

# 27<sup>th</sup> June 2021 – Morning Service

Megan Ashmore

## Call to Worship - 2 Corinthians 12:9

My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.

## StF 51 – Great is thy faithfulness

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| 1) Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father<br>There is no shadow of turning with thee<br>Thou changest not, thy compassions they<br>fail not;<br>As thou hast been thou for ever wilt be:       | 2) Summer and winter, and springtime<br>and harvest,<br>Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,<br>Join with all nature in manifold witness<br>To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love:          |
| Ch) <i>Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness<br/>Morning by morning new mercies I see<br/>All I have needed thy hand hath provided<br/>Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.</i> | 3) Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,<br>Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;<br>Strength for today and bright hope<br>for tomorrow,<br>Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! |

Thomas O Chisholm © 1951 Hope Publishing Company CCL No. 515642

## Prayer

*Faithful God*, we bow before you in adoration and praise, thanking you for your presence here with us this morning. You are a great and wonderful God, whose goodness and mercy abound, and in whom we can put our trust.

*Powerful Lord*, we stand in awe of your might and power that can calm the stormy sea and raise the dead to life. And still, you call each one of us by name and know the number of hairs on our head.

*Merciful Father*, You love us so much that you sent your only son, Jesus Christ, to die for us on the cross, that through his death and resurrection we could approach your throne of glory and stand before you with clean and pure hearts.

*Compassionate Saviour*, forgive us for the times when we forget your presence in our lives and lose sight of your will; when your light in our lives is extinguished by our own misdeeds, doubts and harmful thoughts.

*Loving Friend*, we thank you that with you all things are possible and we pray that through the power of the Holy Spirit we will discern your will for us and live our lives in faith and truth. **Amen.**

## StF 6 – Father we love you

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| 1) Father, we love you, we worship and adore you,<br>glorify your name in all the earth.<br>Glorify your name, glorify your name,<br>glorify your name in all the earth. | 2) Jesus, we love you..... | 3) Spirit, we love you..... |
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## Introduction to reading

Our reading this morning is from the gospel of Mark and tells the account of Jairus. The majority of translations of this passage are headed up something like “Jairus' Daughter and the Woman Who Touched Jesus' Cloak”. The emphasis is on the daughter and the woman in the crowd, but we are going to focus on Jairus this morning. Jairus seemed to be aware of the healing power of Jesus. He knew that the touch of Jesus would make everything better. Perhaps he had seen previous miracles of Jesus. In Mark chapter 3 we read the account of Jesus healing a man with a withered hand. This miracle was performed in the synagogue. If Jairus hadn't seen it for himself I'm sure he would have heard about it – the Pharisees were up in arms about it as the miracle had occurred on the Sabbath! This troubling event had probably popped

up on the agenda for the next meeting of the elders and as a ruler of the synagogue himself, Jairus would have been familiar with what had happened. So when Jairus was troubled he knew just what to do.

### **Reading: Mark 5: 21 – 43**

When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?" Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe." He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha kum!" (which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

### **Sermon**

Jairus' daughter is very ill, at the point of death, and he can no longer sit around waiting for something to happen. So in his anguish, Jairus went to seek out Jesus. Although a large crowd had gathered, waiting for Jesus to return from the other side of the lake, Jairus managed to get through in order to speak to Jesus directly. Jairus, a man of authority, a man highly respected for his position would have had no trouble in making the crowds move aside for him. But then, he laid aside all airs and graces, abandoned pride and concerns about what others might think, and "fell at Jesus's feet". The Good News translation goes as far as suggesting he "threw himself at Jesus' feet". In sheer desperation Jairus was willing to do anything to be noticed by Jesus. And he was. We're told Jairus pleaded earnestly with Jesus to place his hands on his daughter and heal her. Jesus listened and agreed to accompany Jairus to his house.

I can imagine Jairus pulling himself up to full height again, adjusting his robes and leading Jesus back through the crowd in the direction of his home, thinking, "job done, everything will be well". But, no sooner had they started on their way than Jesus stopped again. He'd felt something. Someone in the crowd needed him. So he stopped to investigate and heal.

Many years ago I took my mum and grandad to a meeting. As it finished earlier than expected I offered to take them to a nearby Sainsbury's to have a look around. My grandad lived in Ledbury, which at that time didn't have a supermarket at all and although my mum lived in a town with a Sainsbury's she didn't live close to it or drive. So going to Sainsbury's was an adventure. I didn't really appreciate quite how much of an adventure it would be for them! We still recall and laugh how they looked at everything!!

I must have walked three times as far as they did. Each time I got to the end of the aisle to go along the next I would look back to see they were only a couple of items in, so I would travel back to meet them with the trolley and try to chivvy them along.

Poor old Jairus! Can you imagine his dismay when he realised Jesus had stopped? If the disciples were amazed that Jesus was bothering to discover who had touched him, Jairus must have been beside himself. They were in a hurry – it was literally a matter of life or death.

I hope you've not had cause to visit A and E recently, or been involved in a multi person accident, but if you have you will know that in most cases you are assessed by a triage nurse who decides on priorities for being seen by a doctor. A consideration of the situation here on this road in Capernaum would suggest that Jairus' daughter had the greatest need of attention at this point. And yet, Jesus turns all sense of the norm upside down. He stops and asks "who touched me?" There is a large crowd pressing in on all sides and yet Jesus knows that someone determinedly touched him – it was no accident. Someone needed his healing. He had felt the power leave him. He wants to know who it was. Jesus, the ultimate healer, is aware of the needs of individuals and to whom he needs to give first aid. As Jesus waits for the one who touched him to come forward so Jairus is left in a state of anxious bewilderment. His anger must only increase as a woman emerges from the crowd and explains her actions to Jesus.

*I am the woman. I had almost given up hope of ever becoming well. It had been twelve years. Twelve years of pain. Twelve years of suffering. Even worse – twelve years of social ostracism and being unable to take part fully in the life of my community and synagogue. The way I was bleeding made me ceremonially unclean and I had to be careful not to make others unclean as well. I tried to get help from doctors. In fact, I spent all of my savings trying to get better. Instead, I became worse. I was almost ready to despair.*

*Then one day I heard about Jesus. Did you hear what he did for a leper? Jesus touched the man and he was healed. And he healed another man even though it was the Sabbath. I kept hearing about the miracles that Jesus had done. I thought – if he would touch a leper and heal someone on the Sabbath, then maybe he would be willing to heal someone like me.*

*So when I heard that Jesus had come back to our town, I went out to see him. There were many people there... I tried to get near to Jesus, but at first the crowds were too thick. Then, I saw one of the synagogue leaders and heard him ask Jesus to come and heal the leader's daughter. I didn't want to stop Jesus from going to help but I did wonder what to do – Jesus wouldn't want to stop and help me now. But I couldn't give up—I knew how much I needed healing and I knew Jesus had power to help me. I thought, "If I could just touch his clothes, I would be healed. Then I wouldn't have to interrupt and it wouldn't be such a problem that I'm ceremonially unclean. So I came as close as I could to him... I reached out... and I touched the hem of his cloak. At that moment, I knew Jesus had healed me. I felt that the bleeding had stopped! Somehow I also knew that when I touched Jesus I did not make him unclean... instead, he made me clean – inside and out. I felt like shouting with joy – but I couldn't or everyone would know what I had done.*

*I was about to slip away quietly, when Jesus stopped, turned, and started looking around the crowd. "Who touched me?" he asked. "Who touched my clothes?" The men around him did not understand. But Jesus caught my eyes in the crowd. He knew. We stood looking at one another in the midst of the crowd and I knew that he wanted me to come forward. So, trembling, I stumbled forward and fell at his feet. I told him everything – my sickness and uncleanness, my fear, my hope. I told him how I had touched him – and as I spoke, the crowd looked on and murmured. But Jesus smiled at me and raised me to my feet. Then he said something strange... "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." My faith has healed me? He and I both knew that it was his power. But I suppose it did take faith – faith not to give up when the doctors said it was hopeless... faith not to despair when I kept getting worse... faith to believe that Jesus could heal me... faith to reach out and touch him. God's power... and my faith.*  
(Eleanor Emmott: Faithlife Sermons)

Imagine Jairus. Hopping from foot to foot, trying to find the appropriate moment to intervene and lead Jesus away. But too late. Servants from his house arrive and tell him that his daughter is dead. They tell him not to bother the teacher any longer. Jairus would be heartbroken, stunned, shocked and not a little bit angry. But before he even has time to speak, Jesus, hearing what they say, encourages Jairus to hold on to his faith, that faith that brought him to Jesus in the first place. "Don't be afraid" he says, "only believe".

Choosing just Peter, James and John to accompany them further, Jesus carried on to Jairus' home. There he tells the mourners that the girl is not dead but just sleeping and so dismisses them from the house. Then taking the girl's mother, father and the three disciples he enters the room where the girl is lying. And there, Jesus performs the miracle and brings the little girl back to life, by doing what he was asked – by touching her. We hear no more of Jairus then. His needs have been satisfied and I'm sure his faith has been deepened. As is his wont Mark gives just the necessary details in his accounts. There is no more to be said.

So what have we gleaned from travelling with Jairus this morning? Can I suggest three things for us to ponder:

1. Jairus took his concern to Jesus. Perhaps it was just in desperation or perhaps he believed because he had seen Jesus perform other miracles. Whichever it was he had enough faith to know that Jesus was the answer. Be assured, this morning, that Jesus is the answer, and take your concerns to him. As Paul writes in the letter to the Philippians, chapter 4 and verse 6: "Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart".
2. Jesus heard and answered Jairus' prayer, though it wasn't in the time or circumstances he had expected. The American Gospel singer Dottie Peoples sings a song called "He's an on time God" which includes the following phrase, "God may not be there when you call him but he'll be there right on time". I'm not sure I totally agree with that, because I believe God is there when we call him, but he may not answer us straight away. However we need to have faith that he will answer us when the time is right. Isaiah 55:8-9 says "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.
3. Jairus' faith was deepened by the situation in which he found himself. Jairus listened to the words Jesus spoke to him. "Don't be afraid, only believe." Jesus focussed Jairus's thoughts. Jesus told Jairus in effect to ignore those around him who were encouraging him to leave Jesus behind. Jesus told Jairus to put aside all fear – easier said than done, but with God all things are possible. Jesus told Jairus to believe. And of course, Jesus had provided an example of faith overcoming the seemingly impossible in the encounter with the woman in the crowd. Jesus clearly stated for Jairus and others to hear "Your faith has made you well".

Many of you will not have escaped the irony of this morning's reading following my recent stay in hospital; and I'd just like to add a brief personal testimony. I have stood here this morning preaching about having faith. For someone who can't watch an episode of Casualty or Holby City without hiding behind a cushion, the whole hospital experience was somewhat daunting. On the whole, I coped well. I was surrounded by love and constant messages of support and my daily bible readings seemed to say just the right thing. But, on the day I was told I needed an operation, I fell apart. That has always been my biggest fear. I tried to negotiate with the doctors to do the operation under local anaesthetic, but even as I pleaded I knew it wasn't going to be possible. I really did not want to be put to sleep. I guess it's a control thing – not being in control of myself, but in the hands of someone else. And so, I pulled the curtains around the bed and cried.

And seconds later a nurse came in to do something. She saw I was upset and it all came out. My fear of hospitals in general; the fear of being put to sleep and maybe not waking up again; the fear of not being in control of myself for a while. But my biggest regret was that I am a Local Preacher – I stand up and tell people to trust in the Lord; and yet there I was not willing to do the same.

Not putting my money where my mouth was, so to speak. I was willing to let God heal me – I wanted God to heal me. But I just wanted to feel his touch like the woman in the crowd. I wasn't willing to surrender myself totally like Jairus.

The next day was Pentecost Sunday and I enquired if there was a service in the chapel. I just wanted to go and be on my own and have a quiet word with God, and I suppose, try to bend His will to mine. But that wasn't to be. Unfortunately, there was no chaplain at the hospital and so the chapel was closed for service and private prayer. Instead, I talked and listened to the other patients on the ward; I observed the nurses and other key workers doing their job patiently and cheerfully; I texted, and wrote and read. And gradually, my fears were overcome as I saw God working in that place, and on the day of the operation I was remarkably calm.

I realise now that my relationship with God wasn't complete – I lacked the willingness to surrender control of my life to my creator, who knows me better than I know myself. And because of that I wasn't fully serving Him in my role as Local Preacher. I thank God that through this experience He has drawn me closer to Him. I opened the service with words from 2 Corinthians 12:9 "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." On the day of my operation that was the bible verse on my calendar. What a faithful God have I.

### **StF 58 - Lord, I come before your throne of grace**

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| 1) Lord, I come before Your throne of grace;<br>I find rest in Your presence and fullness of joy.<br>In worship and wonder I behold Your face,<br>Singing what a faithful God have I. | 2) Lord of mercy, you have heard my cry;<br>Through the storm You're the beacon,<br>My song in the night.<br>In the shelter of Your wings,<br>Hear my heart's reply,<br>Singing what a faithful God have I.               |
| Ch) <i>What a faithful God have I,<br/>What a faithful God.<br/>What a faithful God have I,<br/>Faithful in every way.</i>  | 3) Lord all sovereign, granting peace from heaven,<br>Let me comfort those who suffer<br>With the comfort You have given.<br>I will tell of Your great love for as long as I live,<br>Singing what a faithful God have I. |

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### **Prayers of Intercession**

*When I am down, and oh, my soul, so weary,  
When troubles come, and my heart burdened be,  
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence  
Until you come and sit awhile with me.*

Lord Jesus. We thank you that we can come to you with our cares and concerns in the silence of the night, or in the busyness of the day, knowing that you will hear our prayers and respond. We bring before you all those who are troubled in body, mind and spirit. Draw near to them that they may know your comforting presence. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

*You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains,  
You raise me up to walk on stormy seas.  
I am strong when I am on your shoulder,  
You raise me up to more than I can be.*

Father God, we pray for peace in our troubled world; for unity where there is division; for understanding where there is discord; for love where there is hate. Give us strength to rise up and make a difference in your name, that your will may be done and your kingdom come. With you, God, all things are possible.

Father God, we pray for justice in our troubled world; for fairness in trade and an end to hunger and poverty. Raise up leaders in every land dedicated to your standards of order, equity and justice, that your will may be done and your kingdom come. With you, God, all things are possible.

Father God, we pray for patience in our troubled world; for courage to trust in your abiding word, which offers hope and assurance. May your spirit rise up within us that we may offer words of encouragement and truth, that your will may be done and your kingdom come. With you, God, all things are possible.

Father God, we pray for love in our troubled world; fill us with the love of Christ, which will help us to rise above selfishness and greed in order to show love to others, that your will may be done and your kingdom come. With you, God, all things are possible.

Accept these prayers in the name of your dear son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

### **StF 65 – Sing of the Lord's goodness**

1) Sing of the Lord's goodness,  
Father of all wisdom,  
Come to him and bless his name.  
Mercy he has shown us, his love is for ever,  
Faithful to the end of days.

3) Courage in our darkness,  
Comfort in our sorrow,  
Spirit of our God most high;  
Solace for the weary, pardon for the sinner,  
Splendour of the living God.

*Ch) Come then, all you nations,  
Sing of your Lord's goodness,  
Melodies of praise and thanks to God.  
Ring out the Lord's glory,  
Praise him with your music,  
Worship him and bless his name.*

4) Praise him with your singing,  
Praise him with the trumpet,  
Praise God with the lute and harp;  
Praise him with the cymbals,  
Praise him with your dancing,  
Praise God till the end of days.

2) Power he has wielded, honour is his garment,  
Risen from the snares of death.  
His word he has spoken,  
One bread he has broken,  
New life he now gives to all.

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### **Blessing**

As we go from this place, let us sing of God's goodness, so that others will know the God who gives new life; the God who heals and comforts; the God who has time for all. And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon us, now and forever. **Amen.**