

## **"Life Trumps Disease and Death"**

Mark 5:21-43,

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The Rev. Todd R. Goddard, pastor

Zion West Walworth United Methodist Church

Mark 5:21-43

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live."

So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Prayer.

Gospel lesson:

Jesus returns to the other / previous side of the lake.

Returns to the Jewish side

After his encounter with the Gerasene demoniac.

The popular crowds were there waiting for him.  
Jairus: leader of the synagogue.  
Man of importance, respect, authority.  
Parted the crowd by his presence.  
Fell at Jesus' feet: a sign of complete humility.  
RECOGNIZED Jesus' potential to help him.  
TRUSTED that Jesus could do the job.  
RISKED his status to save his daughter's life.  
Begged Jesus repeatedly: a father's despair.  
"So he went with him."

SANDWICH: Jairus story sandwiches story of Hemorrhaging Woman.

Common literary technique of St. Mark.

Adds emphasis and meaning.

One interprets the other, and vice versa.

Similarities

- both females with health problems
- 12 years: hemorrhage and age of child.
- both situations were desperate.
- faith is the central element in their salvation.

Differences:

- Jairus status (socially and religiously prominent) vs. Woman of low estate (un-named).
- Jairus is bold in his request vs. Woman who sneaks a touch.

Story of the Hemorrhaging Woman.

She is unclean, unacceptable, excluded.

Poor: made that way be the health care system!

Sick: anemic and weak.

RECOGNIZED that Jesus could help her,

TRUSTED in his abilities to help her, and

RISKED public disapproval by breaking purity laws

Many persons pressed in all around Jesus, touching him.

It was the one with faith who was made whole.

Unlike the stammering Adam and Eve caught in their lie,

Responding with nuanced parcels,

Or Cain responding with half-truths to the Lord's question "Where is Able?"

This woman tells the truth tells him the whole truth.

The whole truth!

My guess is that she said something like "I was desperate, and you were my last hope."<sup>1</sup>

Jesus summoned the woman: not to reprimand her,

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<sup>1</sup> With thank to Mark G. Vitalis Hoffman, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, PA, as found at:

[http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?lect\\_date=6/28/2009#](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?lect_date=6/28/2009#)

but to commend her faith.  
"Daughter, your faith has made you well."  
Daughter: parent v. child like relationship.  
Reminiscent of Jairus and his daughter.

Return to Jairus' Story.  
Word comes that the 12 year old girl had died.  
Jesus tells Jairus, "Do not fear, only believe."  
Rather cold, don't you agree?  
'Buck up and have faith, old chap."  
Takes only Peter, James, and brother John.  
Why?  
Sensitivity?  
Crowd control?  
Travel to the house: finds a large group of mourners.  
Mourners who crowd around the 'dead' girl (similar to the crowd pressing around the hemorrhaging woman).  
Jesus asks mourners, "Why do you make a commotion and weep?  
The child is not dead but sleeping."  
Mourners mock Jesus.  
They laugh at him  
Jesus takes father, mother, and 3 disciples to where the body was.  
Jesus' words "Little girl, get up!"  
She gets up!  
Resurrection!

Purpose of Jesus working miracles:  
NOT to show off; rather,  
to point believers towards his teachings.  
2 lessons today: Jairus and the Hemorrhaging Woman.  
One message.  
What does it tell us?

First, **GENUINE FAITH**: means RECOGNITION, TRUST, and RISK.  
Characteristics common to both Jairus and the Hemorrhaging woman.  
RECOGNITION: that Jesus is Savior  
He is identified as the one who brings healing and wholeness.  
So many of life's hurts could be healed  
By the mere recognition that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior!  
TRUST: that Jesus can do the job.  
Are Ye Able to turn it over to him?  
Erosion of trust in society:  
In institutions, organizations, politicians, systems ... you name it!  
But even more troubling is the erosion of faith.

RISK: putting your life in His hands.  
Giving up control, power, and authority.  
Death is the ultimate risk of faith.  
There is no question: Jesus wants many followers.  
But even more importantly, he wants followers to be people of faith.  
Faith unleashes the Power of Jesus!

Secondly, **Power.**

St. Mark has drawn a rising curve of miraculous events in these last 2 chapters:

- Jesus calming the wind and sea
- power over demons
- power over disease
- power over death itself!

We see here a portrait of a powerful Jesus.  
Power over all the creative order.  
Jesus uses his power to save, to heal, to restore life.

Thirdly, **look around and look ahead.**

Look around: are there miracles we don't see because of the crush of the crowd?  
Look ahead: are we so sure of what we think are facts to laugh off the possibility of what God might actually be able to do?  
A comfortable faith allows us to become smug, certain, and disbelieving.  
Perhaps Jesus,  
Willing to mix it up with the sick and the dead  
Is inviting us to stretch and grow beyond the comfortable  
- To become radical -  
On behalf of Christ  
And of his kingdom!

Unleash the power of Jesus in your life!  
Come to Jesus with genuine faith.  
Ask Jesus for help when you need it;  
reach out and touch his garment.  
No matter who you are, or what you've done, where you are, or where you are going  
reach out to Jesus:  
Recognize that he is your Lord and Savior.  
Trust that he can help you.  
Take the Risk, and put your life in his hands  
To move beyond the mere comfort of faith  
And your faith will make you well.  
This is the Word of the Lord.  
Amen.