

**Sermon:** *Risking It All to Touch Jesus*  
**Text:** *Matthew 9:18 – 26*  
**Date:** *June 8, 2008 AM*  
**Place:** *Jesup First UMC*

A farmer was sitting on the front porch when a friend stopped by and asked: “How’s your wheat going this year?” The farmer said: “Ain’t got any. I didn’t plant any; I’m afraid the weevil will get it and ruin me.” The man said: “Well, how’s your corn?” The farmer said: “Ain’t got any. I didn’t plant any; I’m afraid the crows will eat it and ruin me.” The man said: “Well, how are your potatoes coming?” The farmer said: “Ain’t got any. I didn’t plant any. I’m afraid the tater bugs will poison them and ruin me.” The man said: “Well, what did you plant this year?” The farmer said: “Nuthin’, I just played it safe.”

I just played it safe. That sounds like a lot of people today, doesn’t it? You and I have been called to the Kingdom for such a time as this. Through the grace of God, we have been redeemed from slavery to sin and death and given life, and yet, instead of living the great adventure that is the Christian life, we just play it safe. We have been called to share our faith with others, across the street and around the world, but we worry that people might think we’re fanatical, so we just play it safe. We have been called to find a place of ministry and service within the Church, but that takes a lot of time, energy, and commitment, so we just play it safe. We have been called to give a tenth of our income to God through the Church, but that cuts into our comfortable lifestyles, so we just play it safe.

In fact, playing it safe is a perfect description for the modern Church. We just play it safe, because we really don’t want to step out of our comfort zones and live the radical life that God is calling us to live. We don’t want to risk our reputation and our status and so, we play it safe, settling for nominal Christianity instead the abundant life that Jesus came to give us. But the Bible tells us about some who took the risk, who stepped out of their comfort zones and had their lives changed forever.

One day, a leader of a synagogue came and fell at Jesus’ feet and said: “My daughter has died, but if you will come and lay hands on her, I know she will live again.” And as Jesus and the disciples were following Jairus to his house, suddenly a crowd gathered and in the midst of the crowd, there was a lady, a very sick lady who said to herself: “If I could only touch the hem of His garment, then I know I would be healed.” And she made her way through the crowd and reached out and touched Him and immediately, she was healed. And when Jesus felt someone touch Him, He turned and saw the woman and he said to her: “Take heart, daughter, your faith has made you well.” And then, they came to Jairus’ house and Jesus walked in, cleared all the people out of the house, took the little girl by the hand, and raised her to life.

Now, this is a story about faith and so, I want us to reflect for just a few moments this morning on the subject of faith. What is faith? Where

does it come from? And what would it look like if you and I were to begin living a faith-filled Christian life? As individuals and as a Church?

**First, what is faith?** Well, Hebrews 11 says: *“To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, and to be certain of the things we cannot see,”* but what does that mean? You see, some people believe that faith is just a cognitive function, that when you’re going through difficult times or times of uncertainty, then all you have to do is trust God and if we only believe, we don’t have to do anything else, just sit back and let God take care of everything.

But our story teaches us that faith is more than that. Jairus’ faith made him seek out Jesus to resurrect his dead daughter. And the woman’s faith caused her to reach out and touch Him for her healing. You see, faith isn’t just believing; faith is acting on what you believe.

**Second, where does faith come from?** Well, Romans 5 tells us faith is a gift from God. And I Corinthians speaks of faith as a gift of the Holy Spirit. So, one of the results of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is that you and I are given faith – faith to respond to salvation, faith to believe God in the difficulties and challenges of life.

Faith also comes through the Word of God. Romans 10:17 says: *“Now faith comes by hearing the Word of God.”* And so, when we read our Bibles, and study our Bibles, and meditate on God’s Word, we are deepening our faith. We are opening ourselves to the possibility that the God who healed the sick and raised the dead, can still heal today. We are opening ourselves to the possibility that the same power that raised Christ from the dead, now dwells within us and desires to bring life to our mortal bodies.

Jairus had heard the stories; he heard that Jesus was a miracle worker, that He had touched the blinded eyes and made them see, that He had touched the lepers and made them clean, that He had touched the lame and made them walk. And Jairus began to consider the possibility that Jesus could do the same thing for him and his daughter.

The little woman had heard the stories; she heard that Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead and she began to consider the possibility that he could do the same thing for her.

Faith comes from God as you and I listen to His Word.

**Third, faith gets God’s attention.** Verse 22 says: *“Jesus turned and seeing her, He said: ‘Take heart, daughter. Your faith has made you well.’”* Here is Jesus, surrounded by people, being pushed and pulled one way and then the other. He is on His way to Jairus’ house and yet, He noticed the faith of a sick woman. Nobody else noticed! She was just another face in the crowd to everybody else, but to Jesus, she became an example of great faith.

There are other examples in the gospels where Jesus responds to faith. In Luke 5, we read about four friends who brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus. And when they couldn't get in the house, they climbed to the top of the house, cut a hole in the roof, and lowered their friend into the presence of Jesus. And the Bible says, "When He saw their faith, He said to the man, 'Your sins are forgiven.'" When He saw their faith!

You see, faith touches the heart of God.

**Fourth, what are the results of Faith? Well, first of all, faith gives us new identity.** Jesus turned to the woman and said: "Daughter, your faith has made you whole." Earlier that morning she was just an outcast, alienated from other people and alienated from God. But by faith, she became a daughter of the living God. She was adopted into the family of God. John 1:12 says: "But to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God."

Once we were not a people; we were alienated from God, without life and without hope, but now, through faith, we have become the people of God. We have been adopted into God's family. Paul told the Church at Rome: "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption by which we cry, 'Abba, Father.'"

Faith gives us a new identity.

**Secondly, faith gives us new power.** When Mark told this story, he tells us that when the woman touched the hem of Jesus' garment, He felt power leave His body. Power left Jesus' body and the woman, who had been weak and suffering, was given new power. And that same power entered into the body of a dead girl and raised her to life.

You know, when we live by faith, we have the power that raised Christ from the dead available to us. The same power that healed the blind, the lame, and the crippled dwells within us and works in us and through us.

Faith gives us a new power.

You see, God has called us to be men and women of faith. Romans 1:17 says: "The righteous will live by faith." Now, this is difficult for us and most of us prefer to live by what we know and by what we can see. But Paul told the Church at Corinth: "We walk by faith not by sight." This is the only life that truly pleases God. Hebrews 11 says: "Without faith, it is impossible to please God."

So, are you living a life of faith? Are we as a Church a faith-filled community? What are we doing as a Church that shows our utter dependence in God? What are we attempting that if God doesn't show up, we will truly fail? Where are we living on the very edge, risking it all to follow Christ?