

With this text, we will encounter another story of Jesus' power. For the last few weeks, from the middle of Mark 4 through Mark 5, Mark presents Jesus' power in the different ways it manifests. We see Jesus in the storm, right on the lake, and he calms the storm. He stands up and rebukes the wind and the waves. And then, last week, we saw Jesus encounter this demon-possessed man. He exorcises the demons out of the man, and you're watching as Mark shows us Jesus' power that in some ways moves from this macro level of all creation down into the spiritual world or that which is anti-kingdom of God.

And then we see this beautiful personal tender power of Jesus. Because if we're honest, there are times in which God shows up and heals miraculously. And there are other times in which we are left wondering God where God is. Because if God is the one who can calm the storm, who can call the demons out of the demon-possessed man, what does it mean for us when God doesn't seem to move in the way we think he will? Or what if there's a delay?

What do we do when we pray, and we pray, and we don't sense what's happening? When we see God act powerfully, but yet we're left wondering when will God act powerfully in our own life and circumstance. These are the tensions we all live in. We live in what the theologians call the time between the times.

I've talked about this before, where Jesus has announced the Kingdom of God, and yet he speaks about it as something also coming in the future. He says the Kingdom of God is here, but it's also one day coming. And so, in that kind of tension, we see these stories where God shows up, and healing happens.

But then we also see the fallout of sin and brokenness still present as well. And that tension is actually a healthy thing to live in because when we feel that angst of like, "God, why aren't you showing up here?" It's your heart longing for what God has promised will one day come. And so we long for that day, we hope, and we yearn for that day. "Come, Lord, Jesus come."

But we live in that tension. And in the next two stories, we're going to step into a little bit of that tension as Mark is displaying a different side of Jesus' power, a softer, more gentle, tender power of Jesus. So what do we do in those moments where the waves continue to crash? What do we do when the storm continues to rage? How do we continue to lean into Jesus and pray for more and more of Jesus to come? Flip in your Bibles to Mark 5; we'll begin in verse 21, and let's work through the text.

The story opens when Jesus crosses over by boat to the other side of the lake. Remember, Mark is brilliant. Okay. Let's give him some credit. When they are crossing back over the lake, they are heading back into

Jewish territory, which is, again, one of those literary devices that Mark is constantly using in his book. So he's leaving the Gentile region and coming back over to the Jewish 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" (Mark 5:21). It says a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. This is a different scene. Remember last time he arrived and there was no one but the demon-possessed man. Jesus arrived this time and immediately crowds our waiting for him.

"Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet" (v. 22). The same posture as the demon-possessed man. I told you to remember that last week because we're going to see both of these people in this story fall in worship. Whereas, before, the falling of the demon-possessed man was a little more in fear and trembling, but here it's fear and trembling as well, but it's at the feet of Jesus in a posture of worship.

"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." (vv. 23-24). So the crowd is swarming, and Jairus, this synagogue leader, which we only know a little bit about him. He would've been a man of high esteem. He would've been a community leader, influential, well-educated, and probably wealthy. He oversaw the operations of the synagogue. He probably wasn't the chief leader of the synagogue but had an influential role.

Now, as we've been reading through Mark, does Jesus get along with the synagogue religious leaders? No. It has been a tumultuous road at best. They are troubled by him. They're cynical of him. They're skeptical of his claims. They, quite frankly, would rather him head back to the Gentiles. There is all sorts of turmoil here. And so when Jairus, a synagogue leader, comes to Jesus, he's risking a lot. It would've been far better for his career and his status to just reject Jesus.

But there's something that happens in us when we face desperate circumstances. There's something in us where we lay aside social conventions. We lay aside those things that hinder us from entering into the presence of Jesus because we recognize our need more acutely for Jesus. And so Jairus comes risking all of those things.

What we learn about him is that his little girl is dying, more tragic than I can even understand. It's a heartbreaking moment. His life is falling apart. And what we sense is that she's right at the brink of death, and Jairus comes and says, "Listen, my daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so she'll be healed and live." And there's a word

in there around dying. It's called eschatos. It's where we get eschatology. Eschatology is the study of end. And so he says, "My daughter's dying. She's at the very edge of death, the last grasp. Jesus, would you come and touch my daughter?" So he comes before Jesus and lays all of that on the line.

"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" (vv. 25-26) So the scene unfolds. Jairus is like, "Let's get to my daughter." He's sensing the urgency in the moment. And Jesus seems to respond. But this crowd is there. And imagine with every step, as this crowd is slowing Jesus down, Jairus is like, "Jesus, we have to go."

And then, all of a sudden, there's this woman. We see this woman come on to the scene who has a chronic illness. She's been sick for 12 years. She's had this flow of blood. Most likely, it's a sort of menstrual problem in which she's just perpetually bleeding. And for 12 years, she's dealt with this. Now, what we have to understand is for this woman, you can go back to Leviticus 15, but it's all of the implications of this for her. See, for her, there's so much more going on. Having this problem for 12 years would've meant that she was not allowed to touch anyone. She was not allowed to be in public. She couldn't bear children, which for women in this day, would've been their only means of economic power or agency. She's cut off from community. All dimensions of her life have been impacted by these 12 years of blood flow—socially, physically, economically, religiously, and spiritually.

All of those things had been cut off from her, and she, by far, has no business, according to the laws of the day, to be in a crowd because anyone she bumps into also then becomes unclean. Now before we get, "This is so like barbaric and old." Yes, to some extent, but they didn't know about bacteria. They didn't know about viruses. The purity codes, in a lot of ways, were a way in which hygiene could be introduced to primitive communities that could help them remain healthy. And so, yes, it caused a lot of pain and damage in that day, but there was a purpose behind it.

And so, as she's fighting her way through the crowd, she too is desperate like Jairus. And you can imagine, as she's realizing for 12 years, she hasn't been able to encounter anyone like this, and she's bumping into people and you just can't help but wonder about the fear of her being seen or being caught.

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. vv. 27-29

"Heard about Jesus," Remember, Mark has been using this terminology hear and see, as in the saying, "Those who have ears, let them hear. Those who have eyes, let them see." He's saying that these two seem to have understood who Jesus is. She hears of Jesus, and she responds. She

thinks, "If I just reach out, just touch the hem of the robe, just the corner of Jesus' prayer shawl, and then I'll be healed."

And what's stunning is that it actually takes place. She reaches out; I imagine she's trying to fight through the crowd. She touches Jesus, the hem of his robe, and immediately she senses the bleeding stop. Now there's a sense here with this woman that what she was hoping for was kind of like a touch and go. Like she just wanted to lean in and grab a little bit of Jesus' power and then split and get out of there. And do you blame her? She's dealt with this for 12 years. That makes sense. She wants to slip into the crowd. She wants to retreat. She wants to go away from this damaging, triggering, trauma inducing environment.

Notice how Jesus then responds.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" vv. 30-31

It's fascinating, this idea of him feeling the power leaving him. I don't know what to do with that. Other than he could sense this woman's desperation. We see this woman's faith, and he stops in the midst of the crowd. Now, this is the woman's worst nightmare, and actually, it's Jairus' worst nightmare too. Jairus is in a hurry. "Jesus, let's go. My daughter is on the brink of death. Why are you stopping? This woman has a chronic illness. She's dealt with it, as tragic as it is, for 12 years. She could wait a few more hours."

Jairus' daughter is facing a deeply acute illness where death is at its door. And yet Jesus stops, and begins to scan the crowd as the woman wants to just touch and go. Jesus stops and says, "Wait a minute, who touched my robe?" Because what Jesus has in mind is actually far more than what this woman actually was asking for. The woman wanted a physical healing, but Jesus had something far more in mind. There's something about how Jesus will always ask more of us than we're ready for but will give us more than we could imagine.

Jesus begins to look around. This power has left him, which by the way, the word for power in Greek is *dunamios*. It's where we get the word dynamite, which I think is kind of fun, but he felt something leave him. *"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" (vv. 32-33).*

So this woman is outed, I'm imagining, as she's seeing this, recognizing Jesus is going to find out who it was. At some point, I imagine the fear coming back, tears swelling in her eyes. I bet her hands are shaking a bit as she realizes she has to confess in front of this whole crowd, this woman who was unclean, who was contagious, according to their laws, to everyone around them. She had to come before Jesus and tell the truth and say, "I am the one who did this." There was in the 1st century a sense in which the impurity was contagious, but what we're going to see in a moment and what we'll see over and over is when the Kingdom

of God comes, what's contagious in the Kingdom of God is not impurity, but purity.

When you encounter Jesus, he brings healing. He brings the restoration that we could never imagine. And notice again, as she's shaking and trembling in the crowd, she's looking at Jesus and wondering what's going to happen. I imagine she expects ridicule and shame but listens to what Jesus does.

He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering" (v. 34). Imagine being the woman, hearing those words, you haven't heard those words, I would imagine for 12 years. She's been an outcast. She's been marginalized. She's been broken. She's been known for her affliction, and yet Jesus looks at this woman and says, "Daughter, you wanted physical healing, but what I'm giving you in addition to the healing is the entrance into the very family of God." He says, "Daughter, your faith has healed you." Which is an interesting response, too, because was it her faith that healed this woman? Kind of, but Jesus seemed to sense that it's the power that left him that healed the woman. And so there's some connection between our faith and the power of Jesus.

But yet, we often see it is not formulaic. It's not; if you have faith, this will happen. If you don't have enough faith, this won't happen. Jesus won't be coerced like that. He won't be manipulated. It's not a sort of incantation. If you just say the right words, then Jesus will do the thing. It's more complex than that. But there is some connection between faith and the movement of Jesus. The closer I walk with Jesus, it seems, the more I see those miracles happen. There's some connection, not a one-to-one, but there's some connection. It's a sort of channel through which God can work with us. He says there's something that is happening.

And so this woman is then told to go in peace. The word for peace is shalom. It means wholeness. It's where the whole story of scriptures is going. The restoration of shalom, where all of heaven and earth are reunited again. And there's no more death, no more sickness, no more illness. He says, "Step into that reality." He says, "Go into peace, step into that peace, and be freed from your suffering."

Now let's snap back to Jairus, who's watching this whole thing happen. Jesus had just called this woman, daughter, and what's Jairus thinking about? His own daughter. Again, he's sensing that this is taking too much time. He wants to get going. "What about my daughter, who's dying right now." I mean, I understand the complexity of Jairus' experience. More desperation is setting in.

"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?'" (v. 35). Finally, the news that Jairus had been resisting, that he feared most would happen. They come, and they tell him that it's too late. His daughter's gone. "Don't bother the teacher anymore." And what I love about this subtle exchange that happens next, that you really have to read a little bit between the lines to see, is that Jairus doesn't share that news with Jesus. I imagine he's angry. I bet he's probably pretty furious. "Jesus, if you'd have just left that woman

who had suffered with that affliction for 12 years and come with me. Then she wouldn't have died."

In some ways, this is malpractice, is it not? I mean, Jesus treats the chronic illness before the acute illness. I'm not a doctor, but I know that's probably not how you triage the situation. And so Jairus is sitting there, I imagine, angry. And then notice the way that Jesus responds before Jairus can even give voice to that. Jairus receives the news.

"Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, 'Don't be afraid; just believe'" (v. 36). Jesus tells Jairus to trust him—to believe, which is the same word used when the woman had faith. It's the word *pisteue*. It can mean faith. It can mean belief. It can be faithfulness. And so when Jairus is sitting there watching this woman with the flow of blood and Jesus has listened, your *pisteue*, your faith has saved you, and Jairus just witnessed this.

He then looks at Jairus and says, don't be afraid. He tells him to have faith, have *pisteue*. Hang with me. Trust that there's something going on here because, again, the timing of Jesus is so confounding for us because God is not constricted by time like we are. And so this delay, which seems unconscionable, Jesus says, "Trust me, have faith.

He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." vv. 37-39

Which, of course, they responded rather naturally—they laughed at him. It's like, "Jesus, how could you step into this scene and say that." And Jesus uses this metaphor that the New Testament writers actually pick up on. They speak of death as a sort of sleep, which we will come back to in a little bit.

But they laughed at him. 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. 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. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat. vv. 40-43

Now, this phrasing is like "little girl." It's what a mother or a father would say when they wake their little girl up. It's tenderness. Like "It's morning. The sleep is over." It says, "She immediately got up." She was 12 years old, which seems odd. But how long had the woman with the flow of blood suffered? Twelve years. Beautiful symmetry between the two stories. I want us to notice the beautiful symmetry between these stories.

As I just alluded to, they're both these healings of women. They both suffered for 12 years in some sense. There's a sense in which Jesus is meeting people in their affliction. They're both called daughter. They're

both made pure by Jesus' touch. A corpse would've made him impure. And so there's all sorts of symmetry here. But what's also happening is there's a sort of inverting of what's expected in the same way that the woman with the flow of blood got more than she ever asked for. So too, did that happen to Jairus. Jairus wanted a healing before death, but what Jairus got was a resurrection. He actually got more than he asked for, but at the same time, it required a greater step, for he had to walk through the agony and the torment of death.

He had to walk through that state in order to arrive where Jesus gave him more. And I think what we see here, we see so much in these beautiful stories, but I want to focus on four things that I think Jesus inverts in our understanding. It is because there's something about this idea of tender power that doesn't seem to go together. We don't think of tenderness when we think of power.

The tender power of Jesus inverts our understanding of God.

Remember, theologically, what we see in Jesus is what we see of God. He is the clearest manifestation and representation of who the very character and nature of God is. Now for a lot of us, when we first come to God, we think of him as some sort of distant, aloof thing. Some abstract force that's out in the boat calming the storm, but you think, "I'm not in the boat, Jesus." We think about him who cast out the demons, but that may not be your story.

We think of God as this distant, far-off being largely because Michelangelo has screwed all of our imaginations. That he's somewhere floating on the clouds, and maybe we can just touch the finger of Adam. But it's far more than that. What we see with Jesus here is he actually enters into the very impure, unclean spaces. He moves towards the broken because, again, it's one thing to hear about the dynamite power of Jesus to calm a storm. It's another thing to hear about him casting out demons, but it is a whole other thing when he walks into the room of death and takes you by the hand. I think this inverts our understanding of God. God is not some distant being, but he's much more akin to a good father who looks at both of these daughters. And he says, "It's time. It's time."

So I think this confronts us because just like the woman with the flow of blood, we often come to Jesus and just want to consume him. "Give me a little bit of your power. I need you here. I need you in this. Just come on, God. Just give me, let that leak out on me." But Jesus says no, "I'm giving you much more than." He invites us to be in the family of God. He says, "Come be my son. Come be my daughter."

Bring those physical needs before Jesus; there's nothing wrong with that. He desires that. But as a father, I know that, yes, I want my children to bring their desires to me. But what I really want is for them to crawl up on my lap and just look at me and say, "This is good." And God is saying, "Listen, I'll do that. I'll happily focus on these areas to just trust that it's how it's going to work. But what I want for you is to call you son or daughter." So, where in your life do you need to move from a consumer of God to a child of God? Where do you need to move from

a transactional relationship with God? He's inviting you into so much more, and he's saying, "Would you just embrace me as your good father?" See, the tender power of Jesus inverts our understanding of God.

The tender power of Jesus inverts our understanding of healing.

What you don't see in this text is both the woman in verse 23 and Jairus' daughter in verse 34, they use this word heal, and that word in Greek is the word *sozo*. It's most commonly, almost overwhelmingly, translated as salvation. It can be properly translated as healing here. But what I think Mark is doing so beautifully here is that for most of us, we reduce the idea of salvation merely to the forgiveness of sins. It is that. It's not anything less than that, but it's comprehensive.

The story of salvation is about Jesus feeling and healing every effect of the fall that has cascaded throughout history and caused all sorts of trauma over and over and over in the world. Both your own brokenness, both the wretchedness that we've made of our own life. But it's also about the healing of the physical material world as well. It is about this grand plan in which heaven is crashing back into earth. We read it in Revelation 21, where it says there's a new creation that's coming down to earth, and there's no more death. There's no more brokenness. There are no more tears. There is no more mourning.

What we're seeing is this comprehensive view of salvation that isn't purely spiritual and it isn't purely material, but rather just like us, as a hybrid of both the dirt of the ground we were created with and then to become human, God breathes his spirit into us. We are both material and spiritual. Both of those things have been incredibly fractured by sin. And the salvation that Jesus is offering is comprehensive. It's just as complex and nuanced as we are. And he says, I've come to forgive you your sins because you desperately need that. And I've come to heal you, your body, and this broken world. I've come to bring this holistic approach to understanding what that brokenness is.

Where in your life are you holding a limited view of how God wants to heal your whole story? Is he just kind of a genie? You may feel like he might solve the material issues you have, but you're not going to let him touch the inner sides of you. Or are you on the other side? You may think that he will forgive your sins, but you don't think he cares about this other issue you have, and so you don't pray about it or bring God into that space. Where has your view of healing been limited? Because the tender power of Jesus is inverting that, and he's saying, "No. This whole story is this comprehensive view in which I want to bring that healing to you." And that leads really nicely into this third thing that the tender power of Jesus inverts.

The tender power of Jesus inverts our understanding of timing.

Notice that for these two healings, for the woman with the flow of blood, it happened immediately after 12 years. But notice that for Jairus' daughter, she had to walk through death. See, I can confidently tell you that whatever you are facing right now. Whatever affliction, whatever disease, whatever it is, you will be healed from it. I just don't know if it's

before resurrection or after. But if you are a follower of Jesus, there will come a day in which everything is reconciled back to Jesus.

We will be reconciled and resurrected back to Jesus, and you will walk with a new body that is healed. It transforms our understanding of timing. When Jesus walked into that room of death and grabbed that little girl by the hand and said, "Rise." He inverted everything we understand about timing. And even more so, when he came out of the grave on that Easter morning, he flipped the whole story upside down and said, "There is hope. Death is nothing but a nap." Because Jesus walks in and he says, "Listen little girl. Your sleep, what everyone sees as death it's like a nap. Let me take you by the hand, and I will walk you through death itself."

Church, I don't know what you're going through, but I know some of you in here have received a diagnosis. Some of you in here have lost loved ones, and Jesus is looking at you and saying "*talitha koum*." Let me walk with you through death. If that's what it is, there is hope coming. It is timing that doesn't make sense, and it's hard, and it's difficult, and there's whaling and commotion because, again, that's the tension we live in. We feel it wasn't meant to be this way.

Death was never meant to have the last word, but as followers of Jesus, we recognize that it doesn't. It doesn't make it easier to walk through. It doesn't make it less challenging, but it does give us a hand to hold through it. And I can't promise that God will heal you before the resurrection, but I can promise you that one day he will heal you on the other side of death. He grabs you by the hand and says to you, "*talitha koum*." Where do you need to hear those beautiful words whispered into you? "Little girl, little son, it's time, it's time." And this is ultimately what gets us to the last thing that Jesus inverts for us.

The tender power of Jesus inverts death itself.

It's this understanding of death itself. When Jesus walked into that room, when that girl rose, when Jesus came out of the tomb, death itself was inverted. What the world thinks was the final word is actually just about a new beginning. It's the beginning of God's good creation. It's the beginning of this new world that's crashing into this moment. It's the beginning in which we feel the fullness of what God has hoped for. And one day, we will experience that joy. We long for it; we look out over the horizon, scanning saying, "When God? Holy Spirit come, will you come and make this world new?" The world is broken. It's fractured at every dimension from sin. Some of it is our own contributions. Some of it is the circumstances around us, but we long for death itself to be inverted. And what we see in the tender power of Jesus here is that it is, in fact, flipped on its head. Death itself is but a nap. Jesus is ready to usher in that new kingdom.

He's started it, and it won't make sense. "God, why not now" But for whatever reason, we wait in that tension of the Kingdom of God arriving, and it's still coming to its fullest manifestation. And we long for that. Some of us need to hear and believe that death isn't the last word. Jesus is inviting us to take him by the hand because that's a different kind of experience of his power. Where it may not be as dramatic and theatrical as the storm or the demon-possessed man, he walks into the room with death, and he stretches his hand out and says, "She's just asleep. Come with me, come with me."

What if Jesus is doing that for you today? He's extending a hand. He knows it's going to be hard. He says, "Don't be afraid. Just have faith. Just walk with me." My hope is that you may begin to experience what that woman felt. You may experience the full restoration of this woman in the crowd, nervous and in tears, and saying, "I don't know what's going to happen," but Jesus says, "Daughter, your faith has healed you."

Or may you come to feel the warmth of that hand at this moment where it feels like death and sleep, and Jesus is stretching this hand out and says, "Come, it's time to rise." May you learn to feel. Because if I boil everything down, I think it's really that the tender power of Jesus brings healing to our brokenness now and in the future. It brings healing to every dimension of our brokenness.

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

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