Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“Who touched me?” (Mark 5:31).

2 Sm 18:9 ff; Mark 5:21-43

The two miracles in this Gospel passage are so tightly woven together, we might think of them as a single miracle that leaps from the woman to the little girl through Jesus.

Mark’s Gospel, thought to be the earliest, offers us a curious look at Jesus, who seems to learn as he goes what it means for him to be God’s messenger, a process Mark calls his “messianic secret.” One way to describe this has been to say that Jesus was a different kind of messiah—a suffering servant—rather than a warrior king. To avoid misunderstanding, Jesus tells people not to reveal his identity. But another way to understand this is to say that the secret lies in Jesus’ own unfolding consciousness of how God is revealing the kingdom through him. Today’s reading from Mark 5 illustrates this.

The woman with the hemorrhage draws power from Jesus by touching his cloak in the crowd. Jesus is unaware until the healing occurs. He stops to ask, “Who touched me?” and the woman comes forward to reveal herself. Jesus is on his way to the house of Jairus, whose daughter is dying. The woman’s faith instills the moment with confidence. Jesus pushes forward, telling Jairus not to lose faith, even as messengers arrive to say that his daughter is dead. The professional mourners at the house ridicule Jesus, but he puts them out, taking some disciples and the girl’s parents into the room where the girl’s body is lying. Jesus takes her by the hand, tells her to rise,

and the girl is alive again. Faith has done this, a continuous flow of faith from the woman in the crowd to the parents and, so it seems, to Jesus himself. The kingdom is at hand because faith draws it forth.

For us, perhaps the real messianic secret is that this same power is always available to us if we believe. Where fear and doubt overwhelm us, faith withers and nothing can happen. But where faith flows and grows and is passed along, miracles happen. Could it be that the real messianic secret is about us?

Faith is the key. Jairus believes that if Jesus comes to his house, his 12-year-old daughter will live, and the girl rises up. The woman, who has suffered for 12 years from blood flow, believes that if she touches Jesus' cloak she will be healed, and she is. Where a community believes and welcomes Jesus, healing occurs. Where faith overcomes fear and we press on, will we not touch Jesus and witness his healing touch in return? Two miracles occurred that day, but the greatest one was that faith prevailed.

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