

I first noticed the corn rows – strand upon strand of hair, intertwined. How long that must have taken. I had never before seen a woman whose hair was gray fixed up in that way. I was in the visiting room at Grafton Correctional Institution. She must be here to visit her grandson, I thought. Her life has ~~not~~ become intertwined with this place. How sad.

When visiting was over and we were leaving woman spoke to a female officer: Friend, these ^{all my} ~~grand~~ granddaughters, pointing to the young girls being held by another woman. I have always thought of that particular guard as being abrupt – not very approachable. But she called her friend – wanted her to share in her joy over her grandchildren. Like the strands of hair interwoven – lives were being intertwined as well. The guard smile ^d spoke a warm greeting.

Intertwined. That is how the two stories about Jesus that Mark tells us this morning are arranged – intertwined. Woven – one wrapped around the other.

First there is the daughter of a leader of the synagogue. Her life has become intertwined with illness. When Jairus, the girl's father, saw Jesus he fell at Jesus' feet and begged him repeatedly, "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."

What would this father do for his daughter? Well this proud leader high up on the social scale became a beggar. Down on the ground, begging repeatedly. Jesus went with him.

But their journey was interrupted by a touch. A woman touched Jesus' cloak. But not just any woman. Though Mark gives her no name those who knew her story must have felt sorry for her ^{as I felt sorry for} ~~as I felt sorry for~~ woman at the prison. Poor Mary, or Rebekah or Rachel. For this woman had been cut off from normal society for twelve years. She suffered from bleeding – not the normal once a month or so that healthy young women experience but continual hemorrhaging. According to Jewish religious law she could not have contact with others as long as she

suffered from this condition. It would be like today being under continual quarantine – for twelve years! Poor Rachel.

But on this day she was breaking all the rules. In a crowd and then touching Jesus, for she thought, ^A I but touch his clothes I will be made well

Immediately Jesus perceived that power had gone forth from him and he turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched me?" The woman confessed – told Jesus her whole story of seeking help and getting none and becoming impoverished in the process. And Jesus said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.

But even as Jesus spoke people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher further?" While Jesus had been listening to a nobody – this precious daughter of a leader of the people had died. Can you see how these lives had become intertwined? The way health care for the poor in our time gets intertwined with how much government will cost us all or how much part time workers will cost a business or how much income doctors will make. Maybe some in that crowd dared to think the thought that this young girl's life was more precious than the life of this used up woman. Jesus should have rushed on by her but now it was too late. Don't bother the teacher any further.

But Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe."

You know the rest of the story, how Jesus went and took the corpse of that young girl by the hand and said, "Little girl, get up!" And she immediately got up and began to walk about.

Intertwined

When Jesus encounters one on the lowest rung of the ladder of society or on the highest there is touch. One reaching out to him – another being grasped by him. And sickness and death that were intertwined in those lives is replaced with the love and power and healing of God. And one who had no name is now called daughter ^{by} Jesus, her life forever intertwined with Jesus. And the daughter who was taken in death is the daughter now restored.

And you and I? None of us are as low and as outcast as that woman who had been hemorrhaging and none of us more loved than that daughter of Jairus. But we come here with pain and shame and disappointment and sickness intertwined with our lives. What will happen when you reach out and Jesus is placed in your hand? I do not know. But I do know that the word Jesus spoke to Jairus is spoken you, Do not fear, only believe. For I know that Jesus is intertwining your life in his through faith. And intends to intertwined himself into the life of every single person you encounter.

I hope you will always remember that