

February 22, 2026 - First Sunday of Lent
Presented by Rev Kath

Lent Series: Faith Through Trials
“The Hem of His Garment”
Psalm 27:1-6, Mark 5:25-34, Romans 10:9-13

I want to share a condensed version of a story called “A Warm Fuzzy Tale,” by Claude M. Steiner. Think about the gift of touch as you listen to this story.

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there lived two happy people called Tim and Maggie with their two children, John and Lucy.

In those days, everyone was given a small, soft Fuzzy Bag when born. Any time a person reached into this bag, they were able to pull out a Warm Fuzzy. Warm Fuzzies were very much in demand because whenever someone was given a Warm Fuzzy, it made them feel warm and fuzzy all over.

Anytime they liked, someone could walk up and say “I’d like a Warm Fuzzy.” You would reach into your bag and give them a Fuzzy, and they would feel good all over. Since they were given freely, getting enough of them was never a problem. There was plenty to go around and everyone was happy.

One day a bad witch told Tim that his wife Maggie was giving their daughter Lucy too many Warm Fuzzies and she would soon run out and there would be none left for Tim. He was shocked and believed the witch.

Tim complained and sulked when he saw Maggie giving out Warm Fuzzies, so Maggie saved them for Tim rather than her friends and her children. When her children saw what she was doing, they decided it must be wrong to share their Warm Fuzzies. They too became very careful.

They were jealous of the Warm Fuzzies their parents shared. They became stingy with their Warm Fuzzies. Everyone in the village started holding back their Warm Fuzzies for only very special people. They began to feel less warm and less fuzzy. They began to shrivel up and die from lack of Warm Fuzzies.

The bad witch, who didn’t really want people to die, but just wanted to sell more salves and potions, started giving everyone a bag of Cold Pricklies. The people would share the Cold Pricklies instead of the Warm Fuzzies.

The people no longer shriveled up and died but a lot of people were very unhappy and feeling very cold and prickly instead. Warm Fuzzies became extremely valuable. Some people made fake Warm Fuzzies made of plastic expecting their friends to feel warm and fuzzy, but instead still felt cold and prickly.

Eventually, a young woman with big hips (don’t know why the story gave this woman big hips!) came to town. She didn’t know about the witch’s story about the Warm Fuzzies running out. She gave her Warm Fuzzies freely, even when she wasn’t asked for one, and all the children loved being with her. The children started to act like her, giving out Warm Fuzzies whenever they liked.

The grownups got worried and even passed a law that made it a crime to give out Warm Fuzzies in a reckless way or without a license. But the children didn’t seem to care.

It isn’t known if the children will be able to change the ways of their village, if the adults will remember the days when Warm Fuzzies were given out freely. It’s isn’t known if the children will be able to bring back the days when everyone shared their Warm Fuzzies.

If you want to, and I hope you do, you can join by freely giving and asking for Warm Fuzzies and being as loving and caring as you can.”

Today’s passages speak to our faith, to our prayers, to truly believing in what God has promised us.

James 1:6 tells us to “ask in faith, never doubting.” We have to trust that God hears and answers our prayers. It’s not so much about the prayer, it’s about our belief in whom we pray to – our belief in God, in Jesus, in the Holy Spirit.

From Romans 10: *“If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, ‘No one who believes in Him will be put to shame.’ ... For, ‘Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord shall be saved.’”*

Our Gospel reading starts with Jairus (Jay-ris), the elected ruler of the local synagogue. He’s responsible for supervising worship, for running the weekly school, for caring for the building.

Now many synagogue rulers had close ties to the Pharisees, so it is likely that some of them were pressured not to support Jesus. For Jairus to bow before Jesus was a big deal and perhaps a daring act of respect and worship.

As Jesus is called to see and heal Jairus’ daughter, a woman in the crowd reaches out to Him. This is my favorite story of healing in the Bible, and one of my favorite stories overall.

This unnamed woman – always referred to as “the woman with the flow of blood,” has been bleeding for 12 years, and she presses, pushes, squeezes forward through the large crowd following Jesus so that she can touch His clothing, just the hem of His garment, having faith that she would be healed by just that one touch.

Leviticus tells us what she had to endure, to no fault of her own: *If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days ... all the days of the discharge she shall continue in uncleanness ... Every bed on which she lies during all the days of her discharge shall be treated as the bed of her impurity, and everything on which she sits shall be unclean ... Whoever touches these things shall be unclean and shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until the evening.*

She most certainly prayed, but was ostracized, ignored, considered unclean – she was not welcome in her community and no doctor had been able to help her!

God answers our prayers, but His answer isn’t always “Yes.” Sometimes the best answer is “No” or “Be patient” or “Not now, but later.”

When my mom was sick, when we understood she was dying, I drove to church late one night and I lay prostrate on the floor of the sanctuary, crying out to God in prayer. I pleaded with God to heal her. I begged God to comfort my father and to encourage our family. God answered my prayers.

My mom passed away June 30th, 2008. He healed my mom and uplifted us. That’s not the healing I was praying for – I was hoping for a miracle. I wanted my mom back. But God healed her. She no longer suffered and our faith tells us that she’s at home with God. God wanted her even more than we did.

My family believes that through our loss and trials we have never been abandoned and we get our comfort from the Holy Spirit.

The story of the woman with the issue of blood is so important to me. It reminds me that our belief, our faith changes things. Our belief heals us.

Sometimes we ask for a healing touch from God and sometimes we reach out to do the touching.

My friend, Nicole C Mullen, sings a song called “One Touch” and she often introduces it by inviting the listeners to name their own issue, whether it’s physical pain, despair, loneliness, and then she challenges us to reach out, and touch the hem of Jesus’ garment.

Not that lyrics can tell the story better than the actual scripture, but listen to these lyrics:

*If I could just touch the hem of His garment
Then I know I'd be made whole
If I could just press my way thru this madness
His love would heal my soul
If only one touch*

*So many people calling
How could He ever know
That just the brush of Him
Would stop the flow*

*If he knew would He rebuke me
Or shame me to the crowd
Well, I'm desperate 'cause it's never or it's now*

*And then, suddenly He turned around
He said somebody has unleashed My power
Well, frightened and embarrassed I bowed
You see I told Him of my troubles and how...*

*I had to touch the Hem of His garment
And I know I've been made whole
And how I had pressed my way thru the madness
And His love has healed my soul*

*And with one word He touched the hem of my garment
And you know I've been made whole
And somehow, He pressed His way thru my madness
And His love has healed my soul*

After reaching out and touching just the clothes that Jesus was wearing, not Jesus Himself, just his cloak, the woman was immediately healed. Knowing He had been touched and some of His healing essence, his power, had gone from Him, Jesus looked around and asked who it was that had touched Him. The woman fell down before Him and told Him what she had done.

Jesus turned to her and said, *“Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”* She believed, her faith had upheld her and her prayers were answered.

We can claim the truth that David wrote in Psalm 27:
*“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh—
my adversaries and foes— they shall stumble and fall.
Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;
though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.
For He will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;
He will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
He will set me high on a rock.”*

In Corrie Ten Boom's, “The Hiding Place” she said she trusted Psalm 32:7. She believed, *“You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble...”* She lived during the Nazi occupation of Holland and did all she could for her friends and neighbors, helping many Jews escape the Holocaust by hiding them in her closet. She was imprisoned for what she did. But Corrie continued to have faith that God would provide a hiding place.

Now, I haven't forgotten the daughter of Jairus ... and neither did Jesus!

While Jesus is speaking to the woman healed by reaching to touch His presence, scripture reads: *“Some people came from the synagogue leader's house to say, ‘Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?’*

But she Jesus says, *“No, she is just sleeping”* ... and the crowd laughed at Him. They were there – they know that she's dead.

So that He can teach an important lesson about keeping hope and trust in Him, Jesus tolerated their ridicule.

How often have people laughed at us, or behind our backs, for the things we believe in? For the things that we know to be true? For our faith that God created this world, that Jesus died for our sins, that we will rise one day and spend eternity with God in Heaven? That through our trials we are never abandoned? Unbelievers don't see as we do.

Lately, there are people who say our prayers for peace and comfort in times of trial or crisis aren't enough. Our words are empty. We should be out there doing something to change our world or to fill the needs of those who are suffering. And to some extent they are right ... but, we cannot always be present. We cannot always send money. We don't always have the words to say to change policies. But we do have the ability to pray. We do have faith that God's comfort and guidance will be present! I won't let their words of ridicule and condemnation stop my prayers!

So, Jesus sends all the people away from Jairus' daughter, keeping with Him only her father and mother. And Jesus takes her hand, he touches her and tells her to get up. She immediately gets up and walks around.

The woman with the flow of blood reached out to Jesus, with bravery, with faith, with hope – and she is healed because of her faith. Jairus' daughter was not able to reach out to Jesus, but her father was able to call out to Him, to bring Jesus to his home to touch his daughter. Jairus also had faith, he had bravery, he had hope – and his daughter was healed because of this faith.

Just as Jairus and the woman reached out to Jesus and His saving touch, we are called to be “in touch” with Jesus, too. We are told to reach out in faith, in hope, in bravery, to reach out and touch the hem of His garment – to accept the new life He offers for ourselves and then to share it with others who are not yet able, who don't understand, who are afraid to believe, who haven't found the trust to know Jesus is with us through our trials.

This woman and this child are physically healed. But we are not always physically healed when we call out to Jesus, when we reach out to touch the hem of His garment, when we ask for a family member to be healed from an illness certain to bring their death. But, if we are open and accepting, we feel the mentally and spiritually healing presence of Jesus Christ.

In our lives there are people who aren't able to believe, who aren't brave enough to call out to Jesus, who don't have the faith that they can be healed – whether it be a healing of mind or body. They can be paralyzed by depression, illness, poverty – even by a loss of faith. We can be a part of their healing when we sit with them, offering our comforting presence.

Touching heals!! Reach out and give a friend a hug. Reach out and touch the hand of someone who is ill. Reach out and caress the cheek of a child. Reach out and rest your hand on the shoulder of someone who is carrying the weight of the world alone.

Remember it's not only physical touch we are called to share. We are told to share of our food, of our clothing, of our finances. We can help to heal spirits, uplift faith, share the knowledge that God is with us.

I think of Jesus when I read of the young woman with the big hips who gave away her warm fuzzies to the children freely. We should be sharing God's Warm Fuzzies with everyone ... because they don't run out!