

**Pastor Tom Mortenson**

**Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York**

**January 3, 2021**

**Communion Sunday**

**Selected Scriptures**

**Prayer:** Father, we just again, we thank you for this day, we thank you that we can take one Sunday a month and focus on you and your life and your death for us. We just again pray that you would give us the gift of your Holy Spirit as we again look into your book, as we again look to see what it is you've done for us in the marvels of that gift. Father, give us grace, give us the ability to hear your Spirit as he speaks to us and to make this of permanent value, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, once again it's the first Sunday of the month, and actually the first Sunday of the year, and again this is the day that we remember Christ and his cross, even if only virtually for most of us. Jesus on the night before he died met with his disciples for one final Passover supper. Matthew 26 describes it, saying: Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is

*my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*" So Jesus took bread and he took wine and he offered them up as symbols of his flesh and his blood and he asked the disciples to eat the bread and drink the cup so that they might symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood. And then he asked them to repeat this remembrance of his sacrifice on a regular basis and this is what we call "the Lord's table." We celebrate it once a month, some folks celebrate it every week, some folks celebrate it once or twice a year, but we do it by meditating on what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us on the cross, by then examining ourselves, asking God's Holy Spirit to point out those areas where he's convicting us of sin, by confessing our sins and then by participating in the elements. John 6:53 says: *So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."*

Well we've been following the life of Christ in the gospel of Mark and just to give you a quick recap of where we are, Jesus has been ministering on the shores of the sea of Galilee. He asked the disciples to take him by boat to the other side, and as they're crossing, a tremendous storm comes up threatening to drown the disciples. Jesus rebukes the wind, he rebukes the storm and

instantly it stops. They arrive on the other shore to find a man demon possessed, screaming, racing down the hill to attack them. Jesus identifies, rebukes and exorcises the demons inside the man allowing them to enter into a herd of pigs which run headlong down a hillside, committing suicide, killing themselves while destroying the livelihood of all of the locals. This is a herd that numbered over 3,000, so this was a considerable economic blow to the area and the people asked Jesus to leave. They don't dare kick him out because they've just witnessed his power in healing this demon-possessed man and casting the demons into the pigs, but they clearly want him to leave. They prefer swine to Savior. And so Jesus leaves. He then goes back over to the previous area in Galilee where he returns to ministering to the crowds, and so we pick up on *Mark 5:21* at this point. It says: *Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live."*

Well, desperate times call for desperate measures and Jairus as the ruler of this synagogue couldn't possibly have been more desperate. His little girl was dying, and he's quite willing to put everything

on the line. For a ruler such as Jairus this is a bridge burning issue. The religious community that he was part of had already declared open war on Jesus. They had seen the miracles that he had done and had ultimately rejected them claiming that Jesus had derived his power from Satan himself. Jesus had responded by speaking only in parables, limiting the understanding of what he was teaching to only the sheep who would hear his voice. Jairus had to know that by making it plain that he trusted that the miracles that Jesus had done were legitimate and that Jesus was indeed who he claimed to be, that that would permanently demonstrate whose side Jairus was now on. Having your own daughter dying in front of you gives a certain clarity to the decisions that you have to make. And Jairus at this point, I am sure, didn't really care what anybody else thought. There was a possibility in his mind, the very real possibility, that he could get the Master to hear his plea and heal his daughter, and that's all that mattered. "*Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed and she will live,*" he said. This was Jairus' public confession that he was trusting in Jesus as Lord.

Now, have you ever had an opportunity like Jairus had to publicly confess Jesus as Lord perhaps in front of an audience that might be potentially hostile? Maybe you have a coworker who can't resist using the name of Jesus in vain or a neighbor who refuses to hide

his disdain for those people that he refers to as "Bible thumpers"? Perhaps you have noticed that the climate towards Christians has become a lot more hostile. For many years Christianity was part of the common cultural consensus in this country. Everyone believed in basic biblical principles not because they were biblical but because mom and dad and grandpa and grandma, they also shared these values. In many areas folks really had no idea what biblical Christianity was all about, why sex was supposed to be a gift from God reserved specifically for marriage or that marriage was supposed to be between opposite sexes or that abortion was inarguably the taking of human life. Folks used to believe these things but they believed them only for romantic reasons. I mean they didn't realize that there was a strong biblical basis for these beliefs and behaviors and when the culture turned against these practices, they just turned with it. And almost overnight the cultural consensus collapsed, and now simply believing what the Bible teaches becomes hateful and bigoted and backwards. Believers find that we only have really two choices: Keep your head down and try not to ruffle feathers or be prepared for some incoming, for some flak, because not much has changed since the days of Jairus and publicly identifying yourself not with the popular, not with the contemporary Jesus but with the Jesus of the Bible is a sure way now to be thought of as some kind of knuckle-dragging, hate-filled bigot. Jesus himself said in Matthew 10: "*Therefore*

*whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven."*

Well we know that this statement of Jesus does not apply to single incidents of failure because we know that Peter did exactly that. I mean, he denied Jesus not once, not twice, but three times in one evening and we also know that Jesus readily forgave him. So we're not talking about some singular momentary lapse of courage. We're talking about an ongoing willingness to either acknowledge Jesus as Lord or to deny such a thing. Jesus speaks in Matthew 7 about the people that he will deny before his Father. These were people who convinced themselves that they were believers while all the time ignoring the evidence that they were not. Jesus said: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" "Look at the great things that we've accomplished in your name!" They may well have been absolutely correct, I mean, God has used false prophets to speak truth before. Balaam prophesied factually before God and according to Jude and 1 Peter now Balaam is in hell. These folks are

claiming that they cast out demons and worked miracles in the name of Jesus and they very well might have. But so what?

You know, I once had a conversation with somebody who was convinced that a televangelist who was later disgraced and booted out, that this was a man of God because this fellow himself had come to Christ through his ministry. And maybe this man was a believer, maybe he was not. I told the man that God can use rocks and donkeys to proclaim his gospel, doesn't mean that they're saved. It's an incredibly dangerous thing that think that because God is willing to use you that that automatically means that you have a relationship with him. And part of the questions that we all need to ask ourselves about our relationship with Christ is do we love him enough to acknowledge him before men. If you've ever been challenged directly about your faith in Christ and have failed, do you respond like Peter responded, with brokenhearted repentance and a determination to not to ever visit that sin again? Among the many sins that I am guilty of, I would include the sin of disloyalty. There have been times in my past when I realized that I kept my mouth shut out of absolute cowardice when I should have been bold. But then I did exactly what Peter did, I confessed, I repented, and I asked for opportunities again to be bold, and God was happy to give them to me. God is not exacting a demand of one hundred percent loyalty one hundred percent of the time because he

knows that we are fallen, sinful sheep who sometimes act exactly like sheep. After all, his disciples who had lived with him for three years, they all deserted him on the night of the cross because they were afraid. Peter denied him because he was afraid. Being afraid is not sinful, it's how you respond to the fear that matters. And even a sinful response can be forgiven. It's not that single sinful response that Jesus is talking about here in terms of loyalty and disloyalty, it's about whether or not you belong to him or not. And it doesn't mean that you won't ever fail again but it does mean that you know where your heart and your loyalty lies. And we know exactly where Jairus' heart and loyalty lay because he made it impossible to think otherwise. It says: *So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.*

So take a moment this morning just to consider your own loyalty. Are you willing to confess Jesus before men? Consider also God's warning about taking communion. This is from *1 Corinthians 11:28*. It says: *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that*

we may not be condemned with the world. And I say this each time, I say that communion is an incredibly serious undertaking and to enter into it in an unworthy manner is to court disaster. I just plea and I say if you're not absolutely confident that you are a child of the King, if you haven't by faith trusted in Christ as your savior, if you first need to be reconciled to your brother and sister before you bring the sacrifice of your own self to the altar, then don't participate. And if you don't feel right about participating, then just err on the side of caution and get right with God. I recognize we're virtual and I recognize that I'm speaking probably to families in living rooms, but even now, that applies just as well because this matters. On the other hand I also point out of making the mistake of thinking, okay, I have to be absolutely flawless to take communion and the devil loves that as well. That's a terrible mistake to make as well. Being a child of the King doesn't mean you don't sin, it doesn't mean that you're flawless. It means that you recognize that salvation is a gift that no one can capable of earning. And each month I quote Dane Ortlund because I think it's one of the most appropriate things that I've ever read. He says: "In the kingdom of God, the one thing that qualifies you is knowing that you don't qualify, and the one thing that disqualifies you is thinking that you do." We'll see how that works specifically later on innocent message. But it also means that when we do fail we are aware that we've sinned.

Why? Because God's spirit lives inside us. He's the one who is convicting us, he's the one who makes us grieve as children who know that we have a Father who longs to forgive and cleanse us. God says: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* So being one of his doesn't mean that you think you're sinless, in fact it means that we are sinners but we have an advocate with the Father, somebody in heaven speaking right now on our behalf. 1

*John 2:1: My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father -- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.* And this is the reason why we're here. This is the reason why we can come to the table, because we have Jesus' righteousness. When we by faith accepted the righteousness that Jesus purchased for us at the cross, we became free to eat from his table. So if you love Your Lord, don't deny yourself the privilege that Jesus purchased for you with his own blood. You know he lived the life we were supposed to live and died the death that we deserved to die so that we could be made worthy of heaven and participate. So we ask ourselves the question this morning as we are about to participate in the bread. We ask ourselves is such a Savior worthy of our loyalty?

*1 Corinthians 11:23 says: For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was*

*betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."* So take, and eat.

So we're back to where Jesus was, he's in the middle of a huge crowd ministering and he's suddenly interrupted by Jairus. *Mark 5:24 says: So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.* Jesus didn't mind being interrupted but as he's working his way with Jairus through the crowd, his interruption gets interrupted. It says: *And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well."*

Well there's so much going on here and all of it is behind the scenes. So first we need to consider the woman. No name, just the woman. Mark makes the statement that her physical condition was as much a fault of these so-called physicians she had spent all of her money on. She is sick, she is desperate, she is broken physically and financially. In addition she's a woman with a woman's problem. You see even under the best of circumstances a woman was not allowed to address a man in public. But she wasn't just a woman,

she was a woman with an issue of blood. It was a condition that made her permanently ceremonially unclean. And because of the issue of blood she would not be allowed to physically touch anyone lest they too would become unclean as well. And we can see that her thinking reflected that. I mean, she firmly believed that Jesus was powerful enough to heal her if she could only touch his garment. I mean she thought she could kind of surreptitiously sneak up behind him in the crowd and touch the tassel of his garment and no one would be the wiser. She thought she could get away with a touch so light that maybe Jesus wouldn't even feel it but light enough and strong enough so that the power would flow from him into her and she would be healed. Verse 28 says: *For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well."* And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Well the woman experiences immediately two extreme responses. I mean first off having touched Jesus, she instantly knows for a fact that she's been healed. Just imagine that absolute exhilaration she must have felt as all of the years of the pain and the financial hardship and the shame, they all abruptly come to an end but then instantly it's followed by a holy terror of knowing she had been caught out. Verse 30 says: *And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?"* And his disciples said to him, *"You see the crowd*

pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" And he looked around to see who had done it.

You know, it's always an encouragement to see how totally clueless the disciples are. I mean, they have no idea what Jesus is talking about, no idea the level of perception that he had, no idea of the supernatural ability that he had to know exactly who it was, who was touching him and why. And she had no idea that Jesus was using the occasion of her healing to pull her into the kingdom. Jesus calls her out because her faith, as strong as it is, is in danger of being placed in the wrong object. You see it's not faith that heals but the object of that faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the healer. It's popular today to put great emphasis on faith itself as if the object of faith is immaterial but it's not, it's incredibly critical. And had Jesus not asked, "Who touched me" she may well have gone away from her confrontation with Jesus thinking that the power of the healing actually lay in his garment. As it is right now there's places like Lourdes in France and Medjugorje in Bosnia where people say the Virgin Mary made a divine appearance. People flock there even now just thinking that the water or the place itself has these magical qualities that can heal and Jesus is a mere afterthought. Jesus wanted her to know that he was the source of the healing and not his garment. And he publicly wanted to affirm her faith for her sake because she was hiding.

Have you ever felt like you've been hiding from Jesus? And as a believer in Jesus Christ, you know you can only hide for so long. At some point just like the woman with the issue of blood, Jesus is going to call you out. And what stops her in her tracks is what stops many of us and it's the whole idea of shame. Her shame was physiological, it was gynecological. She was ceremonially unclean, unfit to approach God in her physical state. While many of us feel exactly the same way because of some other form of uncleanness, how many times do we hesitate to go before God because of shame? You know, maybe you have a secret sin that only you and God know of, and you know deep down that it's separating you from God for either of two reasons; number one, you can't imagine God still loving and accepting you in spite of your sin; or number two, it may well be that you recognize that for you and Christ to really connect, that sin has got to go. And just like the woman with the issue of blood, Christ may be pulling you in one direction and shame is pulling you in the opposite.

You know, the world has its answer to shame. It's shamelessness. I mean more and more our culture says amplify, celebrate those things in you that are shameful. Lash out at the very idea that anything is shameful as if shame is just another word for oppression, and call it sexual empowerment or body shaming or slut shaming or any other kind of shaming as if that itself is going to

change the very nature of the shame. And if you do it loud enough and if you do it vigorously enough maybe, just maybe you're really going to convince yourself that Cardi B really was on to something. But if you're one of his sheep, God won't let you go, and he won't let you go there. And just like he did with the woman of blood, he will eventually call you out. *Ephesians 5:11* says: *Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.*" You see no matter how hard you try to eliminate it, the fact is shame is real and it accompanies things done in darkness. Now you can deal with it either by embracing shamelessness or you can deal with it by giving it to Jesus. I mean it was the woman's shame that drove her to secretly tap into Jesus' power. I mean she knew she had been healed and she knew that she had been less than honest in the way that she went about it and that the Master was now calling her out. Little did she realize that he was calling her out to commend her. It says: *But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."*

We see here there's really quite a contrast between the two different people that we see in this passage that Jesus is publicly

dealing with. I mean, this woman with the issue of blood, she has no status, she has no social standing, she has nothing but shame causing her to fall down in fear and trembling before Christ, and his response is astounding. He calls her "daughter." It's literally the only time in all of scripture that Jesus used that term and it was a term of deep endearment. I mean the woman thought that her shame made her untrustworthy when in fact it was her shame that brought her to the place where she perfectly qualified for the touch of Jesus. And her qualifications are just what we talk about each month when I quote Dane Ortlund: "In the kingdom of God, the one thing that qualifies you is knowing that you don't qualify, and the one thing that disqualifies you is thinking that you do." I mean you think of this woman, everything in her life, her social status, her physical status, her deep shame, her fear, they all told her she had no right whatsoever to even approach the Master. And it was that very spirit, that brokenness that qualified her before Jesus. That's why Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount: "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*"

Well the world looks at this woman's circumstances, says as she's cursed, but Jesus would say she was extraordinarily blessed because

her circumstances are what made her poor in spirit, that is knowing she had absolutely nothing whatsoever to offer on her behalf. They made her mourn for her absolute brokenness, they made her meek, not even daring to assert herself in any way. So she's there in the crowd, she's at the very bottom of the social barrel proving exactly what God means when he says: "*Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*" So Jesus flips the script and he speaks to her words, speaks to her words that she couldn't possibly imagine to be true. I mean this is the King of the universe, the ruler of the stars, he turns and refers to her as daughter. Daughter. And what I want you to see here is that God has called this woman just as he has Jairus. And those whom he calls hear his voice and they follow him. And once God has ahold of you, he's not ever going to let you go no matter what you fall into. I mean you may think that your sin is too great, your shame is too deep but here's the point. All God wants from you is your brokenness and your shame and your sin and your willingness to admit it. You see, your deep need to get right with God about your sin is a sign that you're one of his. And if you were not you would be happy to embrace shamelessness as the solution to your shame. But that just doesn't work for sheep, it only works for goats. That's why Jesus says: "*All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*"

You know the woman with the issue of blood thought she was too shameful, too broken, to "other" to approach Jesus when all she had was all Jesus needed, and that was her need itself. Again you see the complete consistency of who Jesus is, I mean Jesus, according to Dane Ortlund, was only one time in the entire Bible, according to Dane Ortlund, did Jesus give an actual personal reflection about the state of his own heart. This is what he said in *Matthew 11*, he said: "*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*" *For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*" That word "lowly" there, Jesus is referring to his own heart, he's saying this is what my heart is like. That word "lowly" means a willingness to stoop down. Jesus is describing his own heart and he says my own heart longs to meet you right where you are down to the lowest possible level to meet you at the bottom of your shame, if necessary.

In fact Dane Ortlund has written a marvelous new book entitled: "*Gentle and Lowly.*" It's World Magazine's book of the year and it describes with wonderful depth the heart of our Savior which is gentle and lowly. This is what Ortlund says. He says: "We cannot present a reason for Christ to finally close off his heart to his own sheep. No such reason exists. Every human friend has a limit.

If we offend enough, if a relationship gets damaged enough, if we betray enough times, we are cast out. The walls go up. With Christ, our sins and weaknesses are the very resume items that qualify us to approach him. Nothing but coming to him is required -- first at conversion and a thousand times thereafter until we are with him upon death. The only thing required to enjoy such love is to come to him. To ask him to take us in. He does not say, 'Whoever comes to me with sufficient contrition,' or 'Whoever comes to me feeling bad enough for their sin,' or 'Whoever comes to me with redoubled efforts.' He says, 'Whoever comes to me I will never cast out.' Our strength of resolve is not part of the formula of retaining his good will. When my two-year-old Benjamin begins to wade into the gentle slope of the zero-entry swimming pool near our home, he instinctively grabs hold of my hand. He holds on tight as the water gradually gets deeper. But a two-year-old's grip is not very strong. Before long it is not he holding on to me but me holding on to him. Left to his own strength he will certainly slip out of my hand. But if I have determined that he will not fall out of my grasp, he is secure. He can't get away from me if he tried. So with Christ. We cling to him, to be sure. But our grip is that of a two-year-old amid the stormy waves of life. His sure grasp never falters. Psalm 63:8 expresses the double-sided truth: 'My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.'

The good news is that shame is no barrier to Jesus. But along with this good news comes some really bad news. You see, the interruption caused by the woman with the issue of blood has cost Jairus's daughter her life. Verse 35 says: *While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"* But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, *"Do not fear, only believe."* And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James.

Okay. I want you to put yourself right now in the position of Jairus. Just think about what's going through his mind. I mean, he's had this incredible good fortune of gaining the Master's support and he's taken a great risk in order to get him. He's pressing on with Jesus through the crowd towards his dying daughter. And suddenly this woman who is not dying interrupts the Master and takes him down a road that causes your daughter to die. I mean this woman's been suffering for years. My daughter's gasping for air. Why in the world would you stop for her when there's plenty of time to minister to her needs afterwards, isn't there? Well, this is what Charles Hummel referred to as "the tyranny of the urgent." He wrote a little booklet, and in that he spoke about the fact that there's always a tension between things that are urgent and things that are truly important, and more

often than not things that are urgent crowd out those things that are truly important. Jesus never ever subscribed to the tyranny of the urgent. But why would Jesus be distracted by a chronic case when an acute case is spiraling out of control? Could it be that Jesus knows exactly what he's doing? I mean God who is no respecter of persons is pursuing two of his sheep, one from the very top of the social strata, one from the very bottom. And in each case his approach meets a unique individual need. I mean the woman with the issue of blood needs assurance, she needs compassion, she needs care and a public announcement that her shame is over. That's precisely what she receives as the reward for her faith. Jairus, however, needs to see that boldly identifying with Christ is its own best reward. Jairus as the leader of the synagogue is stretched to the very limit of his faith and he's stretched by Jesus' complete indifference to the chaos that now surrounds his daughter's death. Pick up on verse 38: *They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping."* And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was.

You see when anyone died in that culture, the burial was swift, it

was usually within the very day of death. You've probably all seen photos and pictures and videos of funerals in the Middle East and they're almost always accompanied by wailing and weeping and in fact funerals in that day were expected to have at least two, if not many more hired mourners who were part of the funeral process specifically to weep and to wail. And along with musicians they would make a funeral into a very public outpouring of emotion, even if the emotion was bought and paid for. That's the commotion that Jesus encounters. And Jairus is a prominent member of the community, no doubt he had plenty of hired mourners and musicians, all who had gathered to wail over the death of his daughter. So Jesus encounters the wailers, and he tells them that the child is not dead, the child's simply sleeping. And the wailers, thinking that they know better, they just shift instantly from wailing to derisive laughter and mocking. Well, they're showing their true colors. And Jesus tosses them all out, allowing just mom and dad and Peter, James and John to accompany him. Verse 41 says: *Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise."* And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat. See to Jesus death is no different than sleeping when you have the power of life over death. Jesus said essentially

the same thing about Lazarus, said that he was sleeping when he knew that Lazarus was dead. And the reason why Jesus could refer to death as sleep was because he is the author of life itself. And as God who according to Romans 4 gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist, he can treat death merely as sleeping.

So what do the lives of these two of God's chosen ones so vastly different in social strata teach us? Well, they show us that God has an end, a goal, what they say in Greek as "a telos" for every single one of us and each of us has a telos that is unique and different, an end goal. It's something only God truly knows and understands, and we would do well to understand that sometimes, as in the case with the woman, Jesus goes straight to the heart of the matter, telling her, "*Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.*" And sometimes as with the case of Jairus, Jesus zigs and zags in areas that we have to be tested to the very limit of our faith, because he tested Jairus to the very limit of his faith telling him, "*Do not fear, only believe.*" And in each case it was precisely what each of them needed. God has done the very same thing in each of our lives for every one of his sheep including all of us who name him as Lord, and sometimes he zigs and sometimes he zags. And sometimes like Jairus we're going to be questioned, "*What in the world are you*

doing, God?" God's answer is simple: "*Do not fear, only believe.*" *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*

As you take the cup this morning, ask yourself is it fear, is it shame, or is it faith that is driving my life? *1 Corinthians 11:25* says: *In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new Covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."* So take, and drink.

Finally we have head, heart and feet which is really just trying to come up with a practical way of understanding and remembering what it is that Christ has done for us, and so I have a challenge this week. My challenge is this: I would ask that every one of you in the body of Christ, every one of you, whether you're virtually out in YouTube land or wherever you are, that you recognize that we are in this unique and difficult set of circumstances and there's lots of folks who are isolated, lots of folks who are unable to have the contact that really what communion is supposed to represent. So what I want to ask for every single one of you is that you find somebody in this body that you can write or call or text or just contact with, just come in contact with, just to say how are you doing? This is a strange set of circumstances. This church is

incredibly good about just meeting the needs of people and when folks have a need, people are jumping to help. But part of the need that's not being met right now is the fact that we're all scattered and we're all our own little homes and houses. And so I would ask, we all have access to a computer, we have access to emails and texts, I would just ask each of you just pray and ask God for at least one person in this body that you can send a text to or an email or a phone call. And it doesn't have to be anything, can be how are you doing, how is it going? I just pray for each and every one of us that we do that this week. So let's pray.

*Father, I just thank you for the gift that you are, for the marvel that you are. I think of Jairus at the very top of the social heap and this woman without a name at the very bottom of the social heap and how much you moved heaven and earth to get and to pull her into the kingdom, how much love you had for her. And Lord, I know that her shame is what kept her away, and I pray for each and every person that has shame keeping him or her away from you, Lord, that you would break through that barrier, that they would be willing to see that all they need is their need. I pray you would open up those channels and that folks would feel the love and the care that you have, that you are gentle and lowly, and I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.*