Over the past two weeks in our Known series, we have looked at stories of Jesus giving new life to people in great need… In week one of our series Maron told us the story of Jesus not only freeing a man from the misery of being possessed by evil spirits but also changing everything about the man’s life… and his family’s life… and even the life his wider community. Jesus knew this man and gave him all that he needed. And last week Amy told us about Jairus and his desire to have Jesus save his daughter’s life. And in that story we also saw that Jesus knew this little girl… he knew about her life and the circumstances surrounding her life in that moment and he gave her exactly what she needed… and again., Jesus changed everything about her life and her family’s life and even the life of her wider community. What we saw in these 2 stories was that Jesus has great power and authority… BUT Jesus also knows us as individuals. He knows our hearts and our circumstances deeply enough to give us even more than we can hope for… and today we will be looking at another story that tells us even more about Jesus and this story is one that took place right in the middle of the story about Jairus and his daughter that Amy talked to us about last week. In fact, I think we should start today by reading the verses from last week that lead us to the story we will be focusing on today… So, let’s all turn to Mark 5 verse 21 together and see what happened right in the middle of Jairus asking Jesus to heal his daughter. You’ll find Mark 5:21 on page 834 in the house Bible. (Welcome and pray).

Verse 21 of Chapter 5 says this, *Jesus got into the boat again and went back to the other side of the lake, where a large crowd gathered around him on the shore.* Just as a reminder, as Maron told us 2 weeks ago, Jesus and his disciples had left the crowd of frightened gentiles who’d seen what had happened to the man with a legion of demons and now wanted nothing to do with him on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee… and Jesus and his disciples had made the 2-hour-or-so journey by boat back to Jewish territory on the western side of the Sea of Galilee. And when Jesus arrived back in his Jewish homeland, he was greeted by what Mark calls a ‘great crowd;’ and it isn’t just a large group of people quietly standing around waiting on Jesus… no, the Greek tells us that this was a pushing and shoving crowd made up of people trying to get as close to Jesus as they could. Just think about this! In just a matter of a couple of hours Jesus has gone from a crowd that wants nothing to do with him to a crowd that can’t get enough of him! Goodness! And then we read this: *Then a leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet,****23****pleading fervently with him. “My little daughter is dying,” he said. “Please come and lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live.”* ***24****Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him.*

Now, last week Amy gave us a close look at this story about Jairus and his daughter, so I don’t want to go into the details of Jesus’ interaction with Jairus… other than to remind us that Jairus was the leader of the local synagogue and that meant Jairus held a position of high honor in the local community. And this highly respected, religious man was so desperate and panicked that when he finally found Jesus, he fell down at Jesus’ feet, and begged that Jesus come and lay his hands on his daughter so that she may be healed. We know from last week why he was so desperately seeking Jesus. His daughter was dying… and we are told in Luke’s gospel that this was his only daughter… a daughter that we learned last week was only 12 years old. And when Jairus says, ‘heal her so she may live’ he uses the Greek word sozw, a word that means both ‘heal’ and ‘save.’ And in this moment desperate Jairus could very easily have meant both: ‘Please heal my daughter... from her illness; please save her from death!’ And notice that Jesus doesn’t say anything to Jairus; he simply follows him!

 But the story takes a huge turn in verse 25. *A woman in the crowd* (a crowd Mark says is still pressing in on Jesus) *A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding. She had suffered a great deal from many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse. She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe. For she thought to herself, “If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed.”* In this raucous crowd, also seeking Jesus, was a woman who was also sick and was also most likely near death; a woman who, like Jairus was desperate and had come to Jesus in the hope that he could bring her healing. Mark does not tell us a great deal about this woman, but what he does tell us gives us a good deal of insight into her life. Mark simply says, ‘A woman having a flow of blood for 12 years.’ He doesn’t say exactly where this blood was flowing from, but we can assume from Mark’s description that this flow of blood was connected in some way to her menstrual system. Menstrual impurity was a big concern in the Jewish world, so much so that an entire section in the Jewish book of rules for living called the Mishnah had been written to instruct men on how to avoid women during their time of the month. That section of the Mishna, by the way, essentially said that religious men should try to avoid contact with women altogether. Here is the bottom line: a twelve-year flow of blood would have meant she’d been continually ceremonially unclean… for twelve years! That meant 12 years of not being allowed in the temple...12 years of knowing that everything she touched became unclean: cooking utensils, clothing, furniture… everything. And possibly worse of all, 12 years of being unable to have children, most likely during her best childbearing years. And as unimaginable as this sounds this also probably meant that she’d been divorced since men were **expected** to divorce their wives if they hadn’t given birth to a child after 7 years of marriage. There is even some scholarly speculation that the money she’d spent on doctors came from her dowry… money given to her by her husband when he divorced her. Something interesting about this passage is that what our Bibles call verses 25-28 are actually one Greek sentence… one sentence that describes her sad condition through the use of 7 participles. This is what the Greek literally says about her, ‘A woman… many things suffering by many physicians having spent her everything and nothing having been profited but rather to the worse having become.’ I’m sure you get the picture. We even know what she would have suffered ‘by many physicians.’ Physicians then were not what we think of today. Yes, they did do some practical things like setting broken bones and pulling rotten teeth, but they primarily majored in 2 things: 1) what we would call herbal cures and 2) the incantations, the secret words, that were believed could force the gods to heal people. And here is a list of ‘cures for women with menstrual flow issues.’ [1] drinking a goblet of wine containing a powder compounded from rubber, alum and garden crocuses; [2] taking a dose of Persian onions cooked in wine while the doctor chants ‘arise out of your flow of blood!’ [3] carrying a cloth bag filled with the ashes from an ostrich’s egg; [4] a doctor scaring you suddenly. These are the kinds of things she very likely had spent all her money on and none of this had helped. She’d only gotten worse… and like Jairus’ daughter, it sounds like she, too, was near death. But she’d heard things about Jesus and what she’d heard made her confident that were she just to touch his robe she would be healed. You see, there was a general belief then that the healing power of a holy man wasn’t just in his body, but it extended to his clothing, his bodily fluids and even his shadow. Mark even tells us that she’d said to herself, ‘If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed…’ and guess what… the word she uses here to speak of her healing is sozw, the same word that Jairus had used… she wanted to be healed and saved, too! And just think of how desperate and courageous she was to even be in this crowd! She was unclean; anyone who might touch even her clothing would have become unclean according to Jewish law. She was a woman alone and women didn’t go anywhere alone then! And yet, there she was, hiding in the middle of a crowd that was pressing in on Jesus – and she managed to somehow get close enough to Jesus to touch his robe… and we read that, *Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition.* She was healed and she knew it! And verse 30 says Jesus knew something too: *Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my robe?”* ***31****His disciples said to him, “Look at this crowd pressing around you. How can you ask, ‘Who touched me?’”* The Greek actually tells us that Jesus knew **immediately** that power had gone out of him… now, just exactly what this means, I honestly don’t know. But Jesus knew it and he also somehow knew that he needed to **immediately** find out who had touched him. Mark tells us that, ‘*turning around in the crowd Jesus asked, ‘Who touched my clothes?’* And boy, did this seem crazy to the disciples. I can hear them, ‘Come on, Jesus! Really? Who touched you? In this crowd, Jesus? Don’t be ridiculous!’ But Jesus wasn’t listening to his disciples. He was on a mission to figure out whose faith had caused power to come from him. And in verse 33 we read, *Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell to her knees in front of him and told him what she had done.*Her fear and trembling most likely grew out of two things: first, she could see that Jesus was serious about finding out who touched him… and she probably feared he was angry that someone had tried to stop him while he was going to help the community’s highly respected synagogue leader, Jairus. And secondly, I’m certain that she was fearful of being discovered in this crowd… she was a woman who’d been unclean for 12 years; she was almost certainly known as a local pariah… and she’d not only touched a holy man, but who knows how many other men in this crowd! But somehow, she mustered the courage to tell Jesus what Mark calls, ‘All the truth!’ she tells him all the details of her long, terrible, 12 years of misery and isolation and how it had suddenly come to an end! And Jesus responds in verse 34. *And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over.”* Interestingly, Jesus doesn’t respond to the details of her story, but what he does do is call her ‘daughter.’ This was a word that was often used to speak of Jewish women, how they were all ‘daughters’ of Abraham. It was a term that was considered endearing. What shouldn’t surprise us is that this is the same endearing word that Jairus had used to speak of his little girl. And there is so much tenderness in this moment. It is highly possible, due to the cultural norms of that time, that this woman’s father had had nothing to do with her for a good while, possibly for years. My bet is that no one had called her ‘daughter’ in ages, let alone spoken to her in such an endearing way. And then Jesus told her something powerful: her faith had healed her, and he uses the same word sozw... yes, she’d been healed physically, but she’d also been saved from all the misery of her condition **and** the possibility of bleeding to death! This is a wonderful moment! Now, I can’t tell you if there actually was power in Jesus’ clothes; this is all a mystery to me. I do know she believed there was, or more to the point, she believed that God was actively working through Jesus, even through his robe. Somehow her touching Jesus’s robe gave God the opportunity to both ‘reward’ her faith and give her new life. We could talk about this unusual healing moment for a long time, about what it does and doesn’t tell us about the healing work of God. And I am not sure we’d ever come to a 100% certainty about what literally happened in this moment. One thing I am certain of though is that when Jesus said, ‘go in peace’ he was saying something remarkable to her. Peace in the Jewish world meant a life of balance, a life of goodness, wholeness, and many deep relationships. Jesus blessed her with everything her life had been missing for 12 years. My bet is that no one had said ‘go in peace’ to her for years. They might have said, ‘Go away.’ But never, ‘Go in peace.’ And Jesus also added this little phrase ‘and be freed from your suffering.’ The word translated ‘suffering’ is literally ‘a plague.’ What this tells me is that Jesus knew exactly what this woman’s condition had done to every aspect of her life… it was like a plague. Jesus said, ‘your plague… that which has been causing suffering in every corner of your life… is over! I know you and all you have suffered in life up to this moment and now you have a new life!’ And can you imagine how new her life had become! I mean this in the most literal of ways: every bit of her life, everything you can think of, was now new!

One last thing. Why did Jesus feel it necessary to make certain this woman’s healing was announced publicly? Why didn’t he allow her to just disappear into the crowd without making a spectacle of her? Well, there is a good reason, and it has everything to do with Jesus knowing her and knowing exactly what she needed… knowing what would be best for her in the long run. The reason had to do with her life in her community… it had to do with her gaining peace along with her healing. Jesus knew that if she had not spoken to him in front of this great crowd, her later claims of having been healed would have most likely fallen on very skeptical ears. She would have had to prove her healing in very embarrassing ways over a long time. Plus, the news of her healing would have spread into the community very slowly, through gossip, most likely, if at all. But by publicly calling attention to her and publicly hearing her story and publicly declaring her a healed, faithful daughter of Abraham, Jesus made certain that everyone in this great, pressing crowd knew exactly what had happened to her! She could now **immediately** find her way back into her community; she could now **immediately** hold her head up; she could now be **immediately** known as a healed woman, a woman who had been saved and, maybe most importantly, now able to have children. Honestly, this might have been the most life-giving aspect of her healing. We have no idea of her age, but my bet is that she was in her mid-to-late twenties and still both marriageable and able to have children. But even if this wasn’t the case, Jesus knew her deeply enough to give her exactly what she needed in this moment from him… and what she needed was to be healed, yes, but she also needed to have the facts about her salvation known by everyone in that great, pressing crowd! And you can be certain that this news spread like wildfire among the locals… and each telling of her story gave her that much more new life!

And at this point we need to ask this question, ‘What do we do with this story? And maybe even more importantly, ‘How does this story relate to our lives?’ I think the first thing we need to do is remember that this story was given to us primarily to answer the question the disciples asked when Jesus calmed a raging storm with a simple command; they asked, ‘Who is this man?’ Over the last two weeks we’ve seen that Jesus is a man who can control the physical **and** the spiritual worlds… and this week we find that Jesus is a man who can heal the brokenness of our bodies… but I want to be straight up about this. I have seen healing that is nothing short of miraculous… yes, I have. But I have also done many funerals for people who had deep faith in the healing power of Jesus… and yet they were not healed. I am not going to stand here and say that healing is always connected to the depth of your faith… truth is, I don’t even know how we can gage the depth of someone’s faith and anyone who says that God’s healing hand is limited by our faith, I believe is standing on dangerous ground. And so, this is a difficult subject. All I can be 100% certain of is that in this specific case, this desperate woman, who had endured 12 years of suffering, somehow still believed that if she touched Jesus, God through Jesus, would end the plague in her life… and when she touched him, she was healed. Does God still heal today? Absolutely! But, again, this is a very difficult subject as I am certain you can all understand. What I’ve come to believe is true, at least for me, is that I am to stand firmly in my faith, my belief, that God can heal anything, and I am to hold on to the truth that nothing is impossible for Him, even when he, for some reason chooses not to heal. That’s about the best I can do. But what I think may be the more important lesson for us today is that this passage shows us that without question Jesus is someone who knows us… he knows our hearts… he knows our circumstances… and he cares so much that he will stop, even in the middle of responding to a very important person like Jairus,’ and he’ll take the time to gently and tenderly give us exactly what we need. I know that this may seem like pie in the sky talk. I also know that it is easy to look at my life and think that what is happening couldn’t possibly be of any interest to God. But what this story tells me is this: if I seek Jesus, if I go looking for him even when it seems he is hard to find, that even in the midst of the chaos and the confusion of life, if I am looking for him… he will find me… and if you trust him, if you have just a tiny mustard seed’s worth of faith that you are known by him, he will, in his way, give you peace… he will give you salvation… he will give you exactly what you need… he **will** give you life, life that proves that you are known… that you are known by Jesus.