

SUNDAY 27TH June 2021

Homily for Trinity 4 – Elaine Simkin

Lord, we bow in your presence, May, your word be our rule, your spirit our teacher, and your greater glory our concern. Amen.

I would like to start today by asking a question...How do you feel about touch? Do you like to be touched?

Well, like it or not, the last 18 months of this pandemic have stopped all of us hugging, touching, shaking hands, having a cuddle with those we love, and even those we don't particularly like. For some people it's been a blessing, for other a time of sorrow for not being able to cuddle our loved ones.

Touch is a very powerful thing, don't you agree?

I read an interesting article this week about the power of human touch. Many studies have been done about the devastating effects on infants if they are deprived of human touch. This is also true for adults. Most of us love to be touched.

Today we are going to look at the story of two touches

It's a story about three main characters: Jesus and two women.

First, let's look at Jesus.

Wherever Jesus went he always had a huge crowd following him around. Imagine taking The Beatles in their heyday, Billy Graham, Our Queen Elizabeth, mashing them all together and multiplying it by 100. That is the kind of fame that Jesus had in the first half of his ministry.

Jesus was a rockstar.

There are three reasons why Jesus was very popular. The three "P"s..... Preaching, Parables and Power.

The people loved his preaching because he taught with authority.

They loved his parables. The stories made it easier to understand ...He told stories that invite people to have "ears to hear," to learn and explore the deep mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

The third reason everybody loved Jesus was his Power... In today's gospel we see Jesus casting out demons and healing the sick. His unique Power.

We take this man who can mesmerize people with his teaching and combine it with someone who can heal the sick and restore the tortured soul, and you've got it... Jesus the rock star...

Today we see that Jesus heals by touching two women.

Let's start with the girl who has a life-threatening fever.

She is not just any girl. This is the daughter of Jairus. He is the leader of the synagogue. He's a big deal in their town. A powerful man. His daughter is well known in society...she's twelve years old. To be twelve in an ancient Jewish village would be equivalent to being 17 years old today. She is just about to become a full adult woman in society.

Jairus is so worried about his daughter that he walks up to Jesus, in the middle of the huge crowd, and falls at his feet, he actually begs Jesus to come and heal her from the fever. Everyone is worried about this girl. Jesus sees the urgency and starts walking to the house.

Then something happens.

Another woman enters the scene. She's had a disease, a haemorrhage, for 12 years. Now, in our modern times, we would think, "Oh, that's a shame," but it's not a big deal. With today's medicine and NHS she can be treated and cured.

So, we need to take a moment and try to grasp what's really happening here.

No one had touched this woman for twelve years. It was thought when a woman bleeds she was unclean.

Nobody in society today would have been pushed so far to the margins, that they are unclean and untouchable, unable to be cured or helped...

This woman musters up her courage, pushes through the crowd, and touches the hem of Jesus' cloak. He stops and asks "Who touched me?"

He sees this woman. He sees the longing, the desperation, and the courage it took for her to do what she did. He stoops down, touches her, and says, "Daughter, your faith has made you well."

Just then, a messenger comes from Jairus' house. The girl is dead.

Jesus leaves the crowd. And enters the house...she is dead, but he touches her, and said "little girl, get up."

In both cases, these were forbidden touches. The Law of Moses clearly stated that, if anyone touches a bleeding woman or a dead body, then that person would become unclean.

But, when Jesus touches the unclean person..... His power is their healing...

This is the power of Jesus' touch. To make that which the law declares as unclean... to be well and clean again.

We all need that touch, we should all have that faith, only found in Jesus the rockstar...Have that Faith.

Amen.