

The Servant Desires Faith (TIJ Mark 5:21-43) Pleasant Plains 7-12-2020 Nick Angel

- ***READ Mark 5:18-20*** Last we left Jesus, He has just been rejected by the people on the eastern side of the sea of Galilee. He had done such a great service in expelling the legion of demons from the possessed, and yet the people of the Gerasenes were terrified. They begged Jesus to leave... and that is exactly what He did. From this, I want us to recognize that our Lord was not in the habit of forcing Himself upon anyone. He allowed individuals to choose whether or not they would accept Him, what He was doing, and the way He went about it. Just as He will tell His Apostles in the next chapter (**6:11**), Jesus Himself simply moved on from those who rejected Him in search of those who would be more welcoming.
- Jesus allowed people to make these individual choices because He desired followers who had true faith. He desired for people to come to Him recognizing their need for Him and not pushing Him away for this reason or another. Thankfully, Jesus's return trip to the western coast of the sea of Galilee will introduce some individuals who were much more in line with the type of people who Jesus the great Servant came to earth looking for. Let's begin by reading this morning's text of **Mark 5:21-43** together, we'll break down the scene, make some observations of the text, and then conclude with our usual two application questions.

I. Setting The Scene

A. Jesus returns to the western shore of Galilee where He is met with a much more welcoming crowd and a leader of the synagogue who has a daughter on her deathbed.

1. To reinforce this point from just a few moments ago, I believe Mark has put a concerted effort into making sure that the readers of his Gospel take note of the incredible difference between the actions of the Gerasenes on the eastern shore of the sea and the reception Jesus receives once He crosses back over with His disciples. In the region of the Gerasenes, a large crowd was begging Jesus to leave, but here there is a large crowd gathering around to welcome Him back into their company.
2. A man, a father, named Jairus comes to Jesus and begs Him earnestly that He might come with him to his house in order to heal his daughter who is on her deathbed. This might not seem all out of the ordinary considering Jesus had clearly shown His ability to heal the sick, but there was something about Jairus that truly made this a most interesting occurrence. Jairus stands out in this story for the fact that he was a leader in the synagogue. This was so incredible because we have seen time and time again in Mark's Gospel that Jesus did not get along with the Jewish leadership.
 - a) The Scribes accuse Him of blasphemy in **2:7**.
 - b) He is chided by the same type of people in **2:16** for eating with certain types of people.
 - c) The Pharisees accuse Jesus and His disciples of breaking the Sabbath in **2:24**.
 - d) The Scribes accuse Him of being in league with the demonic spirits in **3:22**.
3. From these examples alone we should gain a pretty clear grasp that Jesus simply didn't jive with the leadership of the time, and it ought to be curious to us that this particular man would come to Jesus. Such a story surely would have an interesting ending.

B. In the process of going to Jairus's home, Jesus is contacted by a woman who is at the end of her rope suffering from a bleeding issue that has plagued her for twelve years.

1. Imagine in your mind the scene that is before us. Jesus is walking through a town that was surely similar to any other town of that day and age. The buildings are somewhat close together and there are people already going about their daily activities. Add onto the normal activities a large crowd that is following this man to do what they can only imagine will be an amazing event to behold. Now through a desperate sick woman into the middle of it all.

2. Mark tells us that this woman was suffering from a continual bleeding of blood. She had been suffering from this condition for twelve years, and there was no medical remedy that had brought her healing. The text tells us that she had tried everything and had spent all that she had in trying to be made better. Sadly, the condition only seemed to continually grow worse. Like Jairus, she became aware that a great healer had come into her town, and she just had to go see Jesus...if only to simply touch His clothes.
- C. Her touching of of Jesus's clothing brings instant healing, and Jesus takes the time to address what has taken place.**
1. The woman is somehow able to make her way through this dense glob of bodies in order to come up to Jesus from behind. Again, please imagine this woman squeezing her body through the masses just to stretch out her arm as far as it will go to barely get a touch to the hem of Jesus's garment. It is at the moment that she gets that touch that her bleeding ceases and she knew within her body that she was healed.
 2. It was also at this very moment that Jesus's knows that something has happened. I can't even begin to wrap my mind around the idea of Jesus realizing within Himself that power had gone out of Him, but He knew something was up. He turns around and begins to ask who it was that touched Him to which the disciples seem to give Him some grief. *"What do you mean who touched You? We're smashed in here like sardines in a tin can and You're wondering who touched You?"* The disciples simply couldn't comprehend what had taken place.
 3. But Jesus continues to look for the person who touched Him, and the same courage that moved this woman to originally reach out to touch Jesus also moved her to speak up and acknowledge she was the one who had touched Him. Yes, she did so with fear and trembling, but she still came before Jesus and feel down before Him. She doesn't seem to know what will happen, but she does seem to believe this is the right thing to do. Her courage in the face of fear and trembling leads to a gracious response as Jesus says to her, ***"Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be healed from your affliction."*** (5:34) A better ending could not have been imagined by this woman.
- D. At the same time, Jairus is told his daughter has died, but Jesus tells him to keep on believing and don't lose faith.**
1. In the midst of this happy moment of healing, there is a reminder that there was an original mission that was taking place. Sadly, it is not the type of reminder the reader might have been looking for. People from Jairus's home come to him and deliver the awful news that his daughter had passed. The encouraged him to simply let Jesus be on His way since there was nothing that could be done. After all, what can Jesus do now that she has died?
 2. Jesus hears this conversation and says to Jairus, ***"Don't be afraid. Only believe."*** (5:36) I really love the way Weirsbe paraphrases and interprets what Jesus says right here to Jairus based upon the surrounding circumstances. *"You had a certain amount of faith when you came to Me, and your faith was helped when you saw what I did for that woman. Don't quit! Keep on believing!"* (Be Diligent, page 68) The synagogue leader seems to buy what Jesus is saying for they keep on making their way to the house where his daughter's body lay.
- E. Though the daughter is truly dead, Jesus raises her back to life, and instructs those present to keep it quiet.**
1. By the time they arrive at Jairus's home, it is clear that the news of the daughter's death has spread. The Text tells us that there was a commotion going on within the home for people were weeping and wailing. We must understand that the culture of the day demanded that there be a loud and obvious display of grief from the family or even from hired professional mourners. The Hebrew Mishnah, which is a collection of Hebrews practices and traditions tells

us that *“Even the poorest in Israel do not hire less than two flute players and one wailing woman.”* Is this different from our culture? It sure is, but it is what they did and it shouldn't surprise us to see such a thing.

2. However, what did come as a surprise was Jesus's reaction. Instead of observing the expected carrying out of mourning, Jesus tells these people to chill out because the girl wasn't dead but only sleeping. Jesus as Jesus was chided for asking who touched Him in a massive crowd of bodies, so is Jesus chided for saying such a thing. People laughed at Jesus! But He, of course, had the last laugh as He goes to the girl (with the parents and His closet disciples only), takes her hand, and tells her lifeless body, *“Talitha koum.”*
3. Just as there was an immediate resolution to the woman's unstoppable bleeding, so does this girl immediately get up to the incredible amazement of all who are around. Jesus tells them to keep this to themselves for now, and then He instructs that they ought to get something to eat for this little girl. There's not time for amazement...this little girl needs to eat!

With these being the nuts and bolts of the text, let's draw out some observations that will help lead us to the applications questions that will conclude this study for this Lord's Day.

II. Observations Of The Text

A. These two individuals were in completely different places in their positions within society and stages in their lives.

1. In considering just how different these two individuals were in many respects, let's recognize that intertwining two stories is something that Mark does on at least two other occasions in his Gospel account. He does this in **3:20-35** with Jesus's family and the accusations of the scribes. He will also do this again in **6:7-30** where he inserts what happens to John the Baptist in the context of the Twelve being sent out to preach. Why does Mark do such a thing? It seems to be done to emphasize either the similarities or differences between two groups or individuals. In this case, Jesus is actually doing both. Let's first consider just how different these two individuals truly were.
2. Jairus was the leader of one of the local synagogues. He would have no doubt been a wealthy man with great influence in this community. People would have looked up to him as a model of good Jewish faith and behavior. And yet, he was still having to endure the heartache of his daughter being on her deathbed and about to pass. For 12 years he had experienced joy incomparable by being this little girl's dad, but now those days of joy were almost gone.
3. On the flip-side, this woman was on the very lowest rungs of society. Not only was she a woman who had no more money to her name since she had spent it all on the doctors, but her specific condition left her in a state of continued and perpetual ceremonial uncleanness. According to **Leviticus 15:25-32**, any woman who was suffering from a continual discharge of blood was considered unclean and unfit to interact with. In fact, anyone who she came into contact with would also be considered unclean. For 12 years this woman had suffered agony inconceivable to many of us. Yet, she found herself at the exact same place as Jairus...at the feet of Jesus begging for mercy and healing.

B. Both of these individuals found themselves in extremely desperate positions.

1. Though they were extremely different, let's also recognize that those differences didn't keep them from finding themselves in equally desperate positions before Jesus. Jairus was begging for the life of his daughter to be spared in this moment. The woman is begging for her life to be spared at this moment. Again, though they are so different (one influential, the other unclean), we must recognize their equal need for Jesus.

2. There was no amount of money, influence, fame, or power that could be offered to Jesus that would be enough to warrant His acting on their behalf because those aren't the things that Jesus desires. Let's remember that Jesus desires faith, belief, and trust in the place of anything else. He desires for those who are truly desperate to come and through themselves before Him at His mercy while recognizing the completely powerless position they are in.
- C. Their faiths led them to work through their fears in order to find help at the feet of Jesus.
1. Yet, let's recognize that this doesn't mean that these individuals still didn't have obstacles to overcome when it came to them coming to Jesus for help. Let's not forget that Jairus was still a part of the Jewish religious leadership who wanted Jesus stopped. This seems to be why it is that Nicodemus goes to Jesus at night in order to converse with Him. **(John 3)** Nicodemus had to consider the fact that his group and Jesus were not on the same page. Surely this was something that was also on the mind of Jairus during this whole interaction.
 2. Additionally, this woman also had to overcome the fact that she would've most likely been someone who was well known for being in her perpetual state of uncleanness. If people saw and recognized her then she would surely have suffered great consequences. However, she was truly desperate and willing to do anything at this point for even a chance at being healed of her affliction. She believed that Jesus was that last hail-Mary, and jumped at the opportunity.
- D. Jesus shows His perfect purity and power by coming out of these two situations in an undefiled state.
1. However, what about Jesus? The reality is that her touching Jesus would have made Him unclean by the standards of the Law. The same thing could also be said for the fact that dead bodies were considered unclean and touching one would get a person into the same type of situation which would have required a ritual cleansing. **(Leviticus 21:17)** If this is all true...then how is it that Mark doesn't seem to indicate that Jesus has been made unclean by His interactions with these two desperate individuals.
 2. It comes down to the fact that Jesus is showing His true perfect and awesome nature through being able to be touched by an unclean woman and touching a dead body. In fact, this should have been a clear sign to those present that this man was truly someone special. Please consider what was written of the promised Messiah by the prophet Isaiah.

*He said, "Build it up, build it up, prepare the way, remove every obstacle from my people's way." For the High and Exalted One, who lives forever, whose name is holy, says this: "I live in a high and holy place, and with the oppressed and lowly of spirit, **to revive the spirit of the lowly and revive the heart of the oppressed.** For I will not accuse you forever, and I will not always be angry; for then the spirit would grow weak before me, even the breath, which I have made. Because of his sinful greed I was angry, so I struck him; I was angry and hid; but he went on turning back to the desires of his heart. I have seen his ways, but **I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and his mourners, creating words of praise.**" The Lord says, "**Peace, peace to the one who is far or near, and I will heal him.**" (Isaiah 57:4-19)*
 3. What Jesus is doing in this moment is fulfilling exactly what He was sent to do...give healing to the sick and dying. Now, some might say that is exactly what Jesus is doing in literally healing the sick, but it is the resurrection that truly puts everything into perspective. They are seeing a dead person being raised back to life! What better way to show power over death and uncleanness than that! But that wasn't the main point. The main point of what Jesus is trying to illustrate is the fact that God does these things perfectly in Jesus. He is too pure to be made impure. He is too full of life to allow the dead to remain dead forever. In Jesus there is healing and life that must not be taken for granted.

E. These events conclude the fourfold showing of Jesus's ultimate power over danger, demons, disease, & death.

1. In fact, I believe this section is doing nothing but showing the power that resided within Jesus. Think about what we have seen over the last couple of studies in Mark's Gospel. We have seen Jesus rebuke the storm and call it down just by His words. We have seen Jesus then go face to face and toe to toe with a legion of demons who are dad set against Him. We've now seen Jesus healing the seriously ill, and even raising people from the dead.
2. What must we conclude concerning what Mark is trying to do in the way he sets the stories together in quick succession? It must be that Mark is seeking to give ample and needed evidence to show that Jesus is truly the Son of God and endowed with power that only comes from above. If someone is thinking of following Jesus, then what better way for Mark to push them over the edge than by showing the fact that Jesus has power over every serious enemy that we face here in this life. At this point...the reader surely is being shown that this man named Jesus is the real deal and serious about what He has come to do.

III. Application Questions

A. Do we recognize the desperate position we are all in before God as sinners?

1. These two individuals went to Jesus because they truly had no where else to go. Jairus, for all of his influence and wealth, could do nothing for his daughter at this point. The woman, who at this point was a peasant and a social outcast, was at the end of her rope. They needed healing and hope, but had found none anywhere else. That desperation and feeling of inward hopelessness led them right to the feet of Jesus.
2. Do we see ourselves as being in the same position as these individuals when it comes to the desperate spiritual state that we find ourselves in apart from Christ? Paul speaks of our helpless state on account of our sin before God in **Romans 5:6**, and we must recognize the truth to those words. We are completely helpless to do anything to rectify the wrongs we have done against God. He has fully equipped us to do as He designed us to do in the beginning and yet we have rejected that and gone our own way. For our efforts, we have only received heartache and trouble. We truly are desperate, but do we recognize ourselves as such?

B. Do we recognize Jesus as the perfect solution to any and every problem we face in this life?

1. Based upon that recognition of our helplessness, do we also recognize that Jesus is the only way for us to find help and saving? That is what Paul would further emphasized in **Romans 5:6-11**, and we must embrace Jesus as being the only way for us to have any hope of salvation.
2. To really solidify this point, let's close with a quick look at **Ephesians 2:8-13**. This text speaks so perfectly to our desperate state and inability to do anything about it on our own. The Gentiles, of which most of us are, give a perfect example of what it looks like to be without hope and then to have perfect hope in Christ.

These two people came to Jesus with nothing but hopelessness and despair, but they left with that which is more valuable than all...hope. They had hope in life because of what Jesus gave them. That hope was a gift, absolutely, but I also want us to recognize that it came on the basis of their faith, belief, and trust in Jesus. It can be easy for us to find ourselves in similar situations, but I do hope that our study of this text has reminded us of the ever present need to have faith, to believe Jesus, and to trust that He will always give us what we need in order to be pleasing to His Father. What a Servant! May we ever remember that He is worthy of our faith.

"Daughter...your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be healed from your affliction...Don't be afraid. Only believe." (Mark 5:34,36)