

Jesus Raises Jairus' Daughter (Mark 5 v21-24; 35-43) - 4754 words

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See also Matthew 9 v18-26. Luke 8 v40-56

.. Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill. ¹⁶ He warned them not to tell others about him. ¹⁷ This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:¹⁸ "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. ¹⁹ He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. ²⁰ A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory. ²¹ In his name the nations will put their hope." [**Matthew 12v15-21**] (*could extend reading & include withered hand miracle from v9*)

Word out – Jesus returns

The wind of change was blowing, and Jesus was in the midst of bringing about an extra-ordinary sequence of events. In the surrounding mountains of Lake Galilee, a strong wind had swept down the valley channels and had whipped up another storm in no time. The boats fishing near the shore had safely returned to Capernaum, but they had seen one other boat pushing further out, as if to cross the lake, The recognisable boat, of Jesus and his disciples, was now engulfed somewhere in the violent storm. The next day, the locals spotted the boat again, which had survived the storm, to reach the far shore at Genesseret and was now returning home. Word spread quickly that Jesus was on his way back and the fishing port was shot through with expectancy again, as crowds turned out in force to greet him.

Unknown to the crowd, the close disciples of Jesus had witnessed the storm suddenly abate when all looked lost, as Jesus woke up, stood up, and commanded the wind and waves to calm down. This extra-ordinary Rabbi poet teacher had taken dominion over the elements. Then at the far Gentile shore he had been confronted by a dangerous madman of immense strength. He turned on Jesus, but the Rabbi grabbed him and commanded out the demons. The evil spirits then jumped into a herd of pigs which raced off the cliff to their watery death. In these two miracles, his close followers had **seen** the power available to Jesus over both the **physical** realm with power over nature, and the dark **spiritual** realm, with power over the demons.

As he sat the crowd down on the shore-line for a teach-in, the power within him was ready to respond to the faith it found that day, even if it was an almost non-existent faith, or a faith that in some way was misguided.

Two contrasting individual were about to step into this days story, with what faith they had mustered from their own places of extreme need. An outcast penniless woman marginalised to the fringes of society, because of her perpetual vaginal bleeding was one of those who heard that Jesus was back. The other, at the opposite end of the town's social hierarchy, was Jairus, the leader of the synagogue. For very different reasons, both were desperate to see Jesus.

Jesus in the Synagogue

As a Pharisee and local religious leader, Jairus was well connected. As such, in his culture, he would have been regarded as blessed and wealthy. What more could he ask for, except perhaps a son, as his only child was a daughter, but one though that he loved beyond measure.

Jesus went to his synagogue, and he allowed the learned man from Galilee, the platform to speak. He spoke more like a prophet than a scribe or teacher, speaking in the Spirit, with the authority of God on him. He would proclaim 'Thus, says the Lord our God' instead of 'thus said this Rabbi or that Rabbi'. His words contrasted anything they had heard before shocking, amazing and overwhelming his hearers, including Jairus. [Luke 4v32].

But Jesus not only taught the scriptures in new and challenging ways, but he seemed to flow with God's healing power. This would have silenced some, but by no means all, of his many critics who didn't like the New Kingdom message that had little respect for the complex Sabbath and Purity laws that they held dear, from their sacred book, the Talmud.

Jairus could well recall the day when one of his congregation, who had shown no previous reason to be banned from the synagogue, now in the presence of Jesus began manifesting. A demon controls the mans voice and shouts out "**Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are -- the Holy One of God!**" (Luke 4:33-34). Jesus does not need confirmation from demons, especially when they are trying to distract his listeners, and derail his teaching and timing. Jesus commands the demons to come out, which they do after throwing the man to the floor.

Then there was that awkward Sabbath day in his synagogue, when it all kicked off. Jairus well aware of the building opposition from fellow Pharisees, could have been dismayed to see the group of external religious folk. They had travelled there to find fault with Jesus, who then asked them if the Sabbath day laws allowed them to help people or to harm them, to save life or destroy it. It was a clear challenge to their understanding of the Sabbath. Jesus calls out a man with a small withered hand and asks him to stretch it out, and as he did it was healed. It was not work to stretch out your hand and Gods power is allowed to move on the Sabbath. But the Pharisees went bonkers with rage and wanted to plot the downfall of Jesus [Luke 6v11].

Jesus and the Centurion

The healing of the withered hand on the Sabbath, however did not seem to turn Jairus against Jesus, or indeed nor did it for the other elders that lived in the town, but just gave them more proof of his healing power. They not only kept a good relationship with **the radical Teacher**, but unusually, also had a good relationship with the **Roman occupiers** in Capernaum.

Their local Centurion, rather than being hated by the community, had accepted the Jewish God as his own, and done much for the people under his watch, in particular, he funded the building of this very prestigious Capernaum synagogue in which Jairus led. When the beloved servant of this generous Roman soldier fell seriously ill, Jewish elders from Capernaum had sought out Jesus, because of his healing reputation, and asked him to go to the Centurions house to heal his servant. He willingly set off, but the great faith of the Centurion, encouraged Jesus to bring about the healing by just speaking the word from a distance, which he did.

It was an extra-ordinary request from the Jewish elders, as under their own purity roles, by excepting the hospitality of the Roman, it would defile the Rabbi. Perhaps this was something that none of them would have been prepared to do themselves. But Jesus was different; he seemed to be setting a new Godly purity standard. It was one that had very little to do with any external contamination (what you touched), or what goes into your stomach (what you eat), and much more about what goes into your heart and mind and comes out in what you do and say.

The conflict in Jairus

Jairus, may well have been amongst the elders that day, or more likely he could have been the one that send them to Jesus. Either way, he was very familiar with what Jesus was capable off and may have seen this as a way of deepening the good favour between synagogue and Romans. Yet, the rage of the other Pharisees at the withered hand incident, would have made it very clear to Jairus, the danger of openly supporting this controversial Rabbi. No doubt they had tried to draw Jairus into their sabotage plans. But Jesus had great local support, so banning him from the synagogue would have been a difficult call, even if he had wanted to.

The religious establishment has afforded him the position he was in, with all the prestige and privileges that went with. Jairus might afford to let Jesus speak in his synagogue, and hence keep peace with the growing number of local followers and supporters of Jesus; However whatever his personal beliefs were, he could not come out as an open follower of Jesus, without risking all he had. Yet it may have this very pressure from other religious leaders which held Jairus back from seeking the help of Jesus sooner, when his daughters illness was progressing.

Jairus is therefore conflicted by Jesus, much like Nicodemus the Pharisee was later, who become a secret follower, out of fear of those more powerful than him in the Religious court of the day, the Sanhedrin.

Jairus' daughter

The girl was 12 years old. It was a common enough occurrence to lose children, and perhaps up to half of her contemporaries would have died in childbirth or in infancy. Unlike her Father who had a high status, a girl had virtually none.

However at 12, she was had just attained marriageable age. There were no careers for women, so getting married was often seen as the happiest day of a woman's life. To die now unmarried, would have been seen as particularly tragic for her.

Jairus seeks out Jesus

Jairus steps into our Gospels, when he has reached the point of desperation, and his story is recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Here is how Mark recalls the day.

²¹ When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." ²⁴ So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. (Mark 5 v21-24)

She had been his joy for 12 years, now as her life ebbed away, his hope for a medical recovery had evaporated and he clung one to last hope. Probably the hardest decision of his life, this was his last resort. The only way she can be saved now - is Jesus.

Having heard Jesus was at the shore, he left his wife in a moment of panic over their daughter, ran out of town to the gathering, and pushed through a crowd, who on recognising for him, would have parted out of respect and let him through.

What mattered to Jairus before today, other than his daughter, no longer mattered. Now he was prepared to give everything up. When faced with the Teacher, he fell prostrate to his feet, and humbled himself in front of Jesus. Such behaviour by a prominent man, would be reserved to honour some-one of much higher status like the king, or when before God. This act of public humiliation from Jairus, was to openly demonstrate his believe in the power of Jesus. For a Pharisee, this was an astonishing act, which must have shocked the crowd. He then started pleading with Jesus. Begging him continually to come to his home, driven by this tremendous need.

He fell at the feet of Jesus, which is a sign which acknowledges social inferiority. This was a powerful gesture for some-one who would have been expected to have just sought professional doctors not a traditional folk faith healer like Jesus. It is also an act which clients, such as a land tenant, would perform in front of their rich patron, if they were begging a favour.

Jairus was happy to show his despair, and Jesus was happy to see it in him. Not because he rejoices in our suffering, but because he knew that this very act of desperation, is what would lead to a breakthrough in the life of the synagogue leader. The illness of daughter is unlikely to have been a sudden one, and he could have easily approached Jesus on an earlier occasion, but it wasn't only at the moment of her death, his moment of extreme need, when it sunk home what he was about to lose, only then could he muster enough faith to go to Jesus.

The Bleeding Lady

Now there was a pleasing urgency in the movement of Jesus towards his house, despite the jostling crowd. Then for a moment Jairus seemed to have lost Jesus, only to look back and see that the Teacher had stopped. Every time Jesus stopped, every second spent, must have felt like an eternity to Jairus.

There was now some-one else knelt at his feet, pleading. He perhaps vaguely recognised her as some-one that he had banned from the synagogue, but it must have been for a very good reason. Now, in this moment of his greatest need, he certainly did not have the same compassion for the woman as Jesus was showing her. For onlookers too of any social standing it must have appeared strange that the Teacher who had been beckoned by a leading member of their society, had turned from him in his moment of need to deal with an outcast.

Too late?

While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?" [v35]

Jairus must have thought if it hadn't been for the crowds, hadn't been for her that outcast, he would have got back in time. His mind already screaming with grief and anger. No God. No God. Not my daughter. But surely as he left his daughter on the verge of death, he can not humanly have expected to return to the room and find her still alive ! Yet having been lowered into the dark pit of despair, whilst he watched his daughter fading away he must have sense that small light of faith burning with him, that Jesus even now, could still help him. But as his messengers now whispered to him, that it was too late, surely all hope was gone.

Jesus speaks to Jairus – The smouldering wick

Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe." [v36]

Jesus, told Jairus, not to give up, when the bad news came through. In Jewish thought, they were living in a linear story of the people of God, and there was no reversal once an event had happened. If she was gone, then she was gone. Full-stop. It was a real test of Jairus' faith. His daughter is dead, but Jesus is still telling him, not to worry, keep believing and it will be alright.

There may have been talk of Jesus raising a widows son from death as he lay on his funeral bier at the gates of Nain, a 10 hour walk South of Capernaum. But could this peasant gossip really be believed by a learned teacher such as Jairus. Raising the dead was an extra-ordinary miracle, attributed just to Elijah and Elisha amongst the great Jewish prophets. Could this man from Nazareth really be an equal in such company.

The little faith he had mustered up in Jesus from his point of desperation, was somehow still flickering.

When Matthew in writing his Gospel records the withered hand miracle, he adds that Jesus then goes to a new place where he healed all the sick that were present. He then quotes Isaiah's prophecy of the

Messiah.

Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. ¹⁹ He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. ²⁰ A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought justice through to victory. ²¹ In his name the nations will put their hope.” [Matthew 12v18-21]

The prophet’s words described a character of much gentleness.

In our story, the bleeding lady is the bruised reed. It represents the poor and the oppressed, broken by the weight of sadness; some-one that men in general would disregard, exclude or trample on. Jesus never trampled down the broken reeds, but full of compassion, sought to bind up and strengthen them. Even with the urgency in the voice of Jairus, and the crowd jostling him towards the house with the girl in, he took time to stop for the one, to restore and strengthen a broken reed.

In our story, the faith of Jairus, is the “smouldering wick”, where a lamp run out of oil, has ceased to burn clearly, and the cloudy flickering of a small flame is ready to be snuffed out. In His tenderness, Jesus sought to trim the lamp and to pour in the oil till the flame was bright again. What tiny vestige faith that Jairus had left in this moment of tragedy was enough for Jesus to work with.

The bleeding lady was outcast, with no children, and had no standing in society. But then at her age Jairus’ daughter, outside of her family, was no more important to society than the lady. Yet both were important to Jesus.

Commotion

Mark continues his narrative..

³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” ^{40a} But they laughed at him.

Jesus somehow managed to stop the crowd going with him, and just took along with him, Peter James and John, his inner circle of trainee disciples.

The professional wailers or mourners were hired and had already arrived. The death within a prominent family like this would have had many mourners. They were shrieking and beating their breasts, loudly letting the neighbours and everyone else know of the families grief. You had to bury your dead within 24 hours, so the wife had been straight onto it. The relatively calm scene of family concern that Jairus had left, was now replaced by a house in grief and commotion.

Jesus appealed to them to stop wailing, because the girl was just sleeping. Jesus used this for believers who had died because they were never truly dead, just at rest. He later told his disciples said that he was going to back to Jerusalem to see Lazarus who was now asleep and he wanted to wake him up. He never used this term for non-believers.

The mourners in the home of Jairus laughed at Jesus. “This is our **job** ! We know dead when we see it . This girl has definitely died and we will go home when our job is finished.’

Creating a room of faith

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was [v40]

Jesus made two decisive decisions before approaching the girl. He kicked the mourners out of the room, and took into the room, Peter, James and John. He had removed all those with lack of faith in the power of

God to heal, and replaced it by those that understood him best; those that had already see him raise a widow son from death; his inner circle with the most faith in Him. In this faith mix, is Jairus and his wife. It is the first time the mother is mentioned, and although she had called in the mourners, you can't help think that she had believed enough in Jesus, to have pleaded with Jairus to break off any obligation he felt to the Rabbis opposition, and put his daughter first.

The faith of Jairus, was flickering but had not gone out, and as he stood there in the presence of this prophet man of God, surely he could feel at least a little fuel going back into his lamp of hope.

Little Lamb – Get up

⁴¹He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). ⁴²Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. [v41-42]

Jairus knew well of the prophet Elisha dramatically bringing the only son of his landlady, a single mother, back to life (2 Kings 4). The widow places the corpse in his room, and seeks out the prophet. At first he sent his servant Gahazi ahead of him to hold his prophet stick over the boy, but there was no change. Later Elisha, came to his room, prayed fervently to God. Then he laid down on the boy, and pressed his mouth, eyes and hands, over that of the boys. He stretched himself out over him, until he felt the boys body to start to warm up. It must have been a lengthy process, as he needs a break, to walk round the room, then stretched out on the boy again. Finally the boy sneezes and opens his eyes. As Jairus stared down at the motionless body, he must have wondered what theatrics Jesus would need to do.

Jesus moves over to her bed, and took her cold hand in his. The worst possible breach of their purity laws, was to touch a corpse, but the touch of Jesus works in reverse, and his touch makes the unclean, clean. He spoke two Aramaic words to her, that best translate 'Little Lamb get up.' Perhaps these endearing words were used every morning by her mother to wake her up. Through them the Holy Spirit, worked powerfully to provoke the girls own spirit back to life. No fuss, just power.

Immediately the girl stood up. She woke up, and jumped up. Whatever had wasted her away was conquered in a moment. Her health, and her strength were renewed. If her body had been damaged or weakened, then it was physically restored and rebuilt in that instant. She lept to her feet and walked again, perhaps for the first time in months, just like she had before any illness had invaded her body.

Her parents were amazed, stunned; their minds could not comprehend it. Jairus had his daughter back. His wick once smouldering with a flickering faith, was now ablaze.

Final Instructions

He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat [v43]

Jesus brought the young lady back from the dead, but not with a full stomach. He may do for us, what we can not do ourselves. However, he expects **us** to **do** what we can do. He tells the parents “Give her something to eat”.

Resurrection or Resuscitation?

Some say, that Jairus' daughter was not dead, but in a coma, and Jesus merely resuscitated her and not raised her from death. It certainly seemed very unlikely to the mourners that the girl was not dead. However even if she had of been in a coma, it does not lessen the miracle, or cast any doubts on the power of Jesus, who later raised Lazarus from a tomb he had been very much dead in for 4 days. The girl here was dying, probably being getting gradually worse for a long time, and at the word of Jesus, she jumps to her feet well. Coma, or dead, it's still a very impressive miracle.

There was Jesus

It had been an incredible sequence of events

As the storm battered their wooden vessel, a small desperate band of disciples feared for their lives. But there was Jesus, and with miraculous power he calmed the storm.

Reaching the shore, a most desperate mentally ill man, exiled to a cave, both naked and violent, charged at the landing party. But there was Jesus, and with miraculous power he drove out the demons, restoring and calming the mind of the outcast.

Back across the lake in the welcome crowd at Capernaum, there was another desperate outcast, a woman who had suffered 12 years of continual bleeding. But there was Jesus, and with miraculous power restores her to full health.

And in the same crowd, was one desperate man, a leading figure in the community, but whose world was falling apart as the life of his only child ebbed away. But there was Jesus, and with miraculous power raises the Jairus' daughter back to life, and his life with it.

In each desperation situation, - there was Jesus.

The Need and the Cost

Jairus, was about to lose the thing most precious to him, his daughter and it was in this moment of desperation, that his need outweighed the cost of Him going to Jesus.

When his daughter was first ill, Jairus would have sought help from Physicians, much like the bleeding lady did. He had faith in a cure from them. Even when she got very ill, he still had some faith that she would recover. Yet at the moment she was about to breathe her last, then all that hope had come to nothing. It was now, in his desperation, that he could place his hope in the healing Rabbi. His faith, was a smouldering wick of light, that would have been extinguished completely when the news of his daughter death reached him. But there was Jesus. "Don't be afraid, Just Believe". It was enough to trim his wick, and keep the small flame of faith burning, until it was fully fuelled at the moment his daughter jumped to her feet.

For some people, 'very hard times' may drive them further from God, but for many people, it is in **their** hour of **desperate need**, when their normal defence lines have broken down, that they turn to all that is left for them and seek after God. Any well of despair is not bottomless, and if you are lowered down into it, you will find Jesus their waiting for you.

If you aren't a Christian, then one day you might realise that your need for Jesus outweighs the cost to you of following him. I want him, I need him in my life, whatever it takes. Then he will see you and save you.

Whatever has kept you from the Lord up to that point, has **not been worth it**. Your desperation for Jesus, needs to be greater than the concern you have about what others may think of you, and fears of how it may change your lifestyle. He has the word of eternal life. No-one else. Your need is higher than any cost.

But Jesus has always been there for you, in good times and in bad. You were known by God even before you were born. All your life, he had watched over you, and wanted a relationship with you.

Testimony

When I was 12, the same age as Jairus' daughter, I was asleep one night, and my bedroom wall had been freshly painted. As I slept I inhaled the paint fumes and my asthma reacted badly to it and fully constricted my airways. I suddenly woke up in the middle of night unable to breathe. I tried to shout out but couldn't. Without oxygen, I felt faint, and fell to my knees. With my last effort I banged my fists on the lino floor, then passed out. It was a desperate situation for me as in that moment I was losing my fight for life. But there was Jesus. My parents in the next room awoke, somehow hearing the faint thumping. We had no phone, and my father ran out in his pyjamas to the other side of the village, and woke up the local doctor. My Mother had been praying over me. Her faith had not gone out. I suddenly woke up, lying in bed, breathing clearly, and was wondering what I would now say when the ambulance men, who were on

their way, arrived with oxygen tanks! Even that age, I had a faith in Jesus, a small flickering flame perhaps. But in that hour of need, there was Jesus, and I can say many years later, he has never left me.

Conclusion

So, If we look through our eyes of desperation, we will see, there is Jesus. He is waiting for us to come with him, with what little faith we have mustered up. He greets us there with his grace, his mercy, his forgiveness, and his overwhelming love.

He comes in Gentleness – the broken reed is not thrown out but straightened, strengthened, and restored. The smouldering wick is not snubbed out, but is trimmed, and refuelled, so it shines bright again.

But why wait, til we are desperate, to come to Jesus. He does not just what to live at the bottom of our dark pits, but wants to be there every day for us, in every aspect of our life, helping us, teaching us and leading us. He wants to continually be refuelling our faith, through the power of his spirit. So that in any dark corner of the world we inhabit, we can shine brightly for Him.

So look around you today, and see. There is Jesus.

Amen