

Sermon 28 June 2015  
2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27 Mark 5:21-43 'What We Do'

*Prayer: God who is loving presence, challenge us to be one who shares good and life-giving stories of healing and community. Help us to do so for ourselves and for others, that together we may discover all that makes us whole and restores life to our worlds. Amen.*

**“What we do”** is the theme given to us today. What do we do with these readings??? I have chosen to reflect on the fact that what we do is tell stories, and *when* we do this right the health of our community is improved. Doing it right includes – *listening* to the story teller and *allowing* their voice to be heard – and **doing whatever** we can to contribute to it having a ‘good’ outcome.

It is even more important for the more mature among us to understand that there is a whole ‘other’ generation reaching adulthood **for whom telling stories is their way of being**, of relating to the world, friends and family. For those of us in the Christian family, we have been doing this ‘forever’ because of the way our faith has been handed down to us. But in the wider world, this method of encouraging ‘belonging’ / inclusion / history and therefore ‘my’ place in life – has not happened and the younger generations actively seek to know the story – their story, where they fit – and so what we do is tell it!

So what we do today is **listen** to at least three stories, and reflect on the differences of the people involved. David being the oldest goes first!! We have been following his rise in importance for the Hebrew people; from shepherd boy to be anointed as the next King, killing the Philistine giant Goliath and being almost instantly promoted to senior positions in the army. The first posting Saul (the King) gave him; immediately after killing Goliath was to be in charge of 1000 men. That’s some promotion for a shepherd boy over night! **What we miss** in our Sunday readings is the increasing loss of Saul’s sanity and all the political moves of Saul to try and discredit / kill / slander / malign / trick. eg he promised a daughter to David and then married her off to someone else (Saul did this 2 times!) Seriously, the stories recorded are ‘good reading’ of political intrigue and manipulation- **what Saul did was not good!**

**In all** this Jonathan, Saul’s eldest remains true to his friendship with David. The readings today keep us reminded that whatever else was happening in Court / Israel / the Nations enemies (Philistines) with Saul and the Kingdom; whatever else was going on these two **stayed friends**. So that David would make sure the personal level of friendship was kept in the ‘BIG’ story – for ever. 1:26 “I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women. 27 "How the mighty have fallen! The weapons of war have perished!"

Our personal stories help to keep us – and our ‘big’ stories human! We ignore the ‘little stories’ within the big ones to our peril. David kept this personal note in the “Nations” story of the death of Saul and Jonathan as they lost in battle to the Philistines. And again when reading these chapters we come to understand **that** God’s people were once again traumatised with the consequences of war. Villages destroyed, families torn apart by fighting, livelihoods wiped out, women and children ravaged by war.... But in a very astute way David opens the path for **a future** for the people. By instructing the story of Saul and Jonathan’s death be told – and by being generous to Saul with his wording, what David does is good!

There is *a whole lot more* of just how clever David is with this move in a political way, and isn’t that how it should be? Our stories are about us – the good **and the not so good** – they are real and somehow the honesty helps us to connect, to bring down into our time, to find God’s voice that is **still speaking truths** for daily living. One of the important ones for me from what David did, is that we can encourage and lead our friends and family into healthy and good places despite the nasty, negative, determinedly destructive attitudes and people around.

We can choose to be gracious, forgiving and kind – and actually I’m not sure our challenge is to have and hold to that attitude all the time – not just when death happens! But we’re real people with real feelings and it’s hard... And as I reflected on this – I realised one of the key determinates in all this is ‘love’. - **When** there is love, **where** there is love – then there is a future with hope in a better way / world / place.

David did it because of the love he and Jonathan shared, the best of a brother’s love, and I don’t think it is too hard to affirm that all Jesus did was because he loved. St Paul describes love this way: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NIV) “<sup>4</sup>Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup>It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup>Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup>It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” So it seemed to me that this is exactly what ***Jesus was doing*** in today’s readings. Marks Gospel is a story about Jesus loving two ‘women’ enough to bring healing, and health to them *and therefore* their community.

**Yes one** was a woman who had been ‘sick’ for 12 years, (the entire life of the other), a girl who at 12 was on the edge of womanhood. In listening to their stories, and in doing something about it – Jesus ‘loved’ in “deed”, he showed love in action. **Had you** thought that the sick woman had **no-one** to tell her story – no ‘male’ and in that culture – no protector, no money, no income, unclear therefore no community.... and still Jesus ‘listened’. He did more than that – he ‘felt’ her drain his healing power and asked for her story.

When she told it, he called her ‘daughter’. **Hear** the belonging / the family / the placement of her as a child of Abraham therefore God’s chosen? He restored her to the community by calling her ‘daughter’. “Daughter” he said, “Your faith has healed you”. Opps – **remember** according to Mark the disciples don’t get Jesus? They keep asking ‘who is he?’ But here a voiceless, powerless, sick, poverty ridden woman – gets who he is – that’s some story to hear and tell!

It’s our challenge folk – **to do** as **Jesus did** and listen to the ‘little’ ones, the voice-less ones in our powerful, consumer powered, success orientated world – to stop and listen to their stories and take action – to build, in love strong healthy communities... some dream! – but Jesus did it! cV

The *girl* was loved – desperately by her dad and he told her story! I’m sure you, *like me know either in ourselves – or from others* that sense of **utter desperation**. When you will do whatever it takes for your loved ones. Jarius was at that point – he loved his daughter – how awesome is that? In his culture a *daughter wasn’t really worth* very much, girls were more a liability but this important community leader loved so much that he went to Jesus and asked for help. **How hard** I wonder was that? Synagogue leader asking Jesus – in public for help? Did you know that Jairus is one of the few named characters in Mark? He is Synagogue leader <sup>\*1</sup> but not a Rabbi, nor in all likelihood a presiding elder so he did not preach the sermon, or chair the council meeting, he’s a lay man who was the ‘go-to-man’ if people wanted to gripe about the synagogue’s hard seats or poor heating, they griped to Jairus. And all ‘worldly’ status is forgotten because **his daughter** is sick.

But it’s what we do, isn’t it? Make a stand for the priorities in our life? Healing for a loved one before our position in society, secure employment, retaining our position of honour – right? **Begging in love** for life of another? Jarius ‘fell’ at Jesus feet and pleaded... The woman had faith that Jesus would heal her, David chose to leave Saul and Jonathan gracious legacies this is what they all did – in love, with love.

What are we being asked to do? Whose voice asking that we tell their story are we hearing? Can we do like Jarius did, put the need of the sick, voiceless, and powerless, before our own ‘status’? Dare we chose healthy, gracious, kind options to build a better future? What story do *we tell* by **what we do**! Amen

\*1 J Petty,