

“Whole”

Solomon 1:13-15; 2:23, Psalm 130:7, Mark 5:21-43

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Prayer for Understanding May the words of our mouth and meditations of our heart be pleasing to you gracious God our rock and redeemer. Amen

Wisdom of Solomon states: **Wisdom of Solomon 1:13-15, 2:23 NRSV** “**God did not make death, and God does not delight in the death of the living. For God created all things so that they might exist; the generative forces of the world are wholesome, and there is no destructive poison in them. For righteousness is immortal. For God created us for incorruption and made us in the image of God’s own eternity.**”

The psalmist sings: **Psalm 130:7 NRSV** “**Hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with God is great power to redeem.**”

Jesus calls us to be whole. Jesus often proclaimed, “peace be with you”. An aspect of peace is wholeness. Wholeness is being in loving relationship with all people, God, self, and the cosmos.

Mark proclaims two interwoven healing accounts. Look for the wholeness; a family made whole, a woman made whole physically, emotionally, spiritually, and socially and all people made whole by God’s love. Peter, James, and John were overcome with amazement as they perceived wholeness.

The context is Jesus crossed over from a shore where only men were noticed and counted to a shore where a woman with continuous menstrual bleeding is declared a daughter of God, an equal to a male religious leader. Search for the wholeness in these words from the gospel of Mark.

Mark 5:21-43 NRSV “**When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and Jesus was by the sea. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and when Jairus saw Jesus, fell at his feet and begged Jesus 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." So Jesus went with Jairus. And a large crowd followed Jesus and pressed in on Jesus. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus and came up behind Jesus in the crowd and touched Jesus’ cloak, for she said, "If I but touch Jesus’ clothes, I will be made well." Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" And his disciples said to Jesus, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" Jesus looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before Jesus, and told him the whole truth. Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease." While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." Jesus allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When Jesus had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at Jesus. Then Jesus 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. Jesus took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. Jesus strictly ordered them that no one should know this and told them to give her something to eat.”**

This scripture has at least three stories of wholeness. The wholeness of God as the creator of wholeness and the redeemer of wholeness. The wholeness of every person belonging to God’s family. The wholeness of each person’s physical, emotional, spiritual, and social life that God will provide.

Jesus is revealing God who created a good whole cosmos with all being interconnected and harmonies. Jesus brings God's healing wholeness through words, actions, love, and miracles. Jesus is bringing all people together into one whole loving, joyful community. Jesus embodies wholeness.

Jesus' healing of Jairus' daughter makes whole their family and unites them with all people in God's one whole family. Jairus has remarkable wholeness perception. Most of the religious leaders saw only the differences between their understanding of religion and Jesus. Most religious leaders judged Jesus and kept their distance destroying wholeness. As a leader of the synagogue, Jairus had access to the best doctors, spiritual leaders, and every manner of healing humanity has to offer. And Jairus perceived wholeness with all of humanities good efforts with Jesus. Jairus begged Jesus to heal his daughter to make their family whole. In so doing, Jairus and Jesus are proclaiming that all manner of healing flows from God's wholeness, that everyone belongs to God's one whole family. Healing is much more than life after death. Healing is being whole with all people across time and space and for eternity.

It seemed Jesus was too late. A messenger said: "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" God is never troubled by our desire for health, life, and wholeness. Jesus came to bring heaven to earth, to bring the life, joy, love and peace, which is wholeness, to earth for all to enjoy. Jesus came to bring the wholeness of God's image, three made whole by love.

Jairus asks for healing for his biological daughter. Jesus shows that everyone is a child of God. If fallen, broken, unwhole parent's desire life, healing, and wholeness for their children imagine how much more God wants wholeness for all God's beloved children. The tiny miracle is bringing a dead daughter back to physical life making whole a biological family. The grand miracle is God's love making whole all people into one eternal family. Jesus tells them not to speak of these healings because without the context people will only see the tiny miracle and not the grand miracle of wholeness. Jesus tells them not to speak of these healings because Jesus is calling people to be more than mere observers, rather to be loving servants who cocreate with God, people who keep going, keep planting love, keep crossing over from every shore of brokenness to the shore of wholeness.

A woman was hemorrhaging for twelve years. Physically she was not whole. A male dominate, patriarchal society deemed that any woman during her period was unclean. This screams absurdity. A healthy woman going through the normal God created biological rhythm, that most women experience, is unclean is ridiculousness. Jesus' healing of the bleeding woman is placed within the story of Jesus healing of a male religious leader's family to clarify the need for wholeness across gender. It laments how this woman, and most women, were labeled unwhole by male-created law and religion.

We have a woman unwhole physically, emotionally, financially, socially, and religiously. This woman suffered from continuous bleeding for twelve years. The Greek word used for her means menstrual blood, vaginal discharge. Suffering can take over a person's identity like it did for this woman. We do not even know her name. She is merely identified as the hemorrhaging woman, the male declared unclean woman. The woman spent all her money on treatments. The woman tried everything. Her bleeding got worse.

Male laws declared the woman must stay outside of towns, the woman must not touch anyone for her touch would make them unclean. The woman was forbidden to come near a synagogue or a religious leader. This woman defies all of this because she perceives God's wholeness, perceive that she belongs to God's family, perceives that God desires to make her whole physically and socially. The woman does what male religion declared was the most forbidden of all possible actions, she touches Jesus. Instantly, Jesus heals her physically.

Jesus draws attention to the healing of the woman. She has been healed physically but not emotionally, socially, and religiously. The woman came in "fear and trembling". Fear that men will persecute her for violating religious law, for touching Jesus. Fear that the crowd will harm her. Fear that she will be exiled. Trembling from being shamed and shunned. Trembling from being manipulated and controlled. Trembling from being treated as less than others and banished from the community. Jesus makes a public display to convict the crowd of their sin against the woman so religious and social healing, wholeness, can begin. Jesus makes a public display to convict the crowd of rushing past a suffering woman to care for a male religious leader.

Jesus draws attention to the healing of the woman, explaining that much more than physically healing is needed for wholeness. Jesus points out the discord destroying wholeness by male laws against women. The woman told Jesus the whole truth. I wish the whole truth was included in scripture. Perhaps, the whole truth was in this scripture until some monk was told to edit it out by a male dictator. Let us try to reconstruct the whole

truth with the context. Wholeness was being destroyed by physical bleeding, by religion that declared her unclean, by men who sought to control her and tell her what she can and cannot do with her body, by society that shunned her, by the emotional trauma she endured from being cast out, from the spiritual trauma from being excluded from worship. Wholeness was destroyed when they took away her dignity, identity, and name labeling her the hemorrhaging woman.

Jesus says a sentence abundant with insights: "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease." Jesus declares her daughter, God's beloved child, an equal to all people, an equal to the male religious leader standing beside them, a sibling to Jesus. Jesus declares her daughter, she is to be seen, valued, and treated as a child of God. Her identity shall not be the woman with the hemorrhage rather beloved, cherished daughter of God.

Jesus says, "Your faith has made you well." Her faith was trusting God desired to heal her, to make her whole, and welcome her into community.

Jesus says, "Go in peace." Peace is shalom. An aspect of peace is wholeness. An aspect of faith and peace is right, equal, loving, whole relationships with God, all people, self, and the cosmos. Jesus is saying to all of us, "be whole". Reject all that destroys wholeness; discrimination, oppression, divisive humanmade religious laws, viewing anyone as less than human, less than equal, as less worthy than an educated, powerful, devout male religious leader. This point is accentuated by the healing of the woman happening within the healing of the male religious leader. The crowd expected Jesus to rush to the home of the male religious leader. Jesus illustrates that all people are equal, women are equal, when Jesus stopped to heal the woman, then lingered to teach the crowd about God's desire for wholeness for all.

Pastor Anna Carter Florence wrote: "Jesus made sure everyone heard. Jesus blessed her and called her 'daughter'. Jesus said: "Go in Peace," so the crowd would know they had a role here, too, which was to keep the peace. Welcome her among them; no questions, no quarrel. She was a child of God, not a nameless hemorrhaging person and Jesus mad sure they all heard it."

Jesus says, "Be healed of your disease." The future tense indicates that there is more healing needed than physical and emotional. The woman, and all women, will not be fully healed, fully whole, until there is no uneasiness with menstrual cycles and all have equal access to health care that values people at every point on the gender spectrum as equal, loved and created that way by God and in God's image.

Pastor Wilda Gafney writes: "These lessons are an opportunity to discuss desperate access to healthcare along lines of gender, race, and class. There is opportunity to discuss the shame that is still attended upon women's reproductive health and diseases and stigma around menstruation. And there is the significant peril Black mothers face during pregnancy and childbirth that is disproportionate to the peril faced by other mothers. Lastly, one might address the difficulty finding medical care many trans persons experience." I am striving to listen to women, and people throughout the gender spectrum, to understand all the wholeness that God desires for all.

Theologian John Shea wrote: "Jesus makes clear what has happened. She has never been an unclean woman. She is a daughter of God. She held onto that spiritual identity and that deeper identity gave her courage to reach for God's love. God's love is for all God's children and she is one of God's children. That is her faith. And the healing that comes is more than physical. She can go in peace and enter back into community. Since she has been spiritually touched by God, she can physically touch and be touched by others. She is re-included into interpersonal and community living."

Jesus embodies the wholeness of a cosmos created good, interconnected, and harmonies. Wholeness is also seen in the covenant people being made whole by receiving blessings and sharing blessings making all people whole. God's wholeness surpasses all understand. God's wholeness will fully heal, redeem and make all glorious. God's wholeness will unite all.

For God created all things so that they might exist; the generative forces of the world are wholesome, and there is no destructive poison in them. Jesus calls us to be whole. Jesus often proclaimed, "Peace be with you." An aspect of peace is being whole. Therefore, Jesus proclaims wholeness be with you, be whole with all people, be whole. Amen

