



THE GOSPEL OF

MARK



Sermon Series Notes

“Jesus, Our Only Hope” (Mark 5:21-43)

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Read the entire text.

My third's son name is Jairus. I think of all my children daily, but in studying this text, Jairus of course came to mind frequently.

This is a story that, in order to gain all that God wants to teach us from it, we must know a bit about the characters involved in it. Let's begin with Jairus. He is a synagogue ruler, so he is a very respected man in the community, especially in a religious culture like this Jewish one. I'm not sure what all the requirements were to become a synagogue ruler, but whatever they were, this man had succeeded. He is no doubt financially self-sufficient, as I understand from my reading that synagogue rulers made a pretty good salary. Luke's account of this story tells us that this was his only daughter, and you get the impression it was his only child. This man is married, and you would assume as you compare Luke's account with Mark's, that this was a happy marriage. This was a blessed family.

As a synagogue ruler, Jairus is accustomed to ministering to and associating with lots of people, but not like this woman with the issue of blood. Jairus and his peers not only shunned people like her, they taught others do so as well, both by their actions, and by their teaching. Jairus' peers were men like the Pharisee who invited Jesus to dinner. Remember that story? During the dinner a sinful woman barged in, began to wet Jesus' feet with her tears and wipe them with her hair. And the Pharisee thought, "If this man were a prophet he would know what kind of woman she is, that she is a sinner" (see Luke 7:36-50). Or like the Pharisee Jesus describes in Luke 18:9-13 (read). Jairus' peers would have been those who criticized Jesus for eating with tax collectors and sinners, for associating with those they viewed as "sinners."

It is interesting that Jesus' most staunch critics were the religious rulers. So for Jairus to seek help from Jesus would mean that *he* now would come under the criticism of his peers. But his daughter's condition drives him to Jesus. The sickness was severe, she is dying, and all of a sudden nothing else mattered, not what any of his peers think, not even what might happen to his status or position as a synagogue ruler. He will do anything to save his child. We have to assume that he, just like this woman, had sought the help of doctors, but the doctors had given the bad news: "There's nothing more we can do."

And now this woman with the issue of blood. We do not know her name, she is an anonymous nobody. She had suffered with this physical infirmity for twelve years. We have no details as to how or why this came about. She had spent all her money going from doctor to doctor, and had only gotten worse. Now she is flat broke, and destitute. The fact that for twelve years she had money to spend on doctors makes me wonder what she did before she was afflicted with this condition. Did she have a job? Was she married? Does she have children? Whatever her life was previously, this physical infirmity had brought nothing but pain and suffering. To say her life had gone from bad to worse is an understatement.

Her condition made her unclean. Many commentators believe this issue of blood was menstrual in nature.

Lev.15: 25 "When a woman has a discharge of blood for many days at a time other than her monthly period or has a discharge that continues beyond her period, she will be unclean as long as she has the discharge, just as in the days of her period. 26 Any bed she lies on while her discharge continues will be unclean, as is her bed during her monthly period, and anything she sits on will be unclean, as during her period. 27 Whoever touches them will be unclean; he must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening.

This is why she approached Jesus the way she did. She knows that if someone sees her, they would drive her away from the crowd, and many would have to go through purification rites because they had come in contact with her.

For twelve years she had been banned from public worship, and from any kind of meaningful social interaction. Let me suggest that she was not just lonely, she was starved for love. She had not experienced any kind of personal touch for twelve years! If she had been married she was in all probability now divorced. If she had children they may have lost all contact with her. If she was single she had lost all hope of ever being married.

She believes that if she can just touch Jesus' cloak she would be healed. There was a commonly held belief that the clothes of a holy man, especially the fringes, possessed miraculous power. See Mark3:10; 6:56.

Acts 5:15...people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on them as he passed by.

Acts 19:11-12 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

So we have two people that could not be farther across the tracks from one another as this unnamed woman with an issue of blood, who Jesus healed, and this synagogue ruler named Jairus, whose daughter died, but who Jesus raised from the dead. It is no coincidence that these two situations are woven into one story. So what does the Lord want to teach us through this?

If you are suffering from a physical infirmity, you should seek Jesus for healing.

You should especially do this if you have reached a point where the doctors cannot help you. See James 5:13-16.

The cleansing this woman received went beyond a physical infirmity.

In this culture, her physical issue was also a spiritual issue. She was ceremonially unclean. This is a religious thing. According to the Law of Moses, it separated her from fellowship, not just with other people, but with God. As I have previously mentioned, what is more than likely happening to her is like a monthly period that never ends. Liver, kidney, or thyroid problems can cause prolonged menstrual problems. But whatever the bleeding, & whatever the cause, Scripture bears out that her uncleanness was spiritual as well as physical (Lev.15:25-27). That makes me think of this verse:

Isaiah 64:6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.

The word used for “filthy rags” is the same word used for a woman’s menstrual cloth. So Isaiah uses a physical illustration to make a spiritual point.

That makes me think of another verse:

Isaiah 1:18 Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

Scarlet = red; Crimson = red; Can the picture be any more clear?

Don’t you just love the Word of God? And don’t you marvel at such a Wonderful Savior. He is willing to be touched by the most unclean person in society, and when the connection is made between them, complete cleansing is the result! Can anybody say Hallelujah with me?

Jesus healed this woman, then was determined that she should make herself known. Why? Because Jesus wants her to know that it wasn’t so much touching his cloak that secured her healing, it was her faith; Because Jesus wants her faith to go public, as a testimony for the sake of others; Because the Father wanted this story in the Bible; And last but certainly not least, because Jesus wanted this woman to know that she is now a child of the King! She is a child of God through faith in Jesus.

God wants us to share our testimony publicly, boldly, & unashamedly.

Don’t miss exactly when this woman touches Jesus, and as a result is cleansed. It is when He is headed to the home of Jairus the synagogue ruler, because his daughter is dying. Jairus was no doubt frustrated already by the crowd around Jesus. Luke’s account says that the crowds almost crushed Jesus (Luke 8:42). It made their movement like an ambulance in heavy traffic. And then, the worst thing happened, as far as Jairus was concerned, the movement stops altogether. When it stops, Jesus begins to ask who touched his clothes. Even the disciples are taken aback by the question (read v.31). But Jesus presses the point, continuing to look around for whoever it was that touched him. Jairus must have been beside himself.

Knowing that Jesus is not going to give up until he finds out who it was that touched him, the woman comes forward, falls at his feet, trembling with fear. What is she now afraid of? Even though she “felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering” (v.29), she must have still been afraid of what Jesus would say about what she had done. She was probably also afraid of how the crowd would react once they knew that an unclean woman like her was secretly among them.

She tells Jesus “the whole truth” (v.33b). That’s how we know that she had the issue of blood for twelve years, that she spent all she had on doctors and had only gotten worse, etc. And Jesus, after hearing her full story, says to her, “**Daughter**, your faith has healed you...” I think she was overwhelmed with relief, surprise, joy, and no doubt overflowed with thanksgiving & praise. I don’t think this is at all what she expected to hear from Jesus. As far as I know, it’s the only time Jesus is ever recorded addressing someone specifically as “daughter.” He addressed Jairus’ daughter as “Little girl.” I know I’ve already used the word fascinating, but I must do so again. This is to me fascinating. Jairus is watching this whole scene unfold, and he hears Jesus now refer to this woman as daughter. Let me remind us, this is a woman who would not have been allowed in the synagogue, who was shunned by society, especially a religious society like she lived in. This is a woman who would have been looked down upon. People would have wondered what sin she had committed to end up so unclean. And Jairus now hears Jesus call her “Daughter.” WOW! WOW!

Could it be that in the wonderful sovereign plan of Almighty God, this woman touching Jesus at this precise time, and Jairus being forced to witness everything that happens, is meant to change Jairus’ perspective about people, about how God views people, about God’s love for people? Could it be that after this all transpires, and Jairus gets his daughter back from the dead, that he not only loves his daughter as never did before, but he begins to love people like he loves his daughter? That he begins to love people, all people, the way God loves them? It is likely that his whole life changed after this experience, and his ministry as synagogue ruler changed as well. Refer to the story of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37.

God loves people, ALL people, and He wants us to love them as He loves them. Part of loving people is going to where they are, meeting them at their point of need. This means getting out of our religious routine. I’m very thankful I’m able this coming Tuesday to do something that up to now has not been part of my normal weekly routine - be a lunch pal with a third grade boy at Campbell Park Elementary.

God loves ALL people. There is no favoritism with Him.

Has anyone noticed the common denominator in this story? The woman had the issue of blood for twelve years, and Jairus’ daughter is twelve years old. This is not a coincidence.

Some people suffer for years, while others are blessed. The Eagles/Don Henley and the song “Sad Café” – “I don’t know why fortune smiles on some, and let’s the rest go free.” It is a line that asks why some are blessed, and some suffer, why some are healed, and some are not. It’s a question about life’s mysteries.

While life is filled with mystery, the truth is, it is only a matter of time before everyone will need the kind of help that only God can provide. And the Lord desires for these circumstances in life to drive you us Himself, because ultimately He is the only one that has the answers to life's problems.

Is it not mysterious that in this one story you have someone who is healed from twelve years of physical suffering, and another who suffers and dies. And from some people's perspective, the one who should have been healed was Jairus' daughter.

The message is clear to me. Life has mysteries that we will never understand this side of eternity (Rom.8:28). But is also clear to me that, by raising Jairus' daughter from the dead, God wants to say to us that ultimately, our hope in Him is beyond this life, beyond the grave. Why didn't Jesus heal both the woman and the girl? On another occasion, a centurion comes to Jesus on behalf of his sick servant. Jesus never even goes to where the sick person is, yet heals them. He could have done the same here. That thought takes me in my mind to Hebrews 11:32-39a. It takes me to Psalm 73:1-3, 13-14. From Jairus' perspective, he had lived a more righteous life than this woman, so why would God heal her and not is daughter?

The story of Lazarus, see John 11.

Sometimes the Lord allows people to die, and sometimes their death seems premature, even wrong.

Warren Wiersbe in his commentary on this story says that what Jesus literally said to Jairus in verse 36 is "Don't be afraid, keep on believing." He came to Jesus with faith that Jesus could heal his daughter. Now he needed to have faith that Jesus could raise the dead. This is what enabled Abraham to offer his one and only son Isaac on Mt Moriah (Heb.11:19).

Jesus allowed Lazarus to die so that the living might have hope beyond the grave. I wholeheartedly believe that is why He allowed this twelve year-old girl to die. Not everyone is going to be healed in this life. In my world, most people are NOT healed. I just spent time with Keith Wheeler, who has seen God do extraordinary miracles all over the world. But Keith has two children that have tremendous challenges, one is on dialysis, and the other has autism. And it is a mystery why they have not been healed, because the same kind of fervent prayers have been made for these children as the prayers that have secured miracles many other places.

I Cor.15:19 if only in this life we have hope, we are to be pitied more than all men.

The ultimate healing comes in resurrection.

I Cor.15:22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

See I Thess.4:13-18

Ultimately, our only hope in life is Jesus.

Job 14:1 Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.

CONCLUSION

It's only a matter of time before you will face issues in life that only God can help you with. May those times drive you to Jesus. If you are suffering a physical infirmity, seek Jesus, and He will either heal you, or He will grant you grace sufficient to endure the suffering. And don't forget that man's greatest infirmity is sin, and Jesus came to cleanse us of all sin. Have you been cleansed? You can be, today, right now.

Isaiah 1:18 Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

Salvation Invitation

Once you've been cleansed by Jesus, He does not want you to remain hidden in the crowd. Share your story, because Jesus is man's only hope!