

## Jairus

2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27  
Psalm 130  
2 Corinthians 8:7-15  
Mark 5:21-43

We probably do ourselves a great disservice when we think of Jesus as meek and mild.

There are far too many pictures of the blond haired, blue-eyed Jesus and not nearly enough of the black haired brown eyed Jew who is God incarnate.

Now don't get me wrong, Jesus is mild: but it tends to be toward those who have lost all hope of being accepted by God.

Prostitutes, tax collectors, the outcast and the losers.

To them, he is mild.

But to the people in power, religious power or political power, there isn't much that is mild about Jesus.

No, toward them, Jesus is pushy.

Jesus, who runs money changers out of the temple.

Jesus, who tells of the old widow who pesters the unjust judge until he gives her justice.

Jesus, who tells about the man whose in-laws arrive in the middle of the night, so he runs to his neighbor, rousts him from bed, begging for some beer and chips for his tired and hungry guests.

So it's no surprise that pushiness is a big piece of today's gospel.

Jairus, a leader in the religious establishment, a man who spends every Friday night playing bridge with the Pharisees (who are confounded by this nobody named Jesus); this Jairus is at this very moment face down in the dirt at the feet of Jesus, begging for the life of the one he loves more than life itself.

Jairus is determined to move heaven and earth to save her, and so here he is, insisting, pleading, begging the carpenter from Nazareth to please come — and Jesus agrees.

Only to be accosted by another pushy person with a problem!

You see, in early Israel, there were purity laws; cleanliness laws, which served many healthy and useful purposes.

And one of those laws said that women who were bleeding aren't supposed to be out in public; certainly she isn't supposed to approach this Jesus, much less touch him.

But she is pushy and she pushes through the crowd intent on getting close to him.

For 12 years her life and her savings have been bleeding away — she is determined to get help.

Pushing through the crowds surrounding Jesus, she grabs his clothes from behind, if just for an instant, and the bleeding stops immediately.

And pushy Jesus demands to know which pushy person touched him.

As she comes trembling forward, this pushy woman is embraced by Jesus and restored to the community.

So it should come as no surprise that you and I my friends, are invited by God to be pushy too.

Be pushy in asking what you will of God.

Be pushy in seeking glimmers of the Kingdom in this life.

Be pushy in reminding anyone who will listen that God has done something marvelous in Jesus:

-he has cancelled our sins

-he has cleared the deck

-he has made us sons and daughters of God.

Too often it seems our faith life prefers soft saw hats as we moon over sweet Jesus, meek and mild; yet if we really listen in on the Gospel, we might better come to church wearing flak jackets and army helmets, lest the living God move through this place with power, calling us out of ourselves so that we might find ourselves.

Ours is a God who calls each and every one of us, you included, to come along on the grand adventure.

If you want to sign on, you need to be pushy too.

It is an adventure as old as creation itself.

And we are each of us called to come along.

Nikos Kazantzakis, in his autobiography, tells of this marvelous call, "the Cry" he calls it, that wells up at the center of all that exists.

This Cry is another name for God.

It stretches out through the aeons of time, and it still beckons to us today.

He writes:

"Blowing through heaven and earth, and in our hearts and in the heart of every living thing, is a gigantic breath — a great Cry — which we call God.

Plant life wished to continue its motionless sleep next to the stagnant waters, but the Cry leaped up within it and violently shook its roots: 'Away, let go of the earth, walk!'

Had the tree been able to think and judge it would have cried: 'I don't want to. What are you urging me to do! You are demanding the impossible!'

But the Cry, without pity, kept shaking its roots and shouting, 'Away, let go of the earth, and walk!'

It shouted this way for thousands of aeons; and lo! as a result of desire and struggle, life escaped the motionless tree and was liberated.

Animals appeared — worms — making themselves at home in water and mud.

"We're just fine," they said.

'We have peace and security, we're not budging!'

But the terrible Cry hammered itself pitilessly into their loins.

'Leave the mud, stand up, give birth to your betters!'

'We don't want to!'

'We can't!'

'You can't, but I can!'

'Stand up!'

And lo! after thousands of aeons, man emerged, trembling on his still unsold legs.

The human being is a centaur, his hoofs are planted in the ground, but his body from breast to head is worked on and tormented by the merciless Cry.

He has been fighting, again, for thousands of aeons, to draw himself, like a sword out of his animalistic scabbard.

He is also fighting — this is his new struggle — to draw himself out of his human scabbard.

Man calls in despair,

'Where can I go?'

'I have reached the pinnacle, beyond is the abyss!'

And the Cry answers, 'I am beyond.'

'Stand up!'

As one writer says it, "The Cry is God's Spirit within us, and indeed within all of nature, calling us constantly out of ourselves and beyond ourselves in order to be ourselves." E. Robinson, *In The End God*, 9.

And the Cry is Jesus.

The Jesus who pushes through the crowd surrounding Jairus' house.

"Go away!, She's already dead!" they jeer at him.

He doesn't listen.

He pushes through.

Out of the house goes everyone, except the closest three disciples, except Jairus and his wife; and of course the little girl.

Jesus, the Cry made flesh, takes her by the hand and gently says:

"Talitha cum.....little one, stand up."

She stands.

Hear my friends the story of the pushy Jesus.

Hear the Cry who insists that we too push.

Push against injustice.

Push against hatred.

Push against resentment.

Push toward forgiveness.

Push toward reconciliation.

Push for peace.

And as we do, we too shall hear him whisper, in your ear and mine,

“Talitha cum, little one, stand up!”

+amen