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Sermon Summary #15

Faith, Healing, and the Compassion of Christ Mark 5:21-43

“What is the most impressive characteristic displayed by Jesus?” His **supernatural capacity** to perform miracles? His **wisdom** and insight as displayed in his teaching? Perhaps his **authority** and the way he challenged, rebuked, and put to shame the religious leaders and legalists of his day? Or could it be his **compassion** . . . ? This compassion of Jesus is once again on display in a truly remarkable way here in Mark 5:21-43.

[Let’s be sure about one thing: **Jesus isn’t any less compassionate today than he was in the first century**. The fact that he no longer walks the earth with human beings as he did then doesn’t mean he feels any differently about their hurts, their struggles, their disappointments. Just because Jesus has died, has risen, and is now glorified at the right hand of the Father doesn’t mean he has changed in his heart or attitude about you and me.]

There are two stories here interwoven in a remarkably instructive way.

The first concerns a “ruler of the synagogue” named Jairus (v. 22), a man of great importance who had been elected from among the elders of Israel. He’s truly a remarkable man, and for several reasons: he’s courteous (v. 22), courageous, caring (v. 23), and confident.

Jesus agrees to help his daughter, until something happened that, as far as Jairus was concerned, was inexcusable and potentially disastrous! . . .

Let’s consider this anonymous woman’s predicament:

There is first of all the **physical** dimension of her suffering (12 years!).

Then there is the **relational** suffering she endured. She was **humiliated** by her condition.

Third, we are told here of the **financial** devastation this condition had created.

Fourth there was the **religious and spiritual** suffering she endured.

Add on top of all this, fifthly, the **social** depths of her pain.

A sixth dimension to her suffering was **psychological**.

A seventh factor to consider is the **emotional** devastation she endured.

I only tell you this to point out that in spite of it all, **she still had faith! She hadn’t lost her confidence in God or his goodness!**

In seeking to touch the hem of his garment, some accuse her of being superstitious (v. 28). But Jesus calls this faith! Don’t forget Mark 3:10 . . . Several things are important to note here:

First, because of her physical contact with Jesus, she “felt” in her body that she had been healed.

Second, Jesus himself felt “power had gone out from him” (v. 30). This “power” is the Holy Spirit!

Third, Jesus “felt” this in his body. Notice: the HS present in Jesus goes out of Jesus’ body and into the body of another and both feel or perceive it!

Fourth, Jesus' question strikes the disciples as silly (vv. 31-32). "What do you mean 'who touched you?' Everyone touched you! The crowds are pressing in and grabbing at you from all sides!" But Jesus knows the difference between "touching" and "touching"! He knows the difference between the mindset of those who are seeking him for a thrill or for a show and those who are desperate and humble and who've put all their hope in him alone. Not everyone who touched Jesus was healed or helped.

Fifth, the poor woman was paralyzed with fear (v. 33).

Sixth, our Lord's response to her again highlights his compassion.

"Ok, Ok! It's a beautiful story. Yes, I agree, she is a remarkable woman and Jesus is very compassionate. But what about Jairus? Has everyone forgotten about his little girl on her deathbed? Had Jesus forgotten?"

Word reaches them that the little girl had died. Did Jairus resent Jesus for the delay . . . ? Again, the ever compassionate Jesus, as it were, places his arms underneath this failing father; he takes hold of this sinking soul, and holds him up: "Don't be afraid. Hold on to that faith that brought you to me in the first place" (v. 36).

When Jesus arrives, **the formal mourning process** had already begun . . . "Stop it! What are you doing?" shouts Jesus. "She's not dead. She's only sleeping." Understandably, they laugh at him.

Was she truly dead? Yes. (1) Luke 8:53 ("they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead"; Luke is a doctor!); (2) Luke 8:55 ("and her spirit returned"); (3) their amazement is otherwise inexplicable: they had seen far greater miracles than awakening a girl from a coma; (4) "sleep" is a euphemism for death in the NT (John 11:11). Yes, she is literally dead. But her death is not permanent; it is not final. She is not dead as you perceive death.

Several concluding observations:

- 1) Note his impartiality and humility.
- 2) Delays are not always denials.
- 3) Note the role of *faith*. In the case of both Jairus and the woman, *faith is directed toward Jesus and is an expression of need*. The point is that it is who Jesus is that makes their faith powerful. Faith in and of itself is useless unless it is vested in and directed towards one who is worthy of it. Faith derives its power *not from the spiritual energy of the person who believes, but from the supernatural efficacy of the person who is believed: God!* It is not faith's act but its object that accounts for the miraculous.
- 4) Aside from the raising of Lazarus from the dead, there is not a single instance in the gospels where Jesus directly *prays* for the healing of the sick. He typically commands that they be made well.
- 5) These healings, like countless others, were motivated by our Lord's *compassion*. See Mt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 9:22; Lk. 7:13-15.

God is so compassionate that he will provide blessings at any point along the spectrum of our trust in him.

There is, first of all, *faith that God is your sole source for blessing, that he is your hope and he alone*.

Secondly, there is *faith in God's ability to heal* (see Mt. 8:2; 9:28-29).

Third, there is *faith in God's heart for healing*. This is *faith in God's goodness and his desire to bless his children* (see Ps. 103; Luke 11:11-13).

Fourth, there is *the faith not simply that God can heal, not simply that God delights to heal, but faith that God does heal*. This is the *faith that healing is part of God's purpose and plan for his people today*

Fifth and finally, there is *the faith that it is his will to heal right now*.