

# Mark 5:21-41

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Date: 12 August 2014

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let me begin this afternoon by asking you all a question. How much of your faith do you really think that Jesus Christ is worth, if any at all?

Just think of life being rocked by a disaster. How far can we really go in trusting him? Where could the limit of your faith be tested? What's the worst that could happen to you? And in that moment, how much faith is Jesus really worth?

Well, it's been a couple of weeks, hasn't it, since we've looked at Mark's Gospel together. And you may remember we're in a section here where Mark puts together for us a collection of three miracles in a group performed by the Lord Jesus.

And the big call, the big challenge, in humanly impossible circumstances, has been for faith in Jesus Christ and the power of his word. The calming of the storm, the healing of the demon-possessed man, and now at the end of chapter 5, the resurrection of a dead 12-year-old girl.

Daddy, the father, the synagogue leader, Jairus, is the main figure here. And as he comes to terms with this grave situation of his little daughter's illness and subsequent death, there's a question that he must wrestle with here.

[ 1 : 50 ] Verse 35. Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further? Why trouble the teacher any further? What reason can you give Jairus to trust in Jesus now? Hope is lost. So why bother Jesus further?

Is Jesus still worth trusting? Surely the death of your daughter Jairus should challenge the limit of your faith in him.

And the challenge Mark puts to us in this account is whether we believe only in the circumstances and what seems possible, or in the God who can do the impossible.

And as with the other two miracles in this section, there's the interplay, isn't there, between fear of a situation and faith.

Have a look at verse 36 there. Overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, do not fear, only believe. In that moment of the grave news, Jesus says to him, yes, even now Jairus, don't fear, but believe.

[ 3 : 15 ] You can trust me. You can trust me and the power of my word all the way, Jairus. Trust me. This is how much faith you can put in me.

That even when death itself comes, trust me. Trust me. And of course it's not only Jairus who has to learn this lesson, is it?

Ever since chapter 3, Jesus has spent particular time teaching his own followers, his disciples, about faith in his power and in his word.

Like a little seed, do you remember? That word is imperceptible. It's so small. And yet it's so powerful. And the disciples themselves must learn, commissioned by Jesus himself, to go out and preach his word later on, they must learn the authority that they go with as Jesus sends them. The power and authority to bring life from death. They're still learning the answer to that vital question, aren't they, at the end of chapter 4.

[ 4 : 25 ] Who then is this, Jesus? How much faith is he really worth? So I've got three headings this afternoon, as is often the case, isn't it?

To take us through this miracle account that Mark gives us. First of all, we see here a prayer of faith. A prayer of faith. The great Ormond Street Hospital treats severely ill children.

There's a programme on TV about it, isn't it? And I don't know about you, but when I watch that programme, it is such a saddening thing to see children that young, so ill.

And if this were a modern day account here, a modern day history, there's no doubt that this young girl in the story, the daughter, would be in the intensive care unit there.

Jairus, we're told, sees Jesus and, verse 23, falls at his feet, imploring him earnestly, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death.

[ 5 : 32 ] Lord, come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be well. At the point of death. These are the last few moments of this little girl's precious life.

You could translate what he says to Jesus there as, Lord, she's sinking fast. Or, she's at death's door. It's truly a heartbreaking scene, isn't it?

A horrible, horrible thing. This man is torn apart by what's happening. And just imagine the room in the hospital. The girl is unconscious.

Perhaps she's hooked up to various apparatus. And all is quiet, apart from the regular beep of the heart monitor. Perhaps there's one or two family there sat at the bedside.

Her favourite teddy snuggled up to her. But this is it. At the point of death. A doctor comes in.

[ 6 : 40 ] He says, you know, there is nothing more we can do. And so dad, he faces his worst nightmare, doesn't he? Watching his girl about to perish.

Just a desperate situation. But how much faith is Jesus actually worth? There is a glimmer of hope, isn't there? As Jesus approaches.

He approaches Jesus. And perhaps this incredible man can heal his daughter like he healed the leper or the paralytic. Earlier in Mark's Gospel.

It's worth a shot, isn't it? So dad implores Jesus. He has a certain measure of faith in Jesus to be able to do something about this situation.

He offers a prayer to him. Lord, come and lay your hands on her. A prayer offered perhaps in desperation.

[ 7 : 37 ] But it's no less a prayer, is it? In that situation. Sometimes it is true, isn't it, that we can treat Jesus a bit like the fourth emergency service.

As a sort of last resort. When things go wrong. We don't pray or contact him at any of the time. Apart from when disaster hits. But that doesn't mean, does it, that he will refuse to listen.

Just out of spite. That doesn't mean that he will refuse to listen to us when and if disaster does come. Sometimes that's what it takes for us to pray, isn't it?

Some desperate situation. For us to realise that all along we were so weak. And we relied upon God. And this otherwise powerful and influential man could have let Jesus pass him by, couldn't he?

Maybe confident in his own position. But as the circumstances arise, he offers Jesus this simple prayer. This simple request. Showing a desperate faith.

[ 8 : 44 ] Lord, I'm powerless here. Can't do anything. Please come and lay your hands on her. Now isn't it so encouraging here?

But given the terrible reception Jesus has had from the religious leaders so far, he is willing to deal with this Jewish synagogue leader.

So you remember a few weeks ago we saw, didn't we, the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish religious leaders has brought the rejection by Jesus upon the old faithless Israel.

But even amongst a rejected, rebellious people, he listens to and helps individuals who break that mould. The mould of faithlessness in Jesus.

Those who come to him in faith and desperation. Just a simple prayer. Offered in great need and desperation. You and your faith may be terribly weak.

[ 9 : 49 ] But Jesus listens. Even if you come from a people, if you come from a background that has rejected Jesus. There's always a new start.

Prayer is always open to us today. So Jairus shows some faith, doesn't he? He goes to Jesus on the verge of a personal tragedy, a prayer of faith.

But just how much faith is Jesus really worth here? Now Mark really loves putting things in sandwiches in his gospel.

He puts things out in sets of three. So you've got the bread in the centre. He often does that to help us to see his point. And he does that here, doesn't he?

He stops in verses 24 to 34. He stops the story of the ill dying daughter with what looks like an unrelated case of an ill woman with a long-term illness, a bleeding problem.

[10:52] There she is in verse 25. There was a woman who'd had a discharge of blood for 12 years. Now it just seems like here, doesn't it, that Mark is a poor editor.

He's gone away, had a cup of coffee, forgotten that he was talking about Jairus' daughter, and now he's talking about this woman. But actually this woman is here as the filling of a sandwich, designed to show us an exemplary faith.

In the context of the dying daughter, this woman is an example to Jairus, and to all of us, and to the disciples, of how much faith Jesus is really worth.

So we've heard the prayer of faith, but Mark secondly interrupts Jairus' story with an exemplary faith. Now the two incidences are put closely together as a comparison.

So Jesus calls both the young girl and the woman daughter. We'll see that a bit later on. The girl is 12 years old, we're told.

[12:03] And the woman coincidentally has had a discharge of blood for 12 years. Both of them are, according to Levitical law, ritually unclean in some way.

The woman from the discharge and the girl later on as a corpse. Both of them receive a touch from Jesus and receive an immediate healing or resurrection.

So Mark lays these two closely together to show us something particular. To show us how much faith Jesus is really worth.

To show us how far we can trust in him. Now I hope that you can see here the chances of the woman receiving anything from Jesus are actually much, much lower than the synagogue ruler's chances.

So look at the comparison. Rather than a pillar of society, she was ostracised by others. She would have been kept from temple worship because of her condition.

[13:12] Mark is emphatic about her condition, isn't he? In verse 26. She'd had this discharge for 12 years who had suffered much under many physicians, had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse.

Now although we don't know whether this woman's condition is life-threatening, the feeling is there, isn't it, that her life really feels like it isn't worth living.

It is a living torment. Suffered much. Many physicians. Spent all she had.

Was no better. Just grew worse and worse. No answers. No improvements. No signs of hope. For 12 long years.

The doctor's fees. The dirty looks. The isolation. And the humiliation. Of this particular illness. But in the midst of this thronging crowd around Jesus, she manages, doesn't she, to force her way to Jesus and to touch his garment.

[14:23] In verse 28. 28. If I touch even his garment, I'll be made well. Now after that, there is a funny moment, isn't there? It probably took us by surprise as Steve read it, where Jesus turns around and says in verse 30, Who touched my garments?

Who touched my garments? Now the disciples think that this is some kind of joke, don't they? Come on Lord, you see this crown pressing around you here, and you're asking who touched your garments?

Ridiculous. Jesus looks around, doesn't he, to see who's done it. Now the point Mark is trying to make there, he's trying to show us that this woman was different in some way to all the other people who were touching Jesus.

There was something about her that was unique. Something that Jesus felt that he noticed. Her touch of his garment was different. Just look at verse 34 for a second.

He said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your disease. See the woman is highlighted because of her exemplary faith.

[15:41] The woman who had the least chance of getting anything from Jesus, who was ritually unclean, who has to even violate the law to go near Jesus, she has no position or status unlike Jairus.

As a woman, that was probably made even worse in those days. She's nameless, isn't she? We know Jairus' name, we don't know her name. We only know her as the woman who had this bleeding issue.

She approaches Jesus in shame. Notice, she approaches Jesus from behind. Whereas Jairus can come straight to him and fall at his feet. You see, the woman's faith stretches beyond what circumstances for her make possible to the God of the impossible who thinks all I have to do is

touch his clothes.

She has an exemplary faith in him. She knows all of the factors, doesn't she? That humanly speaking mean that nothing can be done for her.

She could have easily asked at that moment, couldn't she, why bother Jesus further? Why bother Jesus? Yet, she forces her way through the crowds to him and she believes.

[17:10] Now, isn't it a lovely thing that Jesus isn't prepared to simply dispatch a healing miracle to this woman? She's immediately healed, isn't she?

But he's not happy to just simply dispatch that to her. No, he searches out the person herself. Jesus wants her to have the most important thing which is a personal encounter with him.

Not just to receive his healing. He searches her out. And you get the sense, don't you, of the shame she felt coming to Jesus in the first place.

Just look at verse 33 there. The woman knowing what had happened to her came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth.

told him the whole truth. She came in fear and in trembling and she bared her soul to Jesus. The whole truth of her situation, her uncleanness, the past 12 years, shamed.

[18:20] Shouldn't she at that point in the first place? Shamed that she was even there, unclean. Shame, perhaps, is the barrier sometimes, isn't it, for us to put our faith in Jesus, to go to him.

But she bears all to him. She tells him the whole truth. She confesses it all. The unclean woman comes clean to Jesus.

She tells him her whole life. Opens the flood boats. And it's great, isn't it? It doesn't shock Jesus. That puts Jesus' power above the shame and circumstances in our life.

It is a faith that knows no limits here. An exemplary faith. And so we come lastly, don't we, here, to the lesson that Jairus has to learn.

How much faith is Jesus really worth? Mark brings us back to the story of the dying girl, doesn't he? John's gospel tells us that there was a delay here, long enough for the girl's condition to deteriorate and eventually for her to die.

[19:36] Why bother the teacher anymore? They say. Your daughter is dead. It's a prayer of faith, an exemplary faith, but we close with a lesson in faith.

Now one writer sums this passage up really well by saying that the story swings on the pendulum of human despair and divine possibility.

So true, isn't it? What little hope Jairus has is surely snatched away here, isn't it? The report comes to him of his daughter's death.

But Jesus' perspective on the situation is totally different, isn't it? Look at verse 36, just over the page. Overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not fear, only believe.

He overhears the message. Do not fear, only believe. Now Mark is masterful here in his word overhearing there.

[20:41] It's kind of lost in our English translation, but in the original Greek it's an interesting word. It can mean several things. It means to overhear and yet to discount the truth or to ignore it, to eavesdrop and decide to forget what you've heard.

It's to disregard the words that you've accidentally heard. So Jesus hears this report of death, and even though it may be true, so great is Jesus' power that the one certainty in life, death, he has the liberty to simply ignore.

How much faith is Jesus really worth? Jesus' power is so great, he can afford to disregard this report and say, don't fear, only believe.

death. And then notice what he says to the wailing crowds outside the house in verse 39. If you look there. He entered, he said to them, why are you making a commotion and weeping?

The child is not dead, but asleep. So great is Jesus' power that death can be disturbed like an afternoon nap.

[22:02] And of course it's ludicrous, isn't it, to say such a thing at the graveside at a funeral. Why bother the teacher any more?

But those in the house are overwhelmed, they are overcome with amazement. He takes the girl by the hand and he says, little girl or daughter, I say to you, arise.

This is no longer the hospital, is it? This is in the morgue. I say to you, arise. And Mark says, immediately she got up and walked.

Jesus suspends time with the woman, not instead of Jairus, but for the sake of Jairus. Don't fear, only believe. Now Jairus wasn't a man with no faith at all, was he? He'd come to Jesus with a prayer of faith.

[ 23 : 12 ] It wasn't that he only feared and had no faith, but there came circumstances which put his faith on the line. And Jesus delays, as if to say to him, yes, even now Jairus, trust me.

So this isn't about us believing enough so that Jesus will heal us. And if he hasn't healed me, then I haven't got enough faith.

We get in a mix of that sometimes, don't we? Now actually it's about believing Jesus even when he doesn't heal, even when there is a delay, even when the circumstances say to us, why bother the Lord anymore?

How much faith is Jesus really worth? This isn't just about physical healing either. actually the words used for the woman healed in verse 28 and verse 34, you can look at later, can also mean the word to be saved, to be healed, to be saved, to be rescued from uncleanness, bearing the whole truth of our lives to him, and receiving his resurrection power, being brought from death to life.

And the lesson for Jairus is that when circumstances make it impossible, be like the woman. Be like the woman who trusts Jesus, the God of the impossible, a faith that knows no limits.

[ 24 : 59 ] And on the day of death itself, and even after death, Jesus says to those who trust in him, yes, even now, trust me, trust me, let's pray.