



## WEEKLY STUDY August 13-19, 2023

(Use this guide to individually or with a group dive deeper into this week's sermon.)

### Be Well – Week 2

**Our sermon series for August is: Be Well. A series on physical, spiritual, mental and communal wellness. We are constantly inundated with cultural messages about wellness, but what does Scripture have to say? In this four week August series, we will explore stories in the book of Luke that help us see how Jesus cared for people in their full humanity – mind, body, and spirit. Join us as we seek to take care of ourselves and thus, our communities, so that we can all be well.**

#### Our scripture this week is:

“Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and knelt at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

‘Who touched me?’ Jesus asked.

When they all denied it, Peter said, ‘Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.’ Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. Then he said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.’” **Luke 8:40-48 (NIV)**

- 1) Perhaps one of the things most difficult to do week by week is the message for children. When we were part of West Nashville UMC, this portion of the service was entitled, “The message for all God's children” – a good reminder that regardless of our age we are always and forever your children. For our “Be Well” theme Gracie is using a Prayer Song that I have found myself singing long after Sunday service. It is a prayer that addresses all of wellness. The words are: “May I be happy; May I be healthy; May I be

safe; May I be at peace. May you be happy; May you be healthy; May you be safe; May you be at peace. Amen”

**Question: What does it mean to pray that you – and everyone- is happy, healthy, safe, at peace? What work needs to be done for this to happen?**

- 2) When I read this week’s scripture, I remembered two things. I remember reading in one of the studies by Amy-Jill Levine the statement, “Jesus was about health care.” We see these, in our medically abundant world, as miracles and perhaps forget the underlying thing that is happening. Jesus as offering health care to those who needed it. The second thing that always strikes me is the fact that these 2 linked stories are about women and the care for women’s bodies. I don’t think it’s a small thing that we have bookended the illness of a girl on the cusp of being a woman and the illness of a woman suffering from what might be labeled as a “female” illness. If we were ever to doubt that Jesus cared equally for men and women, here is evidence that all are in Jesus’ care. And it is in harmony with Luke’s Jesus who constantly reminds us that we are to care for those who may be marginalized or considered unworthy of attention for things like health care. This leads us back to one of Pastor Sam’s opening statements: Bodies matter to God.

**Question: Consider this passage of scripture. What are the messages you gain from these stories? What message does it contain about speaking up and asking for care?**

- 3) I loved Lewis’s question that Pastor Sam shared with us during the sermon. She had read these words from her sermon to him, “Sometimes it can feel as if Jesus isn’t paying attention in the midst of our pain, like nobody has their eye on you. But the truth is, when Jesus hears you’re in trouble he starts moving towards you.” Sam said this in explaining the incident in the scripture where as soon as Jairus told Jesus about his daughter, Jesus started heading her way. Lewis asked, “How does Jesus get to your house?” It’s a great question that I’m guessing regardless of age, we’ve all asked at one point. Sam answered Lewis by reminding him of when his grandmother had come to help take care of him and when they all were sick and a neighbor brought homemade bread. Sam stated her belief that Jesus sends people to tend to us when we are in need. This made me recall when I had surgery how the women in our Sunday school class provided food for us for a week after my surgery. The good food was healing food and their hands were healing hands.

**Question: When have you been sick and experienced the love of God through the care of others? When have you answered that call to help someone in need of care?**

- 4) Pastor Sam then asked us to consider what it takes to be spiritually well. She stated that as she sees it, spiritually well people have a meaningful personal relationship with God. They live life attuned to God and with gratitude. And they also have a meaningful exterior life. One that others can see through daily living. Sam talked about how she and Mark record the height of their children as they grow. (We also have a marked up door in our house that is a record to our sons growth!). By the act of measuring, we

place importance in physical growth. And in the same way, we are challenged to grow and mark our spiritual growth. This is lifelong work. We do so with worship, bible study, mission projects, small groups, prayer – spiritual practices.

**Question: Think back to your faith first as a child, then as a teen, then as an adult. Some of will need to consider young, middle and older stages of adulthood. What have been your lifelong spiritual growth practices? How has your spiritual wellness changed and grown since childhood? In what ways do you seek to nurture your spiritual health now?**

**Prayer: (As we pray this week, we give thanks for new members, Hannah Kim & Eddie Iglesia who joined at the 8:30 service. And their boys, Nathaniel & Elias. We give thanks for Chad Hayes (Maria is already a member) and the baptism of their children, Nolan Russell and Eliza Jo.)**

**God of healing and wholeness, We are humbled by your love and care. We know when we call out to you, you turn to us. But even in our knowing we often hesitate. We wander around looking for what might make us whole again before remembering and returning to your care. And just as we are reminded of your love, we are reminded of our role in caring for others. What we seek for ourselves, we seek for whole of creation: to be happy; to be healthy; to be safe; to be at peace. May you guide us day by day to be a witness for what your desire is for all of creation. May we trust in your turning toward us in our times of need. May we in turn embrace and care for others knowing your love is not limited but boundless. In Jesus name we pray, AMEN**

**Weekly Challenges: In addition to following the suggestions on the Be Wellness calendar for this week, ask yourself daily the questions suggested by Pastor Sam: “How have I nurtured my spiritual health today?”**

*(Weekly study guide prepared by Rev. MaryJane Pierce Norton)*