

Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

ENCOUNTER

Labels

Mark 5.21-43

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- What did you hear?
- What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

VERSES FOR MEDITATION AND REFLECTION

³³ But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." ³⁵ While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" ³⁶ But overhearing^[b] what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." **Mark 5.33-36**

The two characters in these passages of scripture are presented to us as being on different sides of the spectrum: the 12-year old daughter of Jairus, a synagogue leader, and the hemorrhaging woman. Their "labels" tell us that the girl belongs to a family, by whom she is clearly cherished and valued. In contrast, the hemorrhaging woman has no name, nor is she claimed by anyone.

Why do you think Jesus does not take the "easy" road of going straight to Jairus' house and healing his daughter?

How might the miracle of healing his daughter publically have immediately increased the public's awareness of Him and His ministry?

Discuss why you think He went against the momentum of the crowd and pressure from His disciples to continue on through the crowd, ultimately encountering the hemorrhaging woman.

Regardless of their labels or their perceived value to others, Jesus does not favor one over the other. After healing Jairus' daughter, we see Jesus address her with the new title of "little girl." The hemorrhaging woman he addresses as "daughter," saying that her faith has made her well. Jesus flattens out the labels which initially defined them.

How were each known by their previous labels, and how were they then transformed with the new labels given to them by Jesus?

Labels can fill us with a sense of importance and worth, or fill us with shame, guilt, or insignificance.

What are the labels by which you are known?

What labels about yourself would you like to change?

Knowing and believing that we are more loved and cherished by God than we could possibly imagine can never take away our worth, no matter what labels we have been given.

How can we believe and hold tight to this truth?

How can we help others re-frame how they are perceived and labeled?

Heavenly Father, thank you for this story of contrasting identities and labels which helps us to see the depth of Jesus' love. Help us to recognize the ways in which labels define us, how we live into those labels, and how we can hold tight to the truth that no label could ever take away our worth in Jesus. **Amen.**