

Just One Touch Mark 5:21-43

Turn with me once again to the gospel of Mark. I want to look at this miraculous account of Jesus as he interacts with some very different people. In fact, I want to just read through this story with you making some comments and then I want to point out some striking differences and similarities in the story.

Turn to **Mark 5:21** and we will begin reading here. This is the story of the woman with the issue of blood as the King James Version refers to her. And of course, she and her need interrupt the story of Jairus whose daughter was sick and dying. We could say the lady cut in line and interrupted Jesus and Jairus. Look at this passage with me.

Jesus had delivered the demon possessed man and then traveled by boat to the other side of the Galilee where he was immediately surrounded by a crowd of people.

V22 - Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue - a chief official of the synagogue and consequently a prominent member of society. Notice, in spite of his prominence, his humility as he fell at the feet of Jesus, showing the utmost respect and honor. There is nothing demanding about what he says nor does he appear demanding when their urgent journey to his house is interrupted by another occasion for a miracle.

V23 - He pleads with Jesus to come and “put your hands on” my daughter because she is dying. Jairus believed that if Jesus would touch his daughter she would be healed and could live. He believed in the power of that one touch.

V25 - A woman with an “issue of blood”. The word there is literally “flux.” Apparently this woman had some kind of uterine bleeding that had been going on for 12 years. This was not simply her monthly menstrual cycle but something much more serious. The fact that she was bleeding in this manner meant that according to Jewish law she was ceremonially or ritually unclean. Anyone she touched would be considered unclean and would be required to bathe and launder their clothing. She should not have been in a crowd in this condition. This is one reason why many Jewish men tried not to touch a woman. You couldn’t tell when they might be considered ritually unclean and they could be defiled and have to bathe and cleanse themselves.

V26 - She had suffered a great deal. One commentary suggested that since the average life span was only about 40, that this might have been a young woman, perhaps in her twenties and had been suffering with this condition since puberty. It was likely then that she had never

been married. No one could marry her because of this condition, so she suffered emotionally and socially as well as physically. Notice her condition was only growing worse.

V27 - She came up behind him, hoping to go unnoticed due to her condition. Perhaps she felt too unworthy to approach him and ask for healing. To her credit, her faith was such that she believed if she could only touch his clothing she would be healed. Perhaps she thought by touching only his clothing perhaps she wouldn't cause him to be contaminated by her impurity. I wonder if some of the rest of us feel that way sometimes about coming to Jesus, afraid we might contaminate him if we touch him. Nevertheless, she was believing in the power of that one touch.

V29 - Her healing was immediate and complete. She felt it and knew it, but that wasn't the end of it. Jesus knew something had happened as well. He knew he had been touched by someone's act of faith.

V33 - The woman fell at his feet in fear and told him the whole story. Imagine as Jesus heard her share the pain, the desperation of 12 long years pouring out of her.

V34 - Such tenderness as Jesus speaks to her "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

V35 - Now the sad news comes from the house of Jairus – his daughter is dead, but look at Jesus' words to the ruler, "**Don't be afraid; just believe.**"

V37 - Leaving the crowd and the others behind, Jesus took Peter, James and John along with Jairus as they headed to Jairus' house.

V38 - Burial was typically within 24 hours and mourners gathered quickly.

V39 - Jesus response to death was always controversial. "**Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.**" Jesus is not suggesting that when we die we are in some state of soul sleep, but rather that her death in this situation was just as impermanent and temporary as falling asleep would be because Jesus was about to raise her to life.

V40 - Jesus put the crowd out, took the parents and the disciples that were with him into her room, took the little girl by the hand and spoke to her in Aramaic, likely her language, telling her, "**Little girl, I say to you, get up.**"

Immediately she stood up and walked around. Jesus told them not to tell anyone about this and to get her something to eat. Of course they didn't have to tell anyone about it, all they

had to do was let their daughter walk outside and be seen by the neighbors and the mourners that had gathered.

Two amazing stories, two wonderful miracles. But I want you to consider the differences and the similarities between Jairus and the woman with the bleeding problem. Consider first the differences between these two people. In some ways **They couldn't be more different.**

Male vs. Female, Name vs. No Name. Jairus was a man and was named in the story. That means by gender and by the fact we know his name he has influence, position, prestige. The woman with the issue of blood is anonymous. We don't know who she is and we won't know until we get to heaven. The fact that she was a woman in first century Israel gave her no influence, no position, no means of prestige. He was a ruler of the synagogue, a prominent man in the community. She was an unknown, a nobody.

Friends vs. Isolation Jairus had friends as witnessed by the commotion at his house when the word came that his little daughter had died. He was revered by others in his community. This woman had been isolated due to her illness. Socially she was not to be around other people. If anyone sat on a chair she had been sitting on, they would be ritually unclean and would be required to cleanse themselves. Even after this woman was healed, she would still be considered by the law to be unclean for another seven days. She had to be avoided by friends and family alike.

Clean vs. Unclean As an official of the synagogue I'm sure Jairus kept himself clean and pure by the standard of the law. He was no doubt often in the synagogue and even able to go to the temple in Jerusalem. The woman would not be allowed in the synagogue or in the temple because she was unclean.

Wealth vs. Poverty Jairus was wealthy. Verse 35 speaks of the men that came from his house. No doubt these were servants or employees. Again, he had wealth and influence. This woman had spent everything she had and had only grown worse. She was financially destitute. She was broke.

Family vs. Loneliness Jairus had family, a wife and a precious daughter, perhaps even other children. This woman was alone. She couldn't marry with this condition and physically would be unable to bear children.

Worthy vs. Unworthy Jairus felt worthy enough at least to approach Jesus from the

front and then fell at his feet. This woman didn't feel worthy enough to approach him in that way but instead felt she would have to sneak up behind him and even then, she didn't feel she could dare to touch him, but only his clothing.

12 years of joy vs. 12 years of suffering. Jairus' daughter was 12 years old. He had enjoyed 12 years of blessing and joy with his daughter. This woman had been sick for 12 years, suffering and growing sicker everyday.

I hope you can see the contrast. Jairus and this woman are essentially polar opposites in every way. But then again, are they really? We think of ourselves as so different from others, but when we find ourselves in need things begin to change. The truth is, while Jairus and this woman couldn't be more different, in other ways, **They couldn't be more alike.** Consider this.

Both were suffering. Jairus was suffering because his little girl was sick and about to die. This woman was suffering because she was growing worse and perhaps would die.

Both were running out of time. Jairus was running out of time when he came to Jesus. Verse 23 says he told Jesus, "My little daughter is dying." The woman too was running out of time as the doctors could not help her and the gospel says, "Instead of getting better she grew worse."

Both were desperate when they came to Jesus. Jairus was desperate enough to come and laying aside his pride he fell at Jesus feet and pleaded with him to come and touch his daughter and heal her. This woman was desperate enough to risk being spotted in that crowd as a person who was considered unclean. The penalty from the leaders of the synagogue could be severe. She would be accused of deliberately contaminating others but she was desperate enough to do whatever was necessary to get to Jesus. For both of them, Jesus was their last and only hope.

Both were frightened. Jairus was frightened when the word came that his daughter was dead but Jesus calmed his fears with his word. "Don't be afraid; just believe." The woman was frightened when Jesus called her out in front of the crowd in verse 33, but to a woman "trembling in fear," Jesus said, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

Both found themselves at the feet of Jesus. Jairus in verse 22 and this woman in verse 33 both found themselves at the feet of Jesus. They both discovered that being at his feet, in

surrender and in humility and in adoration is a good place to be when everything seems hopeless.

Both believed that one touch from Jesus would make the difference. Jairus believed that one touch from Jesus would make all the difference for his little girl. “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” This woman believed that one touch from Jesus would make all the difference for her. “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.”

Both had a resolute faith. Jairus had a resolute faith that he held to in spite of the word from home that his daughter had died, in spite of the crowd of mourners that gathered. The woman had a resolute faith, in spite of 12 years of suffering, in spite of the verdict from the doctors and the obstacle of the crowd. It was their faith that kept them both focusing upon Jesus and looking to him and his touch.

Both received more of a miracle than expected. Jairus received his daughter back and it was not just a healing but a resurrection. Alive and well after the news of her death. And what of the woman? Jesus gave this Daughter of Israel more than just a physical healing, he gave her life back as he healed her and set her free.

We’ve seen the differences between these two and the similarities, now let me mention some lessons we learn about Jesus from these two people and their miracles.

Jesus receives us just as we are. Being a prominent man of means with power, influence, family, position, doesn’t commend you to Jesus. It doesn’t impress him, it doesn’t give you a better place in line. Jesus was never too impressed with outward appearance nor influenced by the world’s standards of success.

Being a poor, outcast, isolated, unnamed, dying woman doesn’t prevent you from coming to Jesus. Our poverty, our sinfulness, our weakness, our fears and doubts – none of that can keep us from coming to Jesus just as we are. He receives us all, just as we are. Jairus with his wealth and position, the woman with her lack, both found that one touch they needed at the feet of Jesus.

Friends, we too can find a place at his feet. We come to him just as we are. Can you imagine, in this world where it’s always about connections, about position and networking, about knowing the right people in the right places, but with Jesus, whether you feel like Jairus or like the woman, there is a place for you. He has time for you. He cares about you. You are equally important to him. Pastor Brian says it at the close of every service, “Remember, there is nothing

you can do to make Jesus love you more and there is nothing you can do to make him love you any less. He loves you and that's all there is to it."

Jesus loves us personally. Notice the personal attention. To this woman, he called her forward, in front of the crowd, but instead of embarrassing her as she no doubt was afraid he would do, he elevated her place in that community. She is no longer some anonymous face in the crowd, she is a daughter of Israel who needed and received the master's touch. He chose to heal this woman and to take the necessary time to affirm her and to comfort her. She had spent 12 years suffering, hiding, and now she is brought into the light of his presence. He announced to everyone clearly that she had been healed. When he said "go in peace," He was saying "go in wholeness. Go because you have been made whole!"

Jesus gave her life back to her. He called her daughter. What a tender and affectionate word. Understand it was more than her physical healing she received that day. He told her to "go in peace and be freed from your suffering." She had been in an emotional, spiritual, and physical prison because of this terrible affliction and now she was free. She had suffered a great deal the bible says, but now she is free to begin to experience life again. She was leaving all those years of suffering behind as she moved into this new freedom Jesus granted her.

I'm impressed that Jairus says nothing to Jesus about hurrying along as he stands there waiting while Jesus has this conversation with this unknown woman. If it had been me, I would have been saying, "How long is this going to take? Don't you realize every minute counts? I told you my daughter is dying, right now. We have to go. Can't you come back and talk to this woman later?" Notice what the bible says in verse 35. "While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus" and told him his daughter was dead. It's hard to rejoice with others when it seems your miracle has been denied. "If we hadn't been delayed...if you hadn't stopped here to talk to this woman..." But you see....two things we learn here about Jesus.

Jesus doesn't wear a watch. He doesn't make his decisions based upon our watch or our calendar or our timing or our panicked pleading. He makes his decision based upon the timing of heaven, upon the word and the will of his Father. Jesus said he did what he saw the father doing and at that moment he saw the father healing that woman and restoring her to a place of health and wholeness. Don't panic if things aren't happening as you think they should because heaven's timing is different from ours. As Jesus said to Jairus, when the timing seemed all

wrong, “Don’t be afraid, just believe.” The second thing we learn is that

We don’t have to compete for Jesus’ healing touch. We aren’t trying to crowd someone out of the healing line as if Jesus will only touch so many today. Jesus doesn’t have to choose one or the other. He didn’t have to decide whether to heal the woman or heal the little girl. He chose both. But think about it for a moment. Jesus risks offending this ruler of the synagogue (and he already has enough problems with the pharisees and religious leaders. He could use a few people of influence on his side). He risks this as he spends all this time talking with this woman, but thankfully, Jairus was a true leader. He appears to remain respectful and hopeful in spite of the time Jesus takes and in spite of the news Jairus receives about his daughter’s death. And Jesus shows him there is no cause for fear regardless of how hopeless the circumstances may seem. Jairus was truly a man of faith. I believe he knew he could trust Jesus and his timing. He still believed one touch could make the difference, even now.

Notice Jesus ignored what the men said (“Your daughter is dead.”) Why? Because as I’ve often said, **Jesus knows something about life, death and victory that we don’t know.** He has come to do more than just postpone death, like he would do for this little girl who would eventually die again some day. Jesus knew that he had come to overcome death, to conquer it and defeat it, to render it powerless and to grant to that little girl and to all of us the hope and promise of the resurrection and eternal life. That’s why he could tell Jairus, “Don’t be afraid, just believe,” in spite of the evidence. That’s why he could ask what all the commotion and fuss was about as the crowd mourned. Jesus knows something we don’t know. It was true for Jairus and it’s true for you.

Jesus still responds to our faith. Faith is still the avenue for approaching God. “If I can touch the hem of his garment. If he can put his hands on our daughter, on us, we can be healed.” In the midst of our fears and worries and struggles, in the midst of bad news and hopeless situations, Jesus comes speaking to us – **“Don’t be afraid. Just believe.” Believe what? Believe that one touch from Jesus can make all the difference.** Believe that Jesus still has power to heal and deliver, that Jesus has good things in store for us. Believe that Jesus won’t fail us or let us down. Believe that he cares as much for us as he does for the Jairuses of this world. Believe that he still stops for unknown, unnamed people like this woman in Mark 5 – folks like us. He still takes time for us because he loves us. No one else may know us by name, but God

does. He calls us son and daughter. He comes to call us to new life. He comes to touch us so we can be freed from our suffering. He comes to touch us, to take us by the hand in order to awaken us from our death-like slumber in sin or in sickness in addiction or depression, in hopelessness or despair. He comes to say to us “Don’t be afraid, only believe. Now get up, go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

Notice, He isn’t afraid of touching us because we are so unclean or so impure. **When he touches us, we don’t contaminate him, he transforms us.** He sanctifies everything and everyone he touches. Let him touch you. Let him call you to himself. Just one touch can make the difference.

A destitute woman, a desperate father, a demon possessed man, a frightened crew on a ship in a storm. Whatever the situation, one touch from Jesus can make all the difference.