

A King and Two Daughters-Mark 5:21-6:6

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[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions, please get in touch with Pastor Derek at dberry@calvarybaptistsc.church.]

Take your copy of God's Word and meet me in Mark 5:21...

Faith is an interesting concept. We often measure the potency of what we predict to be the outcome of faith by the amount of faith someone possesses. In other words, we articulate that you can accomplish anything if you maintain a considerable measure of faith. But is that really true? Let's say someone pitched the idea to you that despite your age, strength, and natural ability if you have enough faith in yourself, you can become the greatest basketball player in the world. Or what if someone said, "If you glue two makeshift wings to your arms and jump off a cliff, you'd be able to fly?" Suddenly, you'd realize that the amount of faith is far less relevant than the object of said faith. If someone told LeBron James at 18, "If you believe in yourself, you will one day become the goat." That's vastly different than someone giving you the very same encouraging word. Why? Because the object of faith has changed. Perhaps this will make it clearer: let's take my second example. Compare and contrast these two individuals. The first person has great faith that he can fly if he straps two wings onto his arms. Yet, as we all know, he would be in for a rude awakening as he tests this theory. Now, take a person who's afraid of flying on planes. But he faces his fears and reluctantly gets on the plane with little faith that he'll get from point A to point B in one piece. Although his faith is much weaker than person A, this individual will actually fly, not because he has a great deal of faith, but rather because the object of his faith has the intrinsic ability to defy gravity.

God's not so much interested in the amount of faith one may possess as opposed to the object of one's faith. The pagans in the Old Testament enjoyed a great deal of belief in their false idols. Consider the analogy of the Red Sea crossing by the Israelites. I'm sure some possessed great confidence that the walls of water would hold while passing through, and others were terrified. And yet, they were all equally saved. When the disciples ask the Lord to strengthen their faith, he responds by saying:

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" ⁶ And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. -Luke 17:5-6

Jesus is recalibrating the disciples' understanding of faith. In our text this morning, we'll read of our Lord responding to the imperfect faith of two individuals, who, although their belief may not be perfect, the object of their faith surely is. We'll consider these passages in three movements:

- I. A Desperate Father's Plea (vv. 21-23)
- II. A Desperate Woman's Act (vv. 24-34)
- III. A Dynamic King's Rule (vv. 35-6:6)

Let's reread verses 21-23. As we've seen repeatedly, the people heard that the Lord Jesus, the miracle worker, was in their region; therefore, the crowds gathered around him. And we find one character in particular who falls before the Lord Jesus, pleading for his service. The text says Jairus was one of the rulers of the synagogue. Some have speculated that he was a man of wealth and prestige, but we know for a fact that as a ruler of the synagogue, he was, at the very least, a man of authority. And yet, with all his authority, power, jurisdiction, command, dominance, and possible riches, he found himself in a situation where he was devoid of all control. The absence of his rule in this situation is made evident as he pleads with the Lord Jesus.

If you've lived long enough, you've come to realize that despite your earthly and temporal ascendancy and affluence, life circumstances are typically the great equalizer. And sure, those with more money and authority can evade certain grim circumstances that those without it can't; however, we all must stand before God. My grandfather is under the impression that he doesn't need God because of his money. However, when tragedy strikes, those costly vehicles and priceless houses are of no help! When your daughter is lying sick in the hospital, and the doctors say it's terminal, all that authority and wealth is suddenly meaningless. This is why the staunchest atheist typically asks for prayer in times of need because there's nowhere else to turn! And there's coming a time when all of humanity will stand before God and realize how much they needed Jesus, but it'll be too late for those who hadn't already surrendered to Christ.

There's never been a time when I've personally related to Jarius more than I do now as I think back on my baby girl Seraiah and her time in the hospital. Krystal and I had no option but to throw ourselves before God's throne room of grace in intercessory prayer, asking the saints to do the same. We possessed the same earnestness that we find in

Jarius in this text. And the reason we requested so many saints to pray for our daughter was because we know that God has the power to heal. He is the object of our faith. We believe he is a great physician, our Yahweh Rapha, who works great miracles. He astonishes doctors who have no earthly explanation of how certain events could have unfolded when we earnestly implore his healing hand through prayer. He has the power to do so!

¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. -1 John 5:14-15

Is this your posture saint? Like Jarius, are you convinced that with the Lord Jesus as your object of faith, you can approach his throne room of grace with any request? Or do you look around at a broken world and suppose that he's far too busy to concern himself with your request? This could have easily been a temptation for Jarius, as Jesus was being pulled every which way. Or perhaps you look at the suffering in this world and imagine that he just doesn't have the power or authority to act on your behalf. Beloved, if this describes you, I beseech you to retrain your thinking. Understand that when Jesus is your object of faith, you have a direct line with God.

⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. -James 1:6-8

Here, I don't believe James is addressing an imperfect faith because we'll soon see that God responds to imperfect, weak faith. This individual flatly doesn't believe God has what it takes to intervene, highlighting the importance of faith when standing in prayer. Saints, we have no reason to lack faith in Christ! Just consider the cross! God does indeed have the power to intervene in human affairs on our behalf.

Now, this doesn't mean that God always will answer our prayers the way we desire. Just consider Job of the Old Testament. And one of my favorite texts on this issue,

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." -Daniel 3:16-18

They had faith that God had the power to deliver them, while at the same time, they were humble enough to recognize that they may not have been a part of God's sovereign plan; therefore, they entrusted themselves to God's providence. And that's the call for us today.

II. A Desperate Woman's Act (vv. 24-34)

Let's reread verses 24-34. Here, we find something a bit unexpected. Sandwiched between the story of Jarius, we see this woman with an issue of blood. And Jesus takes time to address her. Once again, we find a desperate human being who understands that Jesus is their only hope. And if you understand this woman's plight, then it's nearly impossible for your heart not to go out for her. Considering the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament, this woman's twelve-year discharge of blood would have had social implications. Much like the demoniac, she would have been isolated and perhaps deserted by her family. And the text says she suffered much under many physicians. Some of the medical treatments in antiquity were extremely painful and harmful to the individual. So not only had she failed to receive a remedy, she actually grew worse over time. And to cap it all off, she had gone bankrupt seeking a cure. And yet, she's heard that the Lord Jesus is in her region, and what those doctors have failed to do, indeed, Israel's Messiah will have the power to heal. Her faith was so pronounced that she thought she would be made whole if she only could touch Jesus' garment. And verse 29 tells us that she was completely healed of her disease!

Just like that? After all the years of suffering. After all the money spent on physicians and cures. After all the shocked looks on the physicians' faces when they discovered that they couldn't help this woman, it took one touch from the hem of his garment to grant healing. When Jesus asked who touched him, the disciples responded comedically in verse 31. It seems that the woman wanted to remain anonymous. She desired to stick to the shadows instead of coming forth and revealing herself, but the Lord Jesus wouldn't allow it.

Therefore, she came before Jesus with fear and trembling. This isn't meant to denote a woman falling before a drunk and abusive father. But rather, a woman bowing because she knows she's in the presence of a majestic King.

¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling... -Philippians 2:12

He tells her, "Your faith has made you well," and he also refers to her as a daughter. Meaning her faith has done more than heal her of her physical ailment; it's also resulted in her adoption into the family of God. She's gone from being a spiritual orphan to one

who has God as her Father, Jesus as her eldest brother, and the people of God as her brothers and sisters. Which I believe points to the spiritual reality of what's highlighted in this story. Considering the fact that this story expresses the importance of salvific faith, let's reexamine the story with this spiritual application in mind.

What drove this woman to the desperate act of touching Jesus' garment was the realization that she had a disease that could be healed by none but Jesus alone. All of humanity should possess this exact same disposition because all of humanity has a condition that is without remedy. Here's how the Spirit, through David, describes our ailment.

God looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. ³ They have all fallen away; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one. -Psalm 53:2-3

This disease doesn't show itself as a discharge of blood, but it is indeed pervasive. It's the sickness of sin. Its symptoms include placing other objects of worship on the throne of our hearts, including but not limited to ourselves, our spouses, kids, wealth, and pleasures. It leads us to create graven images for worship, taking Jesus's holy name and using it as a curse word. The sickness leads us to view any and every event as more important than gathering with the Lord's people on his day. This disease shows itself in dishonoring our parents, hating others in our hearts, lusting after men and women who aren't our spouses, stealing, lying, and desiring what her neighbor owns. This discharge of blood would have led to separation from society due to the ceremonial laws, and our sickness of sin leads to separation from God due to the holiness and justice of God. She was facing a physical death, while sin leads to spiritual and eternal death.

This woman understood her plight. She grasped the gravity of this detrimental news and, therefore, sought after Jesus. You, too, must understand and grasp the seriousness of sin and the horrors of hell that await all those who fail to repent. Notice that this woman wasn't the only person to touch Jesus in the crowd. This is why the disciples were perplexed when he asked who touched him. However, she was the only one to touch Jesus by faith; therefore, her encounter with the Lord Jesus was different.

In this life, many pass by Jesus, unaware of their sickness. And there are varying degrees to this point. Some attend church; they've even joined the membership. They give financially. They go on mission trips. They employ Christian jargon. Others aren't so devoted; they attend church sporadically and believe Jesus is a good man. But what these groups have in common is their failure to take hold of Jesus by faith, as this

daughter has done. And unless one acknowledges their spiritual depravity and need for a savior, that repentant faith necessary for salvation will never occur. And consider what happens when she touches Jesus by faith. There's somewhat of an exchange that takes place. It should remind you of Isaiah 53.

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. -Isaiah 53:4-5

On the cross, Jesus receives our filth, and we, in turn, receive his righteousness through faith. This is the good news! Jesus tells her to go in peace, precisely what a repentant sinner experiences. Let's transition to the final point.

III. A Dynamic King's Rule (vv. 35-6:6)

Let's start with verse 35. Now, put yourself in Jarius' shoes. You just told the Lord Jesus that time was ticking and that he needed to immediately come and heal your daughter because her death was imminent. And yet, from the outset, Jesus seems to be participating in malpractice. When you go to the emergency room, the hospitals must triage injuries. So, the individual losing blood from a bullet wound will always go before the person with a headache. Perhaps Jarius wonders, "Why not return for this woman, Lord? My daughter is on the brink of death!" It seems that Jarius was indeed grieved by the news, which led Jesus to respond with verse 36. Hopefully, you've caught our text's recurring theme of faith and belief this morning. Let's reread verses 37-43.

So, Jesus takes with him his innermost circle, Peter, James, and John. This is the first time we see them singled out in this gospel, but it won't be the last. In Jesus' day, professional mourners were hired to accompany the family with loud wailing during the mourning process. This is most likely what's taking place in this passage. This leads me to believe that Paul instructs the church to weep with those who weep. The local church would take the place of professional mourners. There's no need to look out in the world for what should be provided by the church. But that's a side point.

Next, we find Jesus flexing his authoritative muscles. Thus far in this gospel, we've considered that Jesus has authority over people, nature, sickness, and unclean spirits, and he comes with an authoritative teaching and the authority to forgive sins. All of this is meant to point to the divinity of Jesus. He's not just a moral teacher but God in the flesh. Who else can speak the words "Follow me," and humans drop everything and follow? Who else can effortlessly cast out unclean spirits unless this person empowers them to do so? Who else has such authority over human anatomy that he can heal the

lame and sick from his own power? Who else can not merely quote authoritative teachings but actually establish new norms and laws? Who else can forgive sins but the one whom sins are an offense against? And who else has power over death? The answer is God and God alone. Once again, our man, Mark, is letting his audience in Rome know that this Jesus we serve is fully God!

Therefore, to him, waking someone from death is as easy as waking someone from a nap. It doesn't take much effort to wake someone from slumber. My wife called me distraught earlier this week as I was in my study preparing this message. She frantically told me she had just dozed off, and the older girls busted down the door and woke her up. Waking someone up from a nap is so easy that my girls can do it! And yet, Jesus is so majestically awesome, glorious, and wonderfully authoritative that resurrecting someone from the dead is likened to you and I waking someone up from a nap. Let that sink in! This is the Lord we serve! Jesus is the resurrection and the life; therefore, he has power over death!

Now, what of the application of this passage? One may argue that believers should be doing the same, as we're the hands and feet of Jesus, meant to continue his earthly ministry. Therefore, the application is for believers to resurrect the dead today physically. I don't believe that's the appropriate application, as I don't believe this experience is meant to be normative. Yes, the church is to continue the ministry of Jesus, but not in every aspect. For instance, we're not expected to tell storms to cease, and an even more fundamental difference is that we can't atone for sin. Therefore, there will be a discontinuity between the ministry of Jesus and the church today.

The healing of Jarius' daughter is a foretaste of the coming kingdom. Remember that Jesus inaugurated his kingdom in his first coming, and he'll consummate it in his second. So this miracle is a proclamation that there will be no death when the kingdom is established in its fullness on the earth. And this pericope is meant to showcase that only those who have Jesus as their object of faith can experience this kingdom. I think there's meant to be a juxtaposition between this passage and the following six verses. Let's reread verses 1-6.

So again, the miracles during Jesus' ministry were signs and pointers to the kingdom. The stories of the two daughters in chapter five place Jesus' miraculous work and faith hand in hand. The grand point: the kingdom of God will be experienced by those who possess salvific faith. In chapter six, by and large, miracles do not take place because the people lack faith in Jesus. The grand point: the kingdom of God will not be experienced by those who lack faith. Not what of verse five in chapter six? The point is not that man's unbelief keeps the savior's hands tied. He's sovereign and can do what he wants. Matthew's gospel makes this a bit more clear.

⁵⁸ *And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief. -Matthew 13:58*

Commentator David Garland hits the nail on the head for this text. “The people of Nazareth already knew of Jesus’ miracles (Mark 6:2) but refused to believe. Their cynicism prevented most from bringing their sick to him for healing. Only a handful did so, and he healed them. Doubt has trouble believing: unbelief obstinately refuses to believe.”

So, he couldn’t do many miracles, not because of a lack of power but because they weren’t bringing their sick to Jesus for him to heal them. Their unbelief kept them from experiencing the inaugurated kingdom in the same way that humanity’s unbelief today will keep them from experiencing the kingdom through a second birth. This is the rule and reign of a dynamic king. So, back to the initial illustration, what is the object of your faith? Is it the makeshift wings? Or the plane? If you’re not a believer, the call is to repent and place faith in the finished work of Jesus. Or perhaps you are but have not joined a gospel-preaching local church. God has ordained the local church as the vehicle in which you are sanctified and guarded in your most holy faith. And for members here, perhaps you can discuss over lunch how we, as a fallen people, can keep our spiritual poverty at the forefront of our minds so that we can desperately reach out for the gospel of Jesus every day.

Let’s pray.