

Two Daughters

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[0 : 00] We're going to turn back this morning to the passage that Alistair read for us in Mark chapter 5 and from verse 21 on page 840 if you've got the church Bible or it's on your bulletin sheet also.

If you're visiting with us today, we've been looking through at quite a slow pace Mark's gospel, taking it a little section at a time because it's worth doing that at such a great gospel and speaks about the beginnings of the gospel.

And we've seen, I hope most weeks we've seen anyway that Mark is in the gospel in his own way, he's setting out a Christ character, a Christ authority and also the nature of true faith.

He's talking about discipleship as well as revealing the character of Jesus himself. And we've been looking over these last couple of weeks at a variety of different miracles that Jesus has been doing, miraculous healings.

And in many ways that's what the gospel is all about. It's all about Jesus' miraculous healings. And not primarily physical, at least not in the short term, but what we find is that Jesus is revealing his own lordship and pointing towards the end game of who he is and what he has come to do on our behalf.

[1 : 37] And that's an end game. Actually last week we looked at that in the evening in Isaiah where we saw that great prophecy that we looked forward with the Old Testament believers beyond our own day even to the new heavens and the new earth.

So what we also find is when Jesus, when Matthew, Mark reveals Jesus here, he's revealing a Savior who deals incredibly personally and in a very real way with individuals.

So there's, in this account there's physical healing, but there's also spiritual healing and pointing forward to future restoration.

Because all the healings that Jesus did, the physical healings that Jesus did still meant that those who had been healed, grew old, or maybe didn't grow old, but some of them would have grown old and aged and died physically again.

Because we know that they're pointing forward that the physical healing isn't the end of the story and isn't the purpose in many ways of what Jesus was doing, however miraculous and how significant it was individually.

[2 : 55] So I know these stories are well known to us, but it's always good to look at God's living word with fresh eyes. And what I want to focus on mainly today is the individuality of the way Jesus deals with people and remind ourselves that that is how He deals with us and not just see Him as a generic Savior or not just see Him as someone who is interested in, as it were, people groups, but He's interested and loves and is concerned for each of us as individuals.

And as we sit here this morning, He's the one who knows exactly what you're thinking and exactly your state of mind and exactly your needs, and He seeks through His Word to bring a message and a truth, a revelation and His own love into our existence.

And it therefore is also, I think, important for us to learn from Jesus to see people as individuals as well, just as He deals with people as individuals.

Remind ourselves that the people sitting next to us and the people we work with, our colleagues and our neighbors and our family members, are image bearers of the living God themselves.

They are valuable as people in and of themselves. And let us not be those who make assumptions about people based on their looks and make assumptions based on anything that doesn't come from a real and interested knowledge of them.

[4 : 38] It's very easy for us to do that. Because here in this story, we have at least a couple of individuals. We have Jairus, synagogue leader, someone of significance in the community in which he lived.

He would have had status. He would have been well known. And he comes to Jesus as a synagogue ruler. Not many of them were that sympathetic with Jesus.

But he came and fell down at Jesus' feet because he had a daughter, a twelve-year-old daughter who was dying. And he was in desperate need.

He'd heard about Jesus. He must have known about Jesus. He knew about the miracles. And this was his last opportunity, his dying daughter.

And here, got a twelve-year-old daughter. Think of that. He's desperate, desperate need. And because of what's happening, there's a large crowd that's gathered.

[5 : 40] Jesus has become well known. He's being followed. There's people jostling to get nearer him this minute. Saviour, this is the one who's coming. And they come close to him.

And as Jesus is going to Jairus' house, there's an anonymous lady who has got an illness, a condition of bleeding that makes her ceremonially unclean.

In many ways, an outcast probably from society, unable to work, poverty, stricken, desperate, and all the money she had trying to get healed, unable to find healing, who also comes to Jesus because she believes that Jesus can do something for her.

So I want to look at the story and the people in it just for a few moments this morning. Because I think one thing we notice is that I believe that these events were twelve years in the making.

This grown woman, we're told, had been suffering from this miserable condition and pain and being ostracized in many ways and unclean, regarded as unclean in the society in which she lived for twelve years.

[7 : 06] Twelve years, maybe twelve years of, as she saw, unanswered prayers, twelve years of loneliness and isolation and broken dreams.

She was probably even breaking the law, the religious law, by even being part of that crowd where she would have been touched and as an unclean person that was a breaking of the religious laws of the day.

Twelve years, the little girl, twelve years old. We don't know anything about her condition. We don't know whether it was sudden.

Maybe we can presume that she had been maybe quite well and had a happy childhood in a home where she was loved and cared for.

But she took a very serious illness and was struck down and was dying and we don't know what her condition was. But in the urgency of the moment, and we've seen Jesus doing this before, He stops.

[8 : 09] He doesn't go immediately to Jairus' house where the little girl was dying and was urgently in need. He stops to focus on this woman who touches him and who is in great need.

And we'll see a little bit more about that in a moment. But what we see, I believe what we see in that, I think that the fact that the years are mentioned is not just because it's true, it is true.

She was twelve and the woman had been suffering for twelve years. But twelve and numbers in the Bible are significant also, and twelve is very much the symbol of perfection.

And what is it? Is there any meaning in that? Well, I would suggest that it reminds us that this time was absolutely right in God's sovereign power and authority for them to be healed.

It might have seemed unreasonable for Jesus to stop when Jairus' daughter was so ill. It might have seemed unreasonable to let this woman suffer for twelve years.

[9 : 19] Who can know the answer to suffering when we call out to God? Why doesn't answer quicker and sooner according to our needs? Not as we pray to Him in faith, there's a recognition that His timing is always right.

He's never late and He's never early. He's always in time in our lives. And as we seek for and look for His answers in our lives, for Him to display His power in our lives, in our weakness, we simply trust that His timing is perfect, even though we might not understand it.

And we cry out about the suffering and the difficulties and the trouble that people have to face and the sadness of the world in which we live. And we say, how long, Lord?

We're saying how long, not because we think, get your time right, God. Come on, finish. It's because we're crying out for justice and we're crying out for the suffering to end, but we also, in praying to Him, are saying that He knows and His timing is perfect and there is a future that even these events that we read about here is pointing towards.

And we recognize that that future, perfect healing, will be a healing that will encompass a new heavens and a new earth and destruction, not only the defeat of evil which we've seen in the cross, but it's utter and complete destruction.

[10 : 53] So we recognize and see that even a story like this has 12 years in the making and sometimes we need a lot of patience. And sometimes maybe you need a lot of patience.

And I need a lot of patience as we pray and as we seek God's healing and God's hand in our lives. But also I think this story is interesting because we don't know in whom God is working.

And as a reminder to us that we don't really know what is happening in people's lives and in whom God is working. The woman was very anonymous in the crowd. Nobody seemed to notice her or care about her.

She had no one to bring her to Jesus. She came on her own. She had no one to plead on her behalf. She in desperation comes because there's nowhere else to go.

Jairus, the synagogue ruler, was completely different. He's named in the account for a start. He is a very public figure among those not known for their sympathy with Jesus.

[11 : 55] But both of them, both on the outside looked very different. We wouldn't have gauged or understood what was the issue. But both a deep heart-rending need for divine help.

Both of them had that great need. Who knew between these two people, the anonymous women in the crowd and Jairus, the synagogue ruler, a respected family man?

Who knew that both of them were crying out desperate for Jesus to work in their lives? And I prayed this because I think sometimes it's important, who is it in the crowd that we don't notice?

Who is it that we presume won't be interested in the gospel? They'll never be interested. I'm never going to speak to them about my faith because they are never going to be interested in seeking Christ.

Who do we think has it all together outwardly, like Jairus, the synagogue ruler, who would think everything's all together? We think they're fine spiritually.

[12 : 56] We come to church, we wear the clothes, we look decent, we go away. Nobody inquires about our heart. Nobody inquires or asks about our spiritual condition.

Nobody knows that we are crying out inside in desperate loss and emptiness spiritually. And therefore, I think it's important for us as Christians to pray for the discernment of Christ and to have an interest in people's lives spiritually so that we take that time to look beyond what are the outward appearances sometimes of people and be willing to seek their spiritual good.

Such an important... I mean, grace groups are such a great thing because it gets beyond the surface of just turning up in church, doing the religious thing and going away untouched.

No one coming there, no one asking any question, no one seeking our spiritual good. We don't know in whom God is working or who is desperately in need for Christ.

But we also do see in this story that faith in Christ changes everything. And I don't want you to be unaware of that this morning because we come to church this morning, we might not have put a lot of thought into it.

[14 : 18] We might not be thinking much about our Christian lives or Christian walk with Jesus. Our faith might be in a sense even incidental to us. It doesn't really impact our lives.

And yet it's good to be reminded that faith in Christ changes everything for us. It makes life very different for us even though sometimes it doesn't feel maybe very different.

We recognize and see from this story that when we have faith in Christ, there is a divine family reconciliation. We're reconciled with God.

We know that's a basic foundational truth of what we believe as Christians. And we see that in verse 34 here, when Jesus speaks to the woman who he eventually calls out, she tries to kind of hide away as it were, he calls out and he says, daughter, your faith has made you well.

Go in peace and be healed of your disease. And he speaks lovingly to Jairus' daughter also.

[15 : 25] And in fatherly terms, he kind of takes Jairus' role in a sense and says, Talitha, come get up. Just like a father would tell a young girl who's getting out of bed, his young daughter waking up in the morning.

And there's almost this sense of which Jesus, the Son, takes on Jesus, the Father, God, the Father's role. He takes a fatherly role and he pronounces on this poor, isolated woman great identity.

He reminds her, you're a daughter of the King. And the story of two daughters, a loving, intimate and gentle word from Jesus Christ.

These fatherly glimpses, the authority of His love, and it's key. It's key to our understanding of faith is that we are brought into the family of the King.

We're reconciled with our Creator, with our God, and with our Father in heaven so that we can pray. Jesus taught us to pray. Our Father is in heaven. And a good father just cares, doesn't he, protects his children, loves them, looks after them.

[16 : 44] How much more are heavenly Father? We are sons and daughters of the King of Kings. And His touch has, it's a physical touch here, both the woman who touches Him and He who holds the young girl's hand and tells her to rise.

But we have the spiritual, it touches so important physically for us. So I hope it wasn't an irreverent picture. But I saw a really great, I thought it was a really great picture on Facebook this week.

I stalk my wife's Facebook, I don't have my own, because I never want to make any identity on Facebook or say anything, like be anonymous.

Just find out what's happening in the world, Katrina's world. And it's all very boring, usually. Facebook, not Katrina. But there was a great, great picture this week.

I hope it wasn't irreverent in terms of image, but it was about someone entering heaven, a woman entering heaven, just throwing her arms around Jesus.

[17 : 57] You know like a child would do when they haven't seen their parent for ages, they just run up to them, they come up from downstairs and they run up and they just put their arms around their parent or a friend or whoever.

And just this amazingly powerful picture of someone entering heaven. You didn't see Jesus' face, it's okay, it wasn't an image.

And just hugging Him, powerfully, just all in. And I thought what a great picture of reconciliation that finds its fulfillment in heaven for us, ultimately, when we'll run up to Jesus and hug Him for what He's done.

So faith is a family, that's what we have. We have family reconciliation with God. That's the greatest thing we could ever have.

But also faith is something that I think we find in this story overcomes our fears. This woman who comes to Jesus, she's afraid.

[19 : 00] She's afraid probably of just being out in a crowd. She's afraid of what might happen. And she touches Jesus, great faith she had. If it only touched the hem of His garment, she says, I'll be healed.

Now, there's nothing magical in His garment. It was faith in Jesus that she had. It wasn't like, you know, everything that He touched turned to gold.

It's not like, you know, there's lots of people touching Jesus that day in the crowd. They were all pretty, the disciples say, well, why are you asking that question? Who touched you? Everyone's touching you. You're being crowded out here.

It wasn't the touch. All the people who touched Jesus that day weren't miraculously healed. Look at this woman had faith in Him, in who He was, amazing faith actually, in who He was, but she was still afraid, tremendously afraid.

She wanted to touch Him, be healed and slip away in the crowd again. That was her default position. That's what she did in life.

[20 : 06] She had no self-worth. She simply wanted to slip away. But Jesus had other plans because He wanted to expose that misunderstanding, giving her that amazing welcome as daughter as she confessed that it was her who touched Him.

She said, daughter, He said, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Amazing words, you're healed of your disease. Nothing about sin in this story, although it's the presumption and our knowledge of the rest of Scripture obviously makes that clear.

She came to Him for healing and He announces on her peace, great peace, that enabled her fears to be overcome.

It was that public willingness to confess Him and to own Him as Jesus overcame, helped her overcome her fears.

And of course, Jairus was afraid as well because people came from his house and said, don't bother the Savior anymore. Don't bother the teacher anymore.

[21 : 23] Your daughter's already dead. But Jesus knows Him and knows His heart and He says, look, Jairus, He says, don't be afraid. Do not fear, only believe.

So there's that great sense in which in both of these stories, both of these individuals, faith is overcoming different types of fear. And Jesus encourages both of them to overcome fear.

And He brings His great shalom. Isn't that again, it's the Old Testament picture we looked at last Sunday night, a shalom. I bring you my peace. It overcomes your fears.

Now you may have all kinds of fears today, I don't know. Many times we have fears about being found out that we're Christians. And that was part of the fear that the woman had.

Just fear of being found out, exposed. Fear about the message, fear about our lives, fear about death, fear about illness, fear about old age. There's all kinds of fears that may entrap us and that may crush us.

[22 : 30] And it's important for us to hear as people of faith, Christ's words of love and words of encouragement and words of belonging and words of delight in us and in the faith that allows us not to be afraid.

Don't be a secret believer. Maybe you've never confessed Jesus as Christ and Lord. Can I encourage you not to remain in that position but to be bold with the boldness that comes from trusting and looking to and depending on Jesus.

Let Christ draw you out of the shadows because it's a great thing to belong. Don't be a secret believer in your workplace, a secret believer, an unconfessed believer here in church so you'll not sit at the Lord's table and acknowledge Him as your Savior.

Allow Him to overcome your fears. So faith in Christ we see here is family reconciliation. It helps us overcome our fears. It leads to worship. In verse 22 and in verse 33 we have the same response from the women who has been healed and from Jairus they both fall on their knees before the living God, before Jesus Christ.

And fear and trembling they fell down before Him and told Him, she told Him the whole truth. And also He is the same. He comes to Jesus, synagogue ruler and falls down at His feet.

[24 : 00] Adoration, desperation. And faith for us will always lead to worship. Faith always leads us to that place of worship.

And sometimes it's desperation that leads us to that place where we cry out, we need to live in God. And we need to remember as we come today that our faith in Jesus Christ is not a philosophy or a morality.

Primarily, it's an act of worship. Coming to Christ is an act of worship. It's a recognition of our desperation, different from the desperation of Jairus and the women, but nonetheless a spiritual desperation.

And we need, it is the first mark of faith is that we become worshipers. And I want us to think about that as we gather each week in St. Columbus, that it is an important public act of worship.

I know Romans 12 reminds us that our whole lives are living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God. But remember as we saw last Sunday evening that we are part of this city of God, part of the people of God, and we're a worshiping community, a worshiping people, so that this time of gathering, publicly, that the world sees and can come and be part of if they so desire and watch is significant and important because it's part of who we are.

[25 : 20] Not just this public act of worship, but as a community of people that we work out our love and our Christ-centeredness with and among each other, that we are people who are daily following it, following on our knees and setting aside time for worship, both explicit worship but also the giving of our days and our lives to Jesus Christ, praying without ceasing and keeping Him at the center of everything.

And so public church, I think it matters greatly. It's important. It shouldn't be for us a, well, whatever, there's nothing better to do.

It should matter greatly for us to declare our worship publicly together as a body of people committed to Jesus Christ.

It leads to worship, and then I think we also see, at least in Jaius's case, that faith enables us to plead on behalf of others. Jaius's daughter couldn't plead for herself.

She was dying, and she didn't, but Jaius did on her behalf. It's a great reminder to us of the concern, the wider concern and care that we have covenantally as parents, covenantally as a church, we take vows, we did last Sunday, remember, for our children, but that we have this great concern for brothers and sisters, for friends and colleagues that we prey on for them, that we use our faith on behalf of others, our covenantal faith on behalf of our children, but also our faith in general, that we recognize and plead on behalf of other people.

[27 : 14] So, lastly, we've seen different aspects of faith that are highlighted in the story, but lastly, I want to read a couple of verses from Hebrews chapter 12, because I think this is very important as a conclusion to the timing of this event and the inclusion of this event in Mark's Gospel.

Hebrews 12, we are therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising its shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

And I think this is a joy set before Him moment for Jesus Christ. He speaks here before the cross, before the crucifixion, with unparalleled power and confidence.

Daughter, be at peace. Toletha koum, rise up from the dead. Great confidence, great power, and He saw in their healings some of the joy that enduring the cross, some of the results of enduring the cross would bring.

See, Jesus Christ from the moment of His public ministry and long before knew exactly what He came to do. And these two characters, I believe in this account, represent the spiritual need that every single human being has before the living God, that we are in spiritual despair or spiritually dead without Christ, in great need.

[29 : 11] It might not seem like that. You may be someone who has got life together, and we may know lots of people who have got life together and who morally might be better than us in many ways outwardly.

But we always have to remind ourselves, because Jesus is reminding us here, that these two people represent the spiritual reality of what Jesus came to deal with.

Isolation, forsakenness, and spiritual death, and sin has brought us into that condition. And He came knowing exactly what He had to do, and He knew the joy that was guaranteed by the work that He had come to do.

Because I think both these healings not only speak of the condition of humanity, but speak of the results of His salvation, His great shalom, His great peace, and the healing that it brings, and resurrection life.

I think the story of the little girl getting up is a great picture of resurrection life, even to the point of Jesus saying, she's not dead, she's just asleep, which becomes a New Testament way of talking about believers who die in Christ.

[30 : 31] They are falling asleep in Jesus. And she's resurrected from that sleep to new life, so that even though we die, yet shall we live, and He gives her something to eat, because He ate after His own resurrection.

And it reminds us of the physicality of His resurrection, and of our resurrection to look forward to. And these healings speak of the joy that was lying ahead for Him.

Tremendous reality. And because He fed on that, because it reminded Him of the joy of His finished work, because He knew what He was coming to do, therefore He could endure the cross.

He could endure the cross. Surely with each step that Jesus took towards Jairus' house, and then from Jairus' house towards Jerusalem, there was a deepening shadow with each step, as He came towards the cross, where He would undertake the dispiece of sin, our sin, outside the city, forsaken, unclean, our hell on the cross, and tasting death on our behalf, so that we might never taste that death.

That is why He endured the cross, His great love and the joy of a people that He would celebrate with, that would run up to Him and just hug Him when they got to glory.

[32 : 08] That's why He was able to do what He was able to do. And this story, this event, this reality would have enabled Him, given Him strength to face the cross as He thought about the joy that lay ahead.

Therefore we persevere, don't we? That's why we keep going. That's why Hebrews 12 is important to us. That's why we don't give up. That's why we're to share His joy in our Christian lives, not slap happiness, but joy, deep seated joy, and it's my prayer that I and you all share that joy.

Let's pray. Father God, help us to live in the reality of who You are and what You've come to do. May it not be blasé for us, may it not be distant, may it not be disconnected to our own situations and our own lives, but may we stay close with You, may we sense that spiritual touch and that closeness to Jesus Christ and that belief in His power and in His grace and in His impossible, miraculous strength to give us new hearts, to give us hearts that care about people and care about God and love God first and foremost and deny ourselves and serve with humble hearts and all the invisible things that we can hide from others, that internal morality, that internal spiritual life that can only come through our being rooted and nourished in relationship with Jesus.

So may we be in prayerful relationship with you, may we read and learn and know and grow and understand in wisdom and in so doing we know the tastes of that healing and of that wholeness and of that life to the full which we see in measure now which we can enjoy beyond our wildest imagination in glory.

We ask it in His precious name. Amen.