

Jesus, our Hope in Despair
Mark 5:21-43

Congregation Psalm 13
John 6:28-40
Romans 5:1-11

Today we will be looking at the last half of chapter 5 where we will see 2 more accounts of Jesus miraculously healing 2 people who just like the Demoniac of Gerasene were beyond despair, with no hope of help until Jesus came. So let us start this morning by reading Mark, chapter 5 vs 21-43.

In these 2 stories there are some interesting bits of information linking them together. 1st off, they are both about females, one who had the issue of blood for 12 years, and the other who was only 12 years old. We also see that in both of these accounts Jesus is met by rebukes, but so far that has not been very uncommon. His disciples seem to think that they know what's best and seem to often have some sort of remark. And the 3rd similarity between these 2 accounts here, is that Jesus comes in direct contact with what was considered to be unclean, just as we saw last week with the demoniac, and previously with the leper, Jesus does not shy away and avoid these unclean people.

That doesn't much sound like Christians today does it? They like their christian schools, and their pious christian groups being careful that they aren't associated with anything or anything that they deem to be "unclean." I understand that there is an element of protecting ones self, or our children from evil influence and harm but sometimes I think we as Christians may have taken it a bit too far. As you all know we home school our children, and that decision to do so was due to the fact that we thought it was the most beneficial thing for our children at the time. There are many benefits to having you as parents being the guiding influence as your child grows instead of their peers. We never bought into the idea of protecting our children from "government brainwashing" nor do we think that our children are smarter or better than anyone else's children because of our choice of schooling for them.

But there are many in the home school system that is their very reason and purpose, they seek to isolate themselves from the world around them, shut themselves up into their protective circles and barely venturing outside of it. I would like to believe that this is less prevalent than it used to be since things such as Gothardism do not have the hold on families like it did 40 years ago. But I will never forget one home school mom talking Diana about her children, saying that they only play with other home school kids. This is exactly the mindset that we as home school parents have tried to avoid, we have encouraged our kids to have friends outside of their church, outside of their family, our goal in their education has always been teaching them how to learn, not teaching them what to learn.

How to study, how to weigh evidences, how to find truth in a world of deceitfulness and lies. We even see it as kids who are raised in this antiseptic environment grow up they do not know how to deal with the sinful world around them. They do not know how to engage and interact with sinners, how to be a light and a witness, some seek jobs working from home because they can not cope with such sinful people in the work place, or others seek to be employed by other Christians, or seek to work at so called Moral Christian companies. But the point is, and all of that is to say that we as Christians are to model our savior. Are we not to be Christlike in our lives, in our actions? Is He not our example that we are to follow, and yet what do we see him doing? Dining with tax collectors, touching the lepers, coming in contact with the sick, and even those who have died. Being surrounded by the unclean, the outcast, the sinners, and undesirables.

Does this sound like the Jesus of our churches today? Do we need to go back to Mark chapter 2? It would seem in my estimation that there are quite a few christian brothers and sisters out there who might want to give Mark chapter 2 some serious thought and consideration.

Let's go there real quick, chapter 2 starting in verse 16. "And when the scribes and pharisees saw him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they asked his disciples how is it that he eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners.? When Jesus heard it, he said to them, Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." That is grounds to not separate yourself from people you deem to be unclean outsiders and sinners if I ever heard any. How are we, as Christians going to be a light to this world if we hide ourselves under the roof of our homes and churches?

As we will see in our studies today, just as we saw last week, Jesus is the only hope to this unclean, sinful, world. The demoniac, this woman with the issue of blood, and Jairus who's daughter was ill, and had died found hope and faith and Jesus when there was no hope left in the world. In verse 21 starting today, we find that Jesus had returned back to the west shore of the Sea of Galilee, and was greeted again by a large multitude. But this time Jairus was there seeking Jesus so that his daughter might be saved, knowing that she was dying and that Jesus was his only hope of his daughter being well again. In verse 22 Mark says that Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue. He was the president, or head of the local Jewish community.

With what we associate a leader, or president to be today is something of high power and authority. But in the Jewish synagogue the leader, was not one who lead the worship ceremonies, nor was he a professionally trained scribe or rabbi. The role of the leader was of one who took care of the practical needs of the local worshipping community. Someone who ensures that the needs are being met for those who are the teachers and who have the higher authority. They would have been entrusted by the elders of the community for things such as the repairs and upkeep of the synagogue, security, and the preparation of the scrolls for the scripture reading, and arranging the sabbath worship by appointing scripture readers, prayers, and teachers. There is evidence showing showing that this office was actually held by quite a diverse group of people.

Most synagogues would only have 1 leader, but on occasion there would be more. But there are inscriptions that have been found dating back to the first century BC that list women and children in this role, and later even those with Greek and Latin names, who wrote in Greek. I found this all interesting because at first I was struck by the fact that this apparent Jewish Religious leader would come to Jesus while all the Pharisee's and Scribes were plotting to have him killed. But now knowing what this role of the leader of the synagogue truly was puts a different understanding on these few verses.

So we have Jesus who has come back to the west shore, already has a multitude of people gathered around, pushing and shoving to get a closer look and Jairus makes it up to the front and falls at Jesus' feet begging that he would come and heal his daughter quickly before she dies. He is desperate, and in a hurry, his daughters life hangs in the balance and his only hope is that this Jesus who he has heard about would be able to make it back to his house and heal his daughter before the sickness claims her life. And yet, what happens. On his way to Jairus house, Jesus is stopped, he is delayed. By a woman who is just as desperate and whose need is just as dyer as Jairus' daughter.

Marks description of this woman's issue is one of someone who has been suffering greatly. He uses the term *Mastix* meaning a scourge, a lashing, and torment. The use of this term denotes that her suffering was far greater than just physical pain, but she also suffered great shame because of it, hence his use of the word *mastix*, denoting something akin to a shameful punishment such as being whipped. We see in Marks description here that this woman not only suffered this great pain and shame,

But also suffered at the hands of doctors who were unable to help her, then as if that was not enough it had also drained her of all of her finances and all of that only made the problem worse. This woman was desperate, just like Jairus little girl, was sick and faced with utter despair and hopelessness until Jesus. This account of her desperate attempt to come to Jesus to be healed mirrors that of the Leper. Due to her medical condition according to the Torah she was considered unclean, she would have been banished from the temple services, and anyone who would have made any contact with her would likewise be unclean and banished from the community until purified.

So this woman just like the Leper in a last ditch effort of desperation broke all of the rules, pushed her way through the crowd to get to Jesus believing that if she could only just touch him then she would be healed. Mark does not go into details about what this woman's thought process one. It was a quite common belief that if one could touch someone of power, a great leader, then they would be blessed. It is possible that this was her thinking here, but by Jesus response it would seem that there was more to it than that. It is more likely that she had heard about the hearings and the ministry of Jesus that had been taking place in the area, and upon his arrival back at the western shore sought him out believing not that she would be blessed by touching him, but that he truly had the ability to heal her.

Throughout the Gospel of Mark he makes an emphasis on those who hear, those who are able to hear and equates those who hear as to those who are Christ's disciples. We see here in verse 27 this woman's faith in action. "When she heard about Jesus, she came behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, if only I may touch his clothes I shall be made well. Mark focuses on what a disciple needs to do. First they must hear, then they must come, then they must be touched by Jesus.

And just like the man with the withered hand when he was touched by Jesus, or the Leper, immediately she was healed of the suffering, not only the physical, but also the shame that her affliction brought upon her. This is not unlike salvation, when we are confronted with our sin, with the dyer, desperate, hopeless state that we are in, full of shame, it becomes clear that our only hope, our only answer is to come to Jesus to be healed. And just like these physical miracles recorded here, there is a change in our heart, instantly, we desire what we despised, we believe in what we denied. We have been saved, healed, through faith, by the grace of God.

The following verses in the record of this serve to point out a few things. Verse 30-34. "And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, he turned around in the crowd and said, Who touched my clothes? But his disciples said to him, you see the multitude thronging you and you say, who touched me? And he looked around to see her who had done things thing, but the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her came and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. And he said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well, go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

This whole thing could have happened unknown to everyone, she very well could have touched him, been healed then gone on her way. First off as we have seen before, she has been singled out from this nameless crowd, it has become personal. True faith, true belief, is personal.

Being a disciples of Christ is not just about getting our needs met, but it is about being in relationship with Jesus, it is about being known by him and following him. Also notice Jesus reaction to this woman, who is unclean, how has come to him in desperation out of faith that he is her only hope. He does not ridicule, or scorn her for breaking the laws, but reacts out of love and compassion for her. Calling her his daughter, and to go in peace.

It is the same of the person who approaches Jesus seeking salvation, he does not turn you away, but rather shows love and compassion toward the repentant sinner. As we read this morning in John, All that the Father gives me, will come to me, and the one who comes to me, I will be no means cast out.

Moving on to the last half of this chapter, verse 35. "While he was still speaking some came from the ruler of the synagogues house who said, your daughter is dead, why trouble the teacher any further." we see that Jesus being delayed by this woman has a dyer effect on Jairus' daughter. While it changed the life of the woman, it now dashes any hopes Jairus had of his daughter being healed. We see this with those who came and reported that she had died. Telling him to just accept it, and mourn his daughter. Verse 36. "As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he said to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not be afraid, only believe!" Jesus did not react directly to these men, but instead turns to Jairus and directly comforts him.

Jesus challenges him, to no longer be focused on the circumstances at hand, but to have full faith and trust in him. This is the challenge that is set before all who are confronted with Jesus. Do we continue in despair and resign ourselves to despair, or do we trust in the one who can make all things possible. James Edwards says, "There is only one thing necessary, to believe. The present tense of the Greek imperative means to keep believing, to hold only faith rather than to give in to despair. With respect to his daughter's circumstances Jairus's future is closed, but with respect to Jesus it is still open. Faith is not something Jairus has but something that has Jairus, caring him from despair to hope. Jesus' authoritative word to Jairus is not to fear, but to believe.

In these last verses we see that Mark continues another theme that we have seen so far. The idea of those who are inside, and those who are outside. Verse 37 "And he permitted no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. Then he came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. When he came in, he said tot hem, Why make this commotion and weep, the child is not dead, but sleeping. And they ridiculed him, but when he had put them all outside he took the father and the mother of the child and those who were with him and entered where the child was lying."

By the time that Jesus arrives, there are already people who have come to mourn over the death of this girl. It was customary that one would hire professional mourners, and in fact it was a requirement at Jewish funerals. These professional mourners were usually woman, who would follow the family to the grave, wailing sad laments. It is important to note this for many critics take Jesus literally when he says that she is not dead, but only sleeping. And we see that this professional mourners turn their lament, into scorn and they ridicule him. It is doubtful that someone whose occupation was to mourn over the dead would likely be hired and duped into mourning over someone in a coma. Other scholars believe that Jesus response was more likely to Jairus again, wanting him to understand how God wants us to see those who die in the faith.

Verse 41 “Then he took the child by the hand, and said to her, Tal itha, cumi, which is translated little girl I say to you arise. Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was 12 years of age and they were overcome with great amazement. But he commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat. Once again we see Jesus reaching out and touching that which was ceremonially unclean.

So what can we take from these 2 accounts today? What is the lesson that we can learn? Well, first off, I think chiefly is that faith in Christ is our hope, it is the only hope the world has against the empty despair of sin. And it is only through a personal relationship and faith in Christ that one can find hope. Both of these accounts as with all of the others typify man's hopelessness toward God, and Christ's willingness, his love, and grace to reach out and touch each of our unclean hearts and lives and to cleanse us, and make us whole, willing, and able to hear his word, and to follow him. And as we see Christ is not dirtied by this act of love, in the case of the leper he does not transfer the leprosy to himself, same with the woman with the issue of blood, he reaches out to that which is unclean and by his sovereign power and authority overcomes and overpowers that which is unclean, he is not infected by our sin, by our disease, by our sin, but instead we are cleansed by his pure and holy touch.