

<Children's Time>

<Interactive Time>

Who grieves most, a young adult who lost their dearest friend, a parent who lost their child, or a grandparent who lost their spouse of many decades? Why? <Let them respond>

Who is in more need, the elderly person struggling to make ends meet that must choose [between having heat or prescribed medicine], or the young college graduate with heavy debt and a low-paying job? Why?

<Let them respond>

How about an addict destroying their family life or a runaway getting caught up with an abusive gang? Which one deserves help more? Why? <Let them respond>

How well do you think any of us might do at trying to "fix" those we just talked about? <Let them respond>

Do you know anyone in one of those situations?

<Let them respond>

What do you think they would find helpful? Why?

<Let them respond>

How did Jesus deal with people in need?

<Let them respond>

Let us hear now about a couple of instances where Jesus helped those in need who approached Him.

Gospel lesson

We continue in the Gospel of Mark, after Jesus and the disciples reached the far shore of the Sea of Galilee and subsequently were asked to leave (because Jesus healed a demoniac by sending the Legion of unclean spirits possessing him into a herd of swine, and then the herd ran into a lake and drowned, so the people there were all upset and asked Him to leave).



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/Lumo-jairus/>; credit: LUMO

Mark 5:21-43

(NRSV)

²¹ When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea.

²² Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet

²³ and begged him 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."

²⁴ So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him.

²⁵ Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years.

²⁶ She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better,

but rather grew worse.

²⁷ She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak,

²⁸ for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well."

²⁹ Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

³⁰ Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?"

³¹ And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'"

³² He looked all around to see who had done it.

³³ But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth.

³⁴ He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

³⁵ While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?"

³⁶ But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe."

³⁷ He allowed no one to follow him except Peter,

James, and John, the brother of James.

³⁸ When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.

³⁹ When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping."

⁴⁰ And they laughed at him. Then he 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.

⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!"

⁴² And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement.

⁴³ He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

The word of God for the people of God

<Hymn "Out of the Depths I Cry to You"

UMH #515>

Message: In Need and in Abundance



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/open-your-heart/sixth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/sixth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Ever-blessing Lord, as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may learn to trust more fully in Your grace and to share Your abundance with others. Amen.

We continue the "Open Your Heart" series today with "In Need and Abundance":

"If last week was about the call to open our hearts, this week is about putting your money where your mouth is. Or more accurately, putting your [resources, time, talents, and gifts] where your heart is."

We heard about a lot of need in the scriptures today: David in need of comfort, mourning the loss of Saul and Jonathan; those the church in Corinth took a collection to support; the synagogue leader in need of his child's restoration; and the woman with the hemorrhage in need of healing.

We know there is a lot of need in the world today:

people in need of comfort, mourning loss; those struggling with too little money (esp. those judged negatively for it by others, adding another block to their getting on their feet financially); people estranged from loved ones; and people in need of healing, be it physical, mental, or emotional.

As Christians, we know that sin is ubiquitous – we all need redemption. In this sin-filled world, it seems like blessings are very unevenly distributed; some definitely have an easier time of surviving than others do. That is a product of Sin – of people taking for themselves at the expense of others – for God provides enough for all and everyone begins life naked at birth, crying for help.

Faced with inequities and challenges, many people wish for God to just fix everything for them; but God enables us to grow and develop our gifts by making us use the resources God provides to take care of needs – which includes other people: we are not alone!



picture from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-flooded-house-in-the-middle-of-a-lake-in-a-mountain-valley-19028272/>; credit: Adem Albayrak

You've heard me tell this story before, about a guy caught in a flood, trapped in his house. He prayed to God to save him; shortly thereafter, a person in a canoe came by and invited him in. The guy declined, saying, "I have faith in Jesus; God will save me!"

The waters rose higher and the man was stuck on the second floor of his house. He prayed again for God to save him; a few minutes later an airboat came by offering to take him with them. He again declined, saying, "I have faith in Jesus; God will save me!"

The waters continued to rise, until the man was stuck on the roof of his house. Again he prayed for God to save him. Just after he finished praying, a helicopter flew overhead and dropped a chain ladder for him to climb up. The guy declined once again, saying, "I have faith in Jesus; God will save me!"

Finally the waters rose up too high and the man drowned. He got to heaven and asked God, "What happened? I thought you promised to save me!"

God looked at him and said, "What do you expect? I sent you a canoe, an airboat, and a helicopter, each of which you declined. Now you are saved from ignoring blessings in sinful folly."

Too many people think they are not to look to other people for help, and then get upset with God for not performing a supernatural miracle to take care of them. They may even reject that God exists, and in a way they are right - the cosmic butler they want does not exist; however, God our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer does.

Jesus came to help everyone, calling us all back to God. The help we receive may not look like the help we want, but if we can swallow our egos enough to accept it, we will be blessed by it!

Similarly, the help we can give may seem completely inadequate, but if we put aside our fears of inadequacy and let God work through us, we can bless far more people than we may ever know.

We also heard in the scriptures today about people who were in a position to help others: David, as a great leader of the people, was certainly there; the church in Corinth had resources to share; the synagogue leader was part of a whole community of people, and of course Jesus has power. Through their actions, others found comfort, relief, and healing.

God has blessed each of us with unique gifts and abilities, far more than just monetary wealth. The Holy Spirit enables us to see need, where we can share the gifts God has given us. Through our witness in word and deed, others learn of Jesus' love, power, and glory, God's grace within our world.

So this week, let each of us give God thanks for the blessings we have. Let each of us open our eyes and hearts to the lack or need in others' lives, be it physical, emotional, mental, or even just a need for

companionship. Do not judge them and do not impose what you think they need upon them. Rather, invite them to share what you personally have in plenty – and let them share their gifts with you.

In this way, you may both be blessed, creating a stronger relationship and more reason to give God thanks and praise for the grace in your lives.



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/open-your-heart/sixth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/sixth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-graphics>

After all, in both need and abundance, God's grace floods our lives. Jesus calls us to share God's love, a living example of how to let the Holy Spirit enrich our lives and our world with far more than money, by giving of ourselves daily, in many cherished moments.