



As I walked into the 7-Eleven that evening he caught my eye. He was sitting outside on the hard concrete, in the dark, leaning against the wall. His clothes were dirty and stained. The florescent light shone on his left side and gave me a simple glimpse of his hand. His left hand was extremely deformed. All of this happened in about two seconds as I opened the door, walked in and headed straight to the back to get my Slurpee. I didn't say a word to any of my friends about the homeless man because truthfully, we prefer to ignore homeless people.

But the entire time we were in the store I couldn't get him out of my mind. My mind was racing as I wondered if I was supposed to approach him. Thoughts were whirling around in my brain desperately trying to make sense of what was happening. Then the story came to my mind, the story of Jesus healing the man with a lame hand in the synagogue, on the sabbath of all days! If I was supposed to approach this man and ask him to stretch out his hand like Jesus had done it would require great faith. We paid for our food and as we walked out of the store I felt drawn to the man. Our eyes caught. He was probably looking for a handout. This was the moment of truth. And just as quickly as it happened I walked away and left the man sitting in front of the 7-Eleven on the cold hard concrete that night.

As I reflect on that evening I still wish I would have approached him and struck up a conversation. I believe God could heal him but I didn't have the faith to ask him to stretch out his hand. I didn't have the faith to see God work that night. Have you ever been in a situation that required great faith? How did you respond? Did you act and see the miraculous power of God or like me did you turn your back and walk away?

Open your Bible to Mark 5. We're going to look at two miracles of Jesus. Both of these miracles are explained as being accompanied by great faith. In these stories we're going to see people who believed Jesus could heal them in their dire situations.

A Unique Invitation

Mark 5 focuses on the miraculous power of Christ. Jesus has just healed a man tormented by demon possession when He gets in a boat and heads for the other side of the lake.

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. Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. 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." So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him (Mark 5:21–24).

Look how Mark records the account. It's almost like Jesus just steps foot on land and the crowd is already waiting for Him; the paparazzi are there waiting to see what Jesus will do next. Tucked away in this group of people is a man by the name of Jairus. Jairus is a respected person with an important title who presents Jesus with a unique invitation, an invitation for Jesus to come and heal his dying daughter.

Notice how Jairus delivers the request. A man of such importance and highly respected humbles himself at the feet of Jesus. Jairus doesn't come and explain his role to Jesus. Jairus doesn't describe to Jesus why his daughter deserves to be healed. Jairus doesn't offer Jesus any special gift for coming with him. No. Jairus does what any desperate parent would do; he falls at the feet of Jesus. He places himself in the dust and pleads with Jesus, turning to the only hope his daughter has.

Now there is an interesting thing going on here that I want to point out. Something just happened that is not a regular occurrence in the New Testament: a religious leader just fell at the feet of Jesus. We see no other account like this in Scripture. In fact, we typically see the opposite. Generally the religious leaders are against Jesus. Normally the religious leaders are in opposition to Christ. Back in Mark 3, when Jesus healed the man with the lame hand, we're told the Pharisees left church that day looking for a way to kill Jesus (Mark 3:6). Eventually they are the ones who condemned Christ to death.

Jairus' attitude is a stark contrast to what we typically see of the religious leaders. Jairus must have heard the stories of Christ. Jairus knew Jesus was his daughter's only option so in faith he goes to find Him and invites Him to come to his house. Jairus believed that if Jesus would just touch her she would be healed.

Verse 24 says: **"So Jesus went with him..."** Did you know that Jesus didn't have to go with him? Jesus could have rejected the invitation. In Matthew 8 we read about another miraculous healing by faith. A centurion came to Jesus because his servant was paralyzed and suffering terribly. The centurion doesn't request Jesus to come and heal him so Jesus invites Himself saying: **"Shall I come and heal him?"** (Matt. 8:7). The centurion humbly

responds telling Jesus he doesn't deserve to have Him enter his house but asks Him to just say the word and his servant will be healed. What faith! What faith to ask Jesus to just say the word and he believed his servant would be healed. He believed that if Jesus would just say the word his servant would be healed and it was so.

Before we follow Jesus to this house of Jairus there is a lesson to learn here: Drop your pride. Warren Wiersbe once said: "The ground is level at the feet of Jesus, for all who have burdens meet there." Do you ever find your pride standing in the way of you trusting Jesus for things requiring great faith? Have you been in a situation where you wanted to fall at the feet of Jesus but you were too concerned with what others might say? Maybe you've trusted in your education too much and that's hindered your faith. Or maybe your title has hindered your faith. It's easy for us to allow our degree, resume or address to hinder our faith. We think because of these elevated positions we hold we don't need. We've been told for our whole lives that we are smart enough to fix the problem. We've been told that if we want something done we need to do it ourself. This thinking is contrary to the Gospel and the teachings of Christ. The next time you find pride hindering your faith think about Jairus.

Met with Extraordinary Faith

Jairus was willing to step out in faith but he wasn't the only one. While Jesus was traveling to his home the large crowd followed. Tucked in this crowd was a suffering woman; a woman who had dealt with an issue of bleeding for 12 years.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse (verses 24b–26).

This woman will probably die if her situation doesn't change; who could bleed for 12 years and have a healthy life? Most scholars think her bleeding was uterine-related. She most likely had an ongoing menstruation for 12 years and was near death.

Understanding the Levitical Law is helpful in this situation. *"When a woman has her regular flow of blood, the impurity of her monthly period will last seven days, and anyone who touches her will be unclean till evening"* (Lev. 15:19). In the Levitical Law when a woman was having her monthly period she was considered unclean. The chapter continues to explain that anything she touched was unclean, any bed she sat on was unclean, any person who touched her would be unclean. It's almost like having cooties. It gets worse. *"When a woman has a discharge of blood for many days at a time other than her monthly period or has a discharge that continues beyond her period, she will be unclean as long as she has the discharge, just as in the days of*

her period" (Lev. 15:25). This woman was unclean for 12 years. Unable to experience touch from people. Un-huggable. Unable to come to your house and sit on the couch. Unable to hold a job. Broke from trying to find a cure for this debilitating condition. Frankly, she was an outcast.

Think about the last time you were sick. Maybe this winter you got the flu. You may have laid in bed one night with intense abdominal pain. You might have taken medication to help you fight the cold quicker but nothing seemed to work. The pain of the flu was overwhelming as you lost sleep. And when you saw others you told them, "Stay away, I don't feel well and I don't want you to get what I have!" You fought through the pain and isolation but in her case there was no hope.

Now imagine her physical appearance—her eyes having dark bags under them; her clothes worn out; her skin tone pale due the constant loss of blood; the smell emanating from her; the looks she received as she walked down the street. People would avoid her at all cost to make sure she doesn't accidentally touch them and make them unclean. Verse 26 tells us she spent everything she had to get better but she was not recovering. Some of you are physicians and I don't think Mark is placing the statement to belittle the medical profession but to emphasize the power of Christ we're about to see. Before we count out her suffering as terrible, listen to what Chuck Swindoll says: "When you suffer and lose, that does not mean you are being disobedient to God. In fact, it might mean you're right in the center of His will. The path of obedience is often marked by times of suffering and loss." This suffering is what drew her to Jesus.

When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering (verses 27–29).

This woman takes a huge leap of faith by pushing in through the crowd. If the crowd gladly parted for Jairus they did the opposite for this woman. Think about it, every person she touched as she pressed closer to Jesus would be unclean but that didn't stop her in her relentless pursuit. Let me draw your attention to verse 28 where we read this: "she thought." The English doesn't do justice to what is really taking place here. The Greek gives us more of an in-depth understanding. The word used here is *ἐλεγεν* (*elegen*) which really means: she thought to herself. It has a connotation that she wasn't convinced but tried to convince herself by telling herself. Have you been in a situation like this? She said, "if I just touch His clothes I'll be better." The pain and rejection would vanish if she could just touch Jesus. She believed it. She had faith that Jesus could heal her and she boldly reached out her weak hand to touch the Savior.

The instant her frail finger touched the edge of Jesus' clothing she felt a change. It was a situation where her eyesight was heightened, her hearing was deeply tuned in, and everything around her moved slowly as she took a self evaluation. She knew it. She knew she had been healed and everything was going to be better. As she stopped to turn around and slip away Jesus stopped also and so did the whole crowd. Time stood still. Jesus knew power had gone out of Him and asked: "Who touched me?"

The question provoked a sarcastic response from the disciples: "Jesus, look at all these people and you ask 'Who touched me?'" I think Jesus knew who touched Him. He waited there on the road with hundreds of eyes scanning the crowd to see if anyone would step forward. She probably feared the consequences of touching a Holy Man. She probably feared the consequences of being an unclean woman who touched a Rabbi. But overcoming fear once again she came forward.

But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering" (verses 32–34).

Notice it was not her touch that healed her but her faith. Hebrews 11:1 says: *"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."* She was finally free from her suffering and knew: Jesus has power over sickness.

A few summers ago I was preaching at a summer camp for junior high students. During camp I reconnected with my friend Cliff who was leading worship. As we caught up on life Cliff shared a story with me about his wife. She was having horrible back pain and went to the doctor. After ordering a laundry lists of tests and getting an MRI it was discovered she had a large tumor on her spine. The doctor informed them that he could surgically remove the tumor but there was a risk of paralyzation due to the location.

It was decision time. They have two young children and the risk was great, but so was their faith. They scheduled the surgery and began praying. They called, texted and Face-booked friends inviting them to pray. The pain remained and it was finally time for the surgery day. The doctors told him it would be hours before they knew anything as they wheeled his wife away. About 30 minutes later the doctor emerged in the waiting room and said: "We opened your wife up and it looks like a surgeon was in there before me and removed the tumor. I can't explain it." There is a constant in both of these stories: both of these women believed that Jesus could heal them from their sickness. They both had extraordinary faith.

Healed by Faith

If you became so encompassed in the story of the woman you may have forgotten about Jairus. Remember the religious leader whose daughter was dying? While Jesus was still speaking Jairus' friends came and found him. They tapped him on the shoulder and whispered the news no parent wants to hear: *"Your daughter is dead, stop bothering Jesus"* (Mark 5:35). Have you experienced a situation like this in life? You are doing your best to pursue Jesus but your friends were not so enthusiastic about you doing so. Maybe your friends were downright opposed to your pursuit of Christ. I know I've experienced this.

With compassion Jesus turns to Jairus saying: "Don't listen to them, just believe." Even though Jesus heard the report that death had claimed another victim He refused to believe in the finality of death and encouraged Jairus to do the same. Seeing the faith the woman had only increased his belief that Jesus could heal his daughter. The professional mourners were already out front crying and wailing loudly. I imagine it being quite an intense scene. Jesus inquires about all the commotion and tells them that the girl is not dead but simply sleeping. These people are professional mourners and they know when death has claimed another.

But Jesus was on a mission. Thinning the crowd to three of His closest disciples and the girl's parents they entered the home. The crowd parted like the Red Sea as He approached the house and went straight to the girl's bedroom. He cast the Levitical Law aside, knowing that touching a corpse would render Him unclean (Lev. 21:11) but that didn't bother Him with the woman. He grabbed the girl by the hand and listen to what happened.

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

The little girl who was once dead is now alive. Life had been restored to her lifeless body. Not only does Jesus have power over sickness but also over death! The restoration of this little girl's life is a preview of the resurrection that will take place in all believers. Did you see that? Jesus has power over sickness and death! We know she is alive because in verse 43 He commands them to give her something to eat.

Jesus teaches a valuable lesson here, a lesson for us to believe against all odds. Are you having trouble believing in the miraculous power of Jesus this morning? You may need to take the advice Jesus gave to Jairus: "Don't be afraid, just believe." Fear can cripple our faith. Fear wants to sneak into our thoughts. Fear wants to dominate our actions. Once it's infiltrated our thoughts and prevailed in our actions we basically become useless. This is why it's so important for us to believe against all odds. If you take

one thing from this message leave knowing this: Jesus has power over sickness and death and desires for all to know Him by faith.

Act in Faith

I do want to make mention of this and not ignore what many have experienced. There are times when we reach out to Jesus in faith, believing in His healing power, and we're not healed. You may have experienced this yourself or have been praying for a person who hasn't been healed. As I look at the three different aspects I've presented this morning about approaching Jesus I can't help but think there is something missing. We're missing "act in faith" to that list. There are going to be times that Jesus doesn't heal the sickness. There are going to be times when people pass away but we still need to act in faith because we, as a human race, are in desperate need of a savior.

There is a way each person can act in faith after hearing a message like this. Let's zoom out a little and move to the broader topic of faith we're studying. For those who are Christ followers, continue to live a life of faith. Don't let your faith grow weak. Yesterday I was at the gym and got to thinking how faith is like a muscle; it needs to be trained. Has your faith muscle been trained lately? Maybe God has placed someone on your heart and you haven't had the faith to reach out to them yet. Look for an opportunity this week to act in faith.

If you recently surrendered your life to Christ I want to invite you to take that faith muscle and start exercising it. Reach out to Christ and look for ways to grow your faith. Keep your eyes

open for ways to believe against all odds. Act in faith even when it seems scary. The more you begin to exercise that faith muscle the stronger it's going to be and the more aware you'll be of Jesus working.

Finally there are some of you who have yet to place your faith in Jesus Christ. The four points we've been talking about when approaching Jesus are a perfect launching pad to you trusting Christ with your whole heart. Today could be the day you drop your pride and act in faith to answer the call to follow Christ.

We've been talking about living a life of faith this morning. We saw how Jairus believed and his daughter's life returned to her. We saw how the woman was healed from her sickness. We talked about practical ways we can apply this message of faith to our lives. Just like Jairus was encouraged to believe, and seeing the faith of the woman helped him believe, we need to encourage each other to grow in our faith. We need to encourage each other to believe in the healer. There are going to be times when each of us faces unbelief so we need to be able to look to each other to encourage our faith in Christ. The faith isn't in touching the clothes, the faith is in He who wears the clothing. The faith we have is in no ordinary man who desires each of us to know Him by faith.

This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.

© 2015 Central Peninsula Church, Foster City, CA
Catalog No. 1404-24FC