24th Sunday after Trinity
Rolling Meadows - 1964

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IN NOMINE JESU

St. Matthew 9: 18-21 While He was thus speaking to them, behold, a ruler came in and knelt before Him, saying, "My daughter has just died; bu come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live." And Jesus rose and followed Hi with His Disciples. And behold, a woman who had suffered from a hemorrhage for twelve years came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His garment; for she sai to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I shall be made well."

F A I T H

The 18th Century has been called The Age of Reason, the 19th Century The Age of Industrialization, and the 20th Century The Age of Fear. Our age, which wa to introduce the rule of man under the blasphemous chant of Swinburne, Glory to Ma in the Highest - where all have bread and God is dead - has given us two of the greatest wars in human history. What is more, nothing has been solved. Mankind i in conflict across the globe with nation pitted against nation, class against clas and race against race. Our problems are greater today than ever before. As Helmu Thielicke has pointed out, The anxiety of this age is actually man's untrammeled fear of himself and of his own kind. In spite of all his accomplishments, man sti has one big nut to crack - himself. In his emancipation from the shackles of the past, man has himself become unpredictable and unreliable. Having tremendous powe of destruction in his own hands, ~~he~~ modern man is no longer bound and restrained by the ultimate authority of God. He finds himself standing on the dread abyss of nothin ness that yawns on the horizon of an atheistic world. Secularism has eaten out th spiritual vitality of nations, leaving exhaustion and emptiness. The Bible says that it is a foolish thing to say there is no God. Our age has proved that it is infinitely more foolish to say there is a God - and to live as though there were not. Practical atheism is the problem of our time and our world.

Many people today are like children, afraid of a bumblebee but with no fear of a huge truck going by. Afraid of the wrong things, they fear for the loss of their material possessions, or of their friends, or of their health, or of their own lives. They are worried about everything except about God. They fear everything but God. About Him they are not even concerned. The result, of course, is frustration, helplessness, and dread. Time magazine said not so long ago, Anxiety seems to be the dominant fact of modern life. Time went on to say that our world's

anxiety is directly traceable to its secularism. We have killed God, annihilated Him, rubbed Him out of more and more areas of our lives. A report in the Reader's Digest states flatly: The majority of Americans say that they believe in God, but ... they never think of God in relation to their own lives or associate Him with their behavior. We are tempted by our secularism to say, Nobody up there loves me because there is nobody up there. To bank on someone who is not there is tragedy!

There is Someone there, of course. There is still God, and there is sti Jesus, the Son of God - Jesus, the eternal certainty in a time of worry and anxiet He is in our todays and tomorrows. He is there not just in spirit but in actual fact. Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. The question is whether we will take Him or the empty glory without Him - whether we will listen t Him or to the tempting voice of the things that are seen and that perish - whether false gods will stand between us and the Savior's love. This is the choice that is before us. Will it be steadfastness, and hope, and joy, and assurance with Jesus, or emptiness without Him?

Do you remember the 12 princes of Israel whom Moses sent forth to spy ou the Promised Land? Upon their return they gave the dismal report: There we saw th giants... and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers. A man who trusts in himself sooner or later ends up feeling like a grasshopper in his own sight. Richard Halvorsen has described modern man as making out when circumstances are okay, but crawling when life tumbles in. Not so the man who trusts in God! He depends not on his own weak and limited resources, but on God. He is certain of victory becaus he is absolutely sure of God's Son, Jesus Christ, the Victor. To recognize God is not a sign of stupidity but a mark of highest intelligence. To trust in God is not to escape from reality, but to meet reality with all of the resources of God Himsel

Look at the two people mentioned in our text! Not even the finality of death could keep this ruler from coming to Jesus. He believed that even now Jesus could help him. Kneeling down before Him, he said, My daughter has just died; but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live. And Jesus rose and followed Him

with His disciples. And behold, a woman who had suffered from a hemorrhage for twelve years came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His garment; for she sai to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I shall be made well. The medical men of her day regarded her illness as hopeless. Moreover she was branded as an outcast, expelled from the Temple, separated from her family, and ostracized by society. Mark tells us that she suffered much under many physicians, and had spen all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. Yet, she dared to believe that Jesus would help her. Timidly she ~~enters~~ joins the crowd that has gathered around Jesus, hoping she will ~~be~~ remain unnoticed, ~~and~~ Trembling she works her way up to Jesus so that she can touch the hem of His garment. Jesus turned, and seeing her He said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well."

So it happens today too. For those who have eyes to see, miracles are happening all around. The great God in His enormous pity and compassion is still doing the impossible for those who put their trust in Him. This does not mean, ho ever, that Christ promises to take us to heaven on flowery beds of ease. The Chri tian faith does not promise immunity from the tragedies of life. We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God.... Whom the Lord loves, He chasten Job, that great man of faith in the Old Testament, lost all of his possessions and his ten children in a single day. As if that were not enough, he himself became deathly sick with putrifying boils breaking out all over his body. Yet he declare Though the Lord slay me, yet will I trust in Him. Paul had his thorn in the flesh; Jesus endured His Cross. We cannot expect our life to be free from trouble. The point is that Christ is there in the midst of all our afflictions, and He will see us safely through them to the other side.

Christian faith is meant for life as it is, not for life as we would like it to be. Jesus showed His love for the world on the Cross. George McLeod has written, I simply argue that the Cross be raised again at the center of the market place as well as on the steeple of the church. I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles, but on a Cross between

two thieves; on the town garbage heap; a crossroads so cosmopolitan that they had to write His title in Hebrew and Latin and in Greek.... at a kind of place where cynics talk smut, and thieves curse, and soldiers gamble. Because that is where H died and that is what He died about. And that is where churchmen should be and what churchmen should be about.

God is God in the midst of tragedy. There are many things about our world we find difficult to understand. But there is one thing we know: Reigning i the heaven above is a God who is for us. Above us and around us is a God of love; not just love in general, but a God who has demonstrated His love in one supreme act of self-revelation - the death of His only Son in our behalf. That one great act proves once and for all that He is for us.

The Christian faith gives hope and joy in the midst of tragedy. Many people have the opinion that the opposite is true. They regard Jesus as a Killjoy as One who would take from them what little pleasure they could get out of life. Such is not the case. Jesus is the Sunshine behind the cloudy sky, the calm in the storm, the shout of triumph in the midst of battle. Yea, though I walk throug the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, because Thou art with me. Faith is not just the calm after the storm, but the calm at the very eye of the hurricane.

We live at a time like that of the Exodus when the Egyptians were struck down by the silent plague. We live in a world of the A-bomb and the H-bomb, of fission and fusion, where it is no longer regarded as fiction to talk about the en of the world. We live in a world where a French existentialist has said, There is no exit from the human delemma; where Ernest Hemmingway wrote before he died, I live in a vacuum that is as lonely as a radio tube when the batteries are dead and there is no current to plug into. It is, for the most part, a world without Christ and therefore without God and without hope. It is an anxious world, full of fear, and tension, and ulcers. But God is still God, and Christ is still the Lord of life and death. By His own death He has conquered death, having pulled all the

teeth from our ancient foe. He lives and reigns through all eternity. Put your trust in Him, and you will not be ashamed. Take Him at His Word, and He will see you through every difficulty - both in this world and that which is to come. Amen