

# ALL OF US

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July 1, 2018

Pentecost 6 - **Canada Day**

[Mark 5:21-43](#)

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(prayer)

[making sandwiches throughout sermon]

- It is said that the eighteen-century english aristocrat, John Montagu, (the 4th Earl of Sandwich) ordered his valet to bring him meat tucked between two pieces of bread. Apparently, Lord Sandwich was fond of this form of food because it allowed him to continue playing cards, particularly cribbage, while eating, without using a fork, and without getting his cards greasy from eating meat with his bare hands.
- Using bread as a *utensil* to scoop food, or even as a plate long predates the time of the Earl of Sandwich. If you have been to one of our Maundy Thursday Seder services, you might remember that the first century BCE Jewish sage *Hillel the Elder* is said to have wrapped meat from the Paschal lamb and bitter herbs between two pieces of soft matzah, during Passover. It is now known as an "[Hillel Sandwich](#)".
- Although Montagu certainly wasn't the first person to think of the idea of having *bread and meat* or *bread and cheese*, this food preference did eventually take on the Earl's name... it is said that his contemporaries would say, "I'll have the same as Sandwich" which eventually became "I'll have a sandwich".
- Interesting fact: in 2006, a sandwich shop in a Massachusetts shopping center sued to stop another restaurant (that sold burritos) from opening up a business in the mall based on a no-compete clause in its lease prohibiting other "sandwich" shops. So, there is an official legal president that defines a sandwich as *including at least two slices of bread*. Since burritos include only a single wrapped tortilla, I guess it is not a sandwich.

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- The scripture reading beginning at Mark 5:21 can also be called a "sandwich".
- This is a narrative technique that the writer of Mark uses a number of times: two distinct stories are interspersed. The first part is started... then interrupted by the second part... then part one is finished. See: [Mark 3:20–35](#); [4:1–20](#); [5:21–43](#); [6:7–30](#); [11:12–21](#); [14:1–11](#); [14:17–31](#); [14:53–72](#); [15:40–16:8](#). Sometimes the stories are related, other times, not so much.
- Today's *marken sandwich* (starting at chapter five, verse twenty-one) is "one story" with two distinct, but related, parts. The resurrection of Jarius' daughter is the bread; the healing of the bleeding woman is the filling. They are related by more than their physical proximity.

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- There are obvious parallels between girl's and the woman's predicaments... things that are common and things that are directly contrary.
- Neither of them are named in the story. They are defined by aspects beyond themselves... their family and societal connections.
- The woman has been suffering from an almost non-stop period for 12 years; the same length of time that the girl has been alive.
- Jairus' daughter, on the threshold of adulthood, is born into privilege. Her father is a leader in the synagogue. She has a powerful advocate who uses all the influence he has to save his daughter.
- The bleeding woman has no advocate. She has been forced to live on the edge of society because of the rules of ritual purity. Because of her continual bleeding, the woman would have been continually regarded in Jewish law as a "niddah" (or menstruating woman), and so ceremonially unclean. In order to be regarded as clean, the flow of blood would need to stop for at least 7 days. Because of the constant bleeding, this woman has lived in a continual state of uncleanness for a dozen years which would have brought upon her social and religious isolation. See [Leviticus 15:19-33](#) (especially verse 25).
- Jairus comes with a crowd to support him. His request is public. Everyone knows what is going on.
- The woman comes alone and acts in secret, hoping no one (including Jesus) will notice her.
- Ironical: Jairus' request is public, but Jesus doesn't want people to talk about the girl's healing; the woman's request is clandestine, but she goes away from her healing with everyone knowing what has happened.

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- When the woman was unwittingly healed by simply touching the edge of Jesus' robes, he interrupted the journey to Jairus' home. Jesus wanted to understand the mysterious healing that he just performed. Jesus wanted to meet the woman so he could bless her... *In faith, go in peace; be healed of your disease.*
- The woman was healed the instant she touched Jesus' robes, so when Jesus says "be healed of your disease" he is really saying *go and enjoy the freedom this healing gives you; the restrictions that your illness had placed on you are over.*
- When we move on to the bottom slice of this marken sandwich, we hear that the delay on the walk to Jairus' house had tragic consequences. Jesus arrived too late to heal the girl. She was dead. Even a very skilled physician or healer could do nothing for her. Jairus' friends encouraged him to leave Jesus alone now.

- There is nothing directly in the text that challenges how Jesus set his priorities. But I can imagine there would have been a popular expectation among the crowd that Jairus' daughter was more important than the woman. At the very least, Jairus asks first.
- Even if that was the case, the argument was moot after the girl was later seen eating and walking about.
- Jesus' compassion for both the girl and the woman goes beyond the actual act of healing:
  - *Go in peace, be healed of your disease.*
  - *Tell the mourners to go away and get her something to eat.*
- In this story alone, Jesus' compassion is not limited or restricted by social status, by age, by gender, by religious authority, by popular opinion. Jesus' compassion for those in need is so engrained that it is lived out on a subconscious level (in the case of the woman).
- Jesus is fully in the moment with the need of the moment. And it was with the same depth and impact for both the girl and the woman in Mark 5, regardless of their (otherwise) significant differences.

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- Can we (dare we) extrapolate this to include all of us?
- Two decades after Jesus, the apostle Paul did just that when he dared to proclaim to early christian communities (that were prone to exacerbate differences among them):
  - that although differently gifted, they had unity in one spirit (1Cor12:4)
  - that there is no longer male nor female, jew nor greek, slave nor free: they were all one in christ (Gal3:28); and
  - that, in Christ, they, though many, form one body (Rom12:5).
- The compassion of God (shown and known in Jesus) is for *all of us*.
- "All Of Us" is a phrase to embrace.

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- I am 54 years old. My mom was (and is) an active United Church member, so I *grew up* in the United Church of Canada. I was educated in Sunday School on “[The New Curriculum](#)” in the 1970s and nurtured my teenage-young adult faith volunteering at church summer [camp](#) in the 1980s.
- I was growing in my faith and understanding during the years that there was a movement within the Church to critically examine how we used language. Some of you may remember that (in most united churches) there was some level of resistance to the calls to use more inclusive language. After lifetimes of using male-dominated language to speak of all people (mankind, etc) and almost exclusively male metaphors and descriptors for God (He, Father, etc), it was hard for some people to embrace inclusive language even though it was more accurate. “When Neil Armstrong said *One small step for man; one giant leap for mankind* he wasn't excluding women. Mankind means all people.” The phrase didn't exist back then, but it could have been dismissed as *politically correct*.
- It wasn't a big adjustment for me to begin to use inclusive language in the 1970s and 80s... I was the right age for it to come naturally off my tongue.
- In the decades since, I continue to cringe when people (in the twenty-teens) still resist inclusivity under the guise of historicity: saying. We are honouring our ancestors by using “man” or “mankind” to refer to female and make humans ... or “in all the sons command” to speak about the armed forces (who even in the early 20th century, included brave and valiant women).
- If it is our goal to be authentic in our beliefs, we want our actions to match our words ... and we want our words to match our actions.
- Jesus’ actions - through the healing of the woman and girl in Mark chapter five - loudly sings out the message that *all us us* are embraced within the loving attention of our God.
- It is one of the deepest hopes of faith: that God is with us in all the circumstances of our lives.
- I know that sometimes we know this instantly (in the moment); at other times it is only with hindsight that we notice it; and... there are times when God’s presence is so hard to feel that we wonder whether we are just alone.

- In one of the apostle Paul's *all of us* sermons (the body with many parts as told to the Corinthians) we are taught: *The members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.* (1Cor12:22-26)
- The ministry opportunity (the mission in action) is that - as parts of the Body of Christ - we are bearers of divine presence. We suffer together. We rejoice together.
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- God knows us. God is known through us.
- Let us reach out to grab on to this hope.

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Let us pray:

Gracious Christ, we seek a touch that brings new life and renewal. We seek a meaningful life. Hear us. Touch us. Renew us. Be with us. Amen.

#145MV "Draw the Circle Wide"