



Speaker:
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Delivered and Resurrected

◀ Series: The Gospel of Mark • 16 of 16

8/23/2020 (SUN) | Bible: Mark 5:21-43

Our reading today is taken from Mark's gospel and the fifth chapter. We're beginning to read at verse 21 and continuing to the end of the chapter.

Today's account follows directly on from the one we considered last week. There, Jesus performed a miracle, but the people begged him to go away. Now, back on the other side of the sea, he is begged to *Come*. He leaves one shore with the sound of *Go away* ringing in his ears, and he lands on the other shore to be met with a plea to *Come and help*. The two attitudes of this world.

This plea comes from Jairus. It tells us he was one of the rulers in the local synagogue. It's extremely likely that Jairus witnessed Jesus casting out the demon in the synagogue that we considered a few weeks ago. Again, we can see two extremes of reaction to Jesus's miracles. Some religious leaders simply wanted Jesus dead. Others bowed down at his feet and worshipped him.

Jairus comes to Jesus in faith. He believes that Jesus Christ has the power to save his daughter from dying. Jesus has compassion on the man and agrees to go with him.

On the way to the house, there's a distraction. A sick woman is in the crowd. For twelve years, she's suffered with continuous bleeding. She too has faith. She believes that Jesus Christ has the power to heal her. We might say her faith is greater than that of Jairus. She has it in her head that if she can just touch his clothing she'll receive his healing. Well she does it and she's healed.

Jesus stops, and looks around. He asks the question, "Who touched me?"

You might be expecting me to say, "Now of course he already *knew* who touched him." You might be hoping that I'll mention the omniscience of Jesus—that he knew everything. If so, I'm going to disappoint you. I've already said that the incarnation is a mystery. That is, although there are aspects of it we can understand, there are others we can't. You might remember that last time I said that Reformed folk are more likely to err on the side of Jesus's divinity, thinking it to be safer.

I've determined to try to preach the word of God faithfully without fear of man. And I know that if I proposed that Jesus didn't know everything while on this earth, I risk infuriating some people. If I say, for example, that Jesus *didn't* understand particle physics at the age of four, I risk being labelled a heretic. So be it. I pray to God he would help me preach with

wisdom, but I won't refrain from preaching what I believe is God's truth just so I can please men.

With that said, we'll get back to this. I can't always say what Jesus knew or didn't know. I *can* tell you that the whole distraction caused by this woman was ordained of God. Later on, we'll see why.

The woman's scared to own up, for several reasons:

- She's female, and it wasn't proper for women to speak publicly
- She'd be revealing very personal health issues to a crowd of people
- And she may be thinking that Jesus was offended by what she did

Jesus's words are so kind. He calls her "Daughter". He tells her that it was by faith that she was healed. In this, he teaches her that he wasn't wearing magical clothes! It was through faith. He tells her to "Go in peace", no more to suffer at the hands of physicians and no more to be treated like an outcast. And in telling her that her disease has been cured, the onlookers learn that a great miracle has taken place.

He resumes his mission. But on the way, they're met by others. They announce that the child, the daughter of Jairus, is now dead. It's not worth bothering now. It's too late.

Jesus isn't fazed by this. He simply turns to Jairus and says, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

There's a great commotion at the house. It's very noisy. There are loud lamentations because of the death of the child.

Like most of you, I've been to a lot of funerals. And they're sad. I do remember though something I heard as a child which made me laugh, and has made me laugh ever since. You know as well as I do that there are some people who go to funerals of people they barely know, and they have these emotional outbursts. And these expressions of grief can be more severe than those seen in the relatives themselves. Some people, to be sure, are naturally more emotional. But some people just like drama and like to be at the centre of it. My mum had a name for these people: they were "professional mourners"!

Little did I know that the concept of a professional mourner was real, and in the Bible, no less! In that culture, those with money could hire the services of people who went from funeral to funeral making a great noise. To us, this is very strange and even deceptive. But we shouldn't judge their cultural habits by the standards of our own. For them, the death of someone dear to them should be broadcast as much as possible. It might help us to understand all this if we think that hiring people to create this loud noise of lamentation was thought of as a mark of respect to the memory of the one who'd died. And although we don't make as much of a show that way, we do have funerals that are more extravagant than theirs in terms of hearses and ornate coffins.

Jairus likely belonged to the middle class. If so, he'd have had the means to employ these professional mourners. We can see from what happens next that this is most likely the case. Jesus tells the people not to worry because the girl is only asleep. And some of these mourners instantly laugh and mock. It's difficult to imagine how they would turn from

wailing in grief to mockery and laughter unless they were professionals who had no interest in the dead girl.

Jesus clears them all out of the house. He lets the parents stay of course. And he takes in just three of the disciples. He chooses Peter, James and John. They were quite a privileged trio. It was this three alone who got to see Jesus transfigured and were allowed to accompany Jesus to Gethsemane where he poured out his heart to God before dying for sinners.

It's good that Mark records here the words of Jesus as they were spoken. *Talitha cumi* is an Aramaic term, and this is the language Jesus used the most. If Hebrew was the language of formal worship, and Greek the language of commerce, Aramaic was the language of the common man.

In an act of tenderness, Jesus takes the dead girl by the hand and speaks to her. *Get up, little girl*. And she does! And in a further act of thoughtfulness, Jesus tells her mum and dad to give her some food. She could have been ill for several days and not eating throughout. You might recall that Jesus, after he was resurrected, was looking for food. He'd been dead for three days, after all.

You might have thought it odd that Jesus tells the witnesses to keep it quiet. Now it's pretty obvious that this isn't something you could keep secret! I'd be amazed if they managed to keep the news from the crowd for more than five minutes. So we can only conclude that this was another example of crowd management by Jesus. It gave him a few minutes to make his escape!

I said the delay in getting to this girl was planned:

- It tested the faith of Jairus
- It exposed the unbelief of many of the mourners
- And it made for a far more God-glorifying miracle

How wonderful it is to witness these miracles by Jesus! It just goes on and on! He's healed people of illness. He's cast out demons. He's changed the weather. And now he's brought a person back to life! I imagine his disciples thought nothing could top this one. But they would see much more to amaze them, and one event would be the raising of Lazarus. There, Jesus wasn't dealing with someone who's very recently died. He raised a man who'd been dead for four days. And if you revisit that account in John, you'll see that Jesus specifically said he was GLAD he didn't arrive earlier. Because it was through the death of Lazarus that Jesus Christ's power would be seen on a whole new level.

Delays from our perspective are nothing of the sort in God's purpose. All things play out according to his wise timing. I can only laugh when my plans go awry. I had great plans for New Road Church for the year 2020. Great plans! God-honouring plans! Many of them have been shelved or scrapped because God sent a microscopic creature to temporarily cripple the world. His ways are not our ways! Our thoughts are not his thoughts! We can only go back to his throne and say *Okay, Lord. Your ways are right and true. Now tell us what we should do next.*

I wonder if these two females ever met afterwards. What an interesting conversation they'd have. One developed an illness *at the same time as the other was born*. In the incomprehensible purpose of God, a twelve-year countdown had begun. And the countdown ended with a visitation by Jesus, whose power would in both cases give new life.

We can of course use these two miracles to inspire us to think more about Jesus Christ and his so-great salvation. We're not to ignore what the story tells us at face value. Two incredible healings are recorded for us so that we might read them and glorify God. They also cause us to be blessed inwardly as we feel happiness for those two subjects. They're long dead, but we can still smile when we think about the happiness that was brought into their lives and the lives of their families and friends by our Great Healer.

But let's consider the beginning and end states of these women. One had this issue of blood, as it's called. I'm certain that this was a case of very heavy menstruation. Perhaps even continual. If you know anyone who's suffered from this, you'll know that it can cause all kinds of problems. For one, heavy blood loss can lead to anaemia. There were no iron supplements in those days, so the victims would have to suffer a great loss in bodily strength.

What made it worse was her ritual uncleanness. In Leviticus 15:19-20 it says, "And if a woman has an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even. And everything that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean: everything also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean."

All who sin are ritually unclean in God's eyes. And all the while they uncleanness remains, they're in a **state of separation**. As long as a man or woman remains in their sin, they are separated from God. **And should they reach the end of their lives and not have their uncleanness of sin dealt with, their separation from God will continue into eternity**, and it will be a separation of a far more extreme nature.

Thank God that he saves sinners! He has a people whose fates he entrusted to his son. And Jesus Christ **fulfilled the law** for those people. And he **prayed** for those people. And he **gave his life** for those people. And he **rose from the dead as the first fruits of those people who he came to deliver**.

Consider how many sinners spend their lives trying to generate their own salvation. Like this woman:

They suffer at the hands of others. They go to religious leaders, supposed "Physicians of the soul", looking for spiritual healing, but find none.

They expend time and effort—and sometimes money too—in useless attempts to find the meaning of life and their purpose in this world, and they end up empty-handed.

And the shocking conclusion to all this is that **THEY END UP IN A WORSE STATE THAN WHEN THEY BEGAN**.

Listen to what this says in Psalms 108:12, "Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man." The men of this world cannot give you the proper answers. They can neither GIVE YOU salvation, nor TEACH YOU salvation, nor POINT YOU IN THE WAY OF salvation. They truly are blind men offering to show other blind men where to go. Job even uses this figure of the physician when he says, "But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value." (Job 13:4) Worthless teachers!

If worn out, burdened, heavy-laden sinners approach us in despair, **we are to show them Jesus**. We're to encourage them to go to God in prayer. WE'RE TO TELL THEM TO REACH OUT FOR JESUS SO THEY MIGHT TOUCH THE HEM OF HIS GARMENT. WE'RE TO PROMISE THEM THAT A SINCERE EFFORT TO TAKE HOLD ON JESUS CHRIST WILL BE MET WITH FULL AND FREE PARDON!

Sinner! Reach out to Jesus! Grasp the fringe of his garment of righteousness! And refuse to give up until you too have felt his power heal you inwardly. Psalms 30:2 says, "O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me." Go to him, and await his healing. Cling to him until the fountain of blood dries up within, that continual issue of sin that so pollutes your soul that you cannot ever have fellowship with God.

Jesus is not put off by how filthy you are inside. There is no level of sin in that will make you ineligible for God's mercy. Don't listen to the foolish physicians of this world who tell you that the bad people in this world are the murderers, the rapists and the drug dealers. GOD HAS SAVED MURDERERS RAPISTS AND DRUG DEALERS AND MUCH WORSE while passing by the others. God's eternal hell will be full of people the world regards as morally upstanding.

Jesus is not put off.

- Did an insane and violent demoniac frighten him off?
- Did he avoid a man with a severe skin disease?
- Was he embarrassed to associate with a woman who was permanently ritually unclean?

God forbid! In the case of Lazarus, he wasn't even put off by a corpse that had begun to decompose!

And let's be clear: a sinner is in one sense *dead*. When Christ approaches such a sinner with a view to saving him, he sees nothing but a skeleton. There's no life in it. And we think of certain sinners and God looks at us and asks, *What do you think? Can these bones live?* We're forced to ask ourselves if it's really possible that God can save even them. But Jesus **will** bring those bones to life. And as he regenerates someone by the power of the Holy Spirit, he soon has standing before him an individual who is now truly alive to God.

This woman firstly needed to believe. "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20:31) We have in our Bibles a record of numerous evidences that Jesus is the Christ, and there is no excuse for anyone to doubt.

Through her God-given faith, this woman believed. She had an immediate assurance that she had been healed. But one thing remained: **she had to publicly acknowledge her deliverance**. Can you turn to the book of Romans and the tenth chapter? You'll read in the ninth and tenth verses, "...if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Confession is used in a couple of ways. One type is an acknowledgement of guilt. But the one in Romans refers to the ongoing confession of Jesus Christ throughout the life of a believer. Paul agrees with John on this. They both tell us that a Christian life is not valid if this important element is missing. The woman was expected to publicly acknowledge that Jesus had healed her of an incurable disease, and **saved sinners are expected to likewise publicly acknowledge that Jesus has healed them of their incurable disease of sin**.

I want to spend our remaining time looking at another doctrine that spins off from the raising of this young girl. I've referred to salvation as being raised from the dead. And this is language the Bible uses often. The elect sinner goes from being dead in trespasses and sins to being spiritually alive.

Yet we should also recognise that, for the believer, there is a *second* type of resurrection they'll enjoy. If we count salvation as a sort of resurrection from the death of sin, we can then justly refer to a *second resurrection*. I mean of course that there's a day coming when all that have died in Christ will be raised to eternal life.

Why did Jesus say this young girl was merely "asleep"? Did he mean that she wasn't truly dead, and only unconscious? No. To show this, I'm going to read a few verses from the account of the raising of Lazarus. Turn with me to John's Gospel and chapter 11. We read in verses 11-15, "These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep'. Then said his disciples, 'Lord, if he sleeps, he shall do well'. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.'"

Lazarus was well and truly dead. Yet Jesus refers to his state as sleep. Why? **Because he means to teach them that he will as easily raise the dead on the last day as he would rouse a man from his sleep!**

On that day, when Jesus comes for us, it'll make no difference what condition we're in. We could be like this little girl. We could be like Lazarus. We could be nothing but dry bones like in Ezekiel's vision! *And we could even have a long time before turned to dust and vanished into the environment*. We don't know how Jesus will recreate us on that great and glorious day. And if he told us we wouldn't be able to comprehend it. We're instead to accept the description Jesus gives us. It will be for us like we've been woke up from a short sleep.

Our confidence that we'll live again is in the very resurrection of Jesus himself. We can justly count the raising of this little child as a glimpse into the end-time marvel. We can rightly view the even more amazing resurrection of Lazarus as a token of what we'll experience. But we remember that these and the others in the scriptures who were brought back to life eventually died again.

Not so with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This was more than a token. He was our forerunner. His resurrection gives us the guarantee of ours. Though we die, "yet shall we live".

Let's conclude by reading 1 Corinthians 15:19-22, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

As all who are in Adam die, all who are in Christ will be made alive, and the Bible is clear that being "made alive" is a description of the resurrection of the body.

If you're listening to this and you're not a follower of Jesus Christ, we urge you to go to him. Believe on him. Receive assurance of salvation from him. Confess him. And have the confidence that the day will come when you will be raised from the sleep of death and find yourself awake in the paradise of God forever.

Don't be one of those on that shore that told Jesus to go away. Be one of those that welcomes Jesus, that says *Come, Lord Jesus*.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17)

Amen.