took the dead girl by the hand, commanded her to get up and she did. Alive – well.

Give me your tired your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore – send these the homeless tempest-tossed to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

In school I learned that poem written by Emma Lazarus. Inscribed on the Statute of Liberty it proclaims the vision of a land where every woman is a daughter – every man a son.

I do not talk about politics here, in worship. The reason is that I am not so wise as to know what political actions will produce good. But that does not mean that I think that Jesus is uninterested in the political decisions

we make. You and I are like Jairus – intensely concerned about our own. But so is Jesus. His own daughters are the women the world is forgetting – abused by the men they love. Jesus’ daughters are all the women who are told to be quiet and wait patiently but who will not. Jesus’ daughters are the women whose houses are destroyed in floods, whose children are starved in famine and slaughtered in wars.

On this Fourth of July weekend we can give thanks for a nation in which the homeless tempest tossed of other lands have found a home. Outcasts have become citizens. The wretched refuse of other teeming shores have become sons and daughters here. And still both here and in other lands millions of hands are reaching out for a touch of healing – for help.

Jesus does not walk the streets of Galilee nor the streets of Sheffield Lake, nor the streets of Avon. But you do. Jesus does not have neighbors in Avon Lake and North Ridgeville and Lorain who need a hand to grasp but you do. Jesus does not live among young mothers who are overwhelmed by their responsibilities and who need programs to help them but you do.

Jesus healed the outcast and the daughter of the honored man. Not one or the other but both. And when they both needed someone to die for their salvation Jesus died for them both.

Whoever you are in the eyes of the world, you are a daughter to Jesus, a son to him. And so is every neighbor you meet in this world. Amen.