

Faith in the King – Mark 5: 21-43

This is one of the most emotive passages in Mark's gospel, dealing with the response of Christ to some extreme situations of pain and suffering. We learn 3 things about Jesus here:

- 1) He draws the despairing
- 2) His timing is perfect
- 3) He gives so much more than you can imagine

1) He Draws the Despairing

Jairus – was a respected leader in the community, probably a wealthy and well-known figure. His only daughter is moments from death and in his helplessness and despair Jairus runs to Jesus, falling at His feet, he begs Him to perform a miracle. Even the most 'ordered and successful' life is vulnerable to the storms common to all in this fallen world. The big question is this, to what or whom do you turn in the moment of crisis? It seems unlikely that Jairus would have journeyed to Jesus but for this tragic moment. Spurgeon said this 'Blessed hurricane that drives me to God, to God alone'.

The anonymous woman – she had suffered for years, spent every penny she had on finding a cure for her bleeding and gotten nowhere, in fact she was more desperate than ever. This woman's plight is analogous to the spiritual condition of this city and the many who live here, there's a constant bleed, all manner of 'cures' are tried; relationships, alcohol, drugs; an incredible £190 million was spent on gambling in this city last year! There is an ache that needs to be remedied. Jesus draws the despairing.

2) His Timing is Perfect

Following 12 years of agony, this woman is healed in an instant. Hundreds of people would have touched Jesus before the woman, but her touch was different; she had faith! Jesus stopped what he was doing to identify her. This must have been agonising for Jairus who was desperate to get Jesus to his daughter, after all surely this woman who has waited 12 years could hang on a few more hours? But Jesus had a valuable lesson to teach, namely how important faith is. When Jairus received the news he dreaded, that his daughter had died, Jesus turned to him, looked him in the eye and said 'Do not fear, only believe'. The 'delay' in God's timing can be so difficult to bear, we can be tempted to think that he doesn't care, but His timing is perfect, He can bring breakthrough in an instant. During the delay He appeals to us to believe Him, to trust Him, to have faith in the King.

3) He gives so much more than you can imagine

In verse 34 Jesus speaks to this woman, calling her 'daughter' and transforms her fear to peace. She had hoped for a miracle, she got that and an adoption into God's family. Jairus also hoped that Jesus would perform a miracle but so much more than that, he witnessed a resurrection. Verses 37-43 capture one of the most intimate interactions of Jesus in the gospels. The Aramaic phrase 'Talitha Cumi' that he used would be like a parent speaking to their daughter 'darling it's time to wake up'. He has authority over the waves, over the demons and over death. Because of his victory on the cross, our bodily death is but 'sleeping' because our souls have been awoken to eternal life.

Questions

- 1) Why was Jairus' response to Jesus shocking for people to see? What did it convey about his grasp of who Jesus was?
- 2) The woman had suffered for 12 years and found no cure for her bleed, what things might drive people today to Jesus?
- 3) Waiting for God to act can be very frustrating, how can we learn to trust Him when it seems prayers aren't being answered? Does anyone have an example of trusting God during a delay? Are there any examples of how God's perfect timing has been proven in your life?
- 4) Why does God love faith so much?
- 5) In what ways have you known God bless you over and above your 'perceived' area of need? Are there friends or work colleagues who are suffering and need to come to Jesus? Spend some time praying for them and one another, for faith to not fear but believe