

“JUST BELIEVE”

Mark 5:21-43

Key Verse: 5:36

Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

In today’s passage, Jesus takes care of two women. He heals a woman with a bleeding problem and he helps a community leader by raising his dead daughter to life. Through these events, Jesus teaches us to have faith in God. What does it mean to have faith in God? What kind of faith does he want us to have? Let us think about these questions this morning and examine our faith.

I. JAIRUS COMES TO JESUS BY FAITH (21-24a)

Look at verse 21. *“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.”* Jesus had wanted to have a quiet retreat with his disciples. But two things happened to spoil their plan. First, a fierce storm met them on their way and the disciples had to receive a storm training. When they arrived their vacation destination, a crazy man met them screaming at the top of his voice. Jesus healed the man by sacrificing 2,000 pigs which made the townspeople angry for the loss of their assets. They demanded Jesus to leave the region.

When Jesus and his disciples arrived at the shore where they originally began their retreat, a crowd of people was waiting for Jesus from early morning. When Jesus saw them, he was willing to serve them, even though he was very tired. He had no time to rest, except for a catnap. He rested on the stern of the boat even as the storm raged. The crowd followed Jesus as sheep follow their shepherd. John 10:14 says, “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me...” Jesus was ready to help the crowds of people. There was one person in particular that drew his attention. Look at verse 22. *“Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet...”* He was a man named Jairus. He came to Jesus and fell at his feet. Who was Jairus and why did he draw Jesus’ attention?

First, coming to Jesus by faith. Jairus was one of the synagogue rulers. He was a man of standing in his community. He had worked hard to achieve his position. Now he enjoyed the reputation and respect from his people. But the source of his real joy was his twelve-year-old daughter whom he loved very much (42). Whenever she called him, “Daddy!” he would answer, “Yes, my pumpkin!” He felt that life was worth living because of his precious daughter. He worked hard all day and came home tired. But when he saw the smiles on her face, his weariness melted away. He was very frugal with money, but when his daughter asked him for a new dress or a doll, he just couldn’t say no. One day, however, a tragedy knocked at his door. His daughter fell ill and did not get out of her bed. Color was gone from the face of the lively girl. And her sickness was getting worse by the minute. A shadow of death was on her eyes. Jairus felt helpless before this terrible tragedy. What could he do? Then he remembered Jesus. He had heard about Jesus’ healing ministry. He heard that Jesus healed a leper, a paralytic, and a man with a shriveled hand. His colleagues in the religious circle did not give the credit to this country preacher, but Jairus could not deny the facts. He believed that Jesus could certainly heal his

daughter. All he had to do was go to Jesus and ask for his help. He had to make a choice. He could take his daughter to a village medicine man. Or he could come to Jesus for help. By faith, Jairus made a decision to come to Jesus. It was a decision of faith. A decision to come to Jesus can change a person's life.

Second, a man of humble faith. Look at verses 22-23. *Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet and 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."* Historically, the Jews were a proud people. This was true particularly for their leaders. Jairus was a synagogue ruler. So it was not easy for him to bend his pride and ask a favor from others, especially from a country preacher known as the son of a carpenter. Jairus was an established leader of the community, while Jesus was the leader of a fledgling movement. Furthermore, Jairus was aware that there was a growing sentiment against Jesus among the Pharisees. It was politically incorrect for him to associate with Jesus. Jairus had to risk an excommunication, which was social suicide for a Jew. But all these things did not matter to him. He was willing to do anything, if only his daughter could be saved. He loved his daughter more than his reputation. He came to Jesus and fell at his feet in front of the large crowd. Then he pleaded earnestly with Jesus to come and put his hands of mercy on his dying daughter. Jairus had humble faith in Jesus. Jesus was no doubt pleased with his humility. James 4:6 says that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. May God help us to have humble faith!

Third, a good father (22-24a). Jairus was a good father. What does it mean to be a good father or good mother? One of the noblest things that parents can do for their children is to sacrifice themselves for their children's sake. We human beings are noble because we are different from, for example, a father pig, who pushes away his piglets in order to feed himself a little more. Jairus was a good father. He had to think of his social standing. After all, he had to work so hard to reach the status. But he did not mind risking it all. He thought only of his little daughter. He had a shepherd's heart for his daughter.

In our society, there are many teenage girls who yearn for this kind of love from their fathers. Many fathers do hurtful things to their daughters as they follow their sinful desires. I wonder how many teenage girls cry silently in their rooms as their fathers and mothers shout at each other saying mean things. Let us pray that men of our society may come to Jesus and learn to be loving fathers like Jairus.

How did Jesus respond to Jairus' plea? Look at verse 24a. *"So Jesus went with him."* Jesus had many people who needed his care. But Jesus heard Jairus' humble cry. He was moved by his humble faith and his love and shepherd's heart toward his daughter. So Jesus went with him.

II. A WOMAN COMES TO JESUS BY FAITH (24b-34)

Look at verses 24b-25. *"A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years."* Someone interrupted Jesus' trip to Jairus' house. It was a woman who had a chronic hemorrhage problem. She also came to Jesus by faith.

First, “If I just touch his clothes.” This woman had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. Twelve years is a long time. In ten years, the world changes. Ten years ago, the song by 'NSYNC called “It's Gonna Be Me” was popular among young people. Ten years ago, South Korean President Kim Dae Jung won a Nobel peace prize. Ten years ago, the summer Olympic games were held in Sydney. These things already seem a distant memory to us. But this woman had been sick for ten long years and plus two more. To a woman, a sense of beauty is very important. But because of her constant bleeding, this woman lost her beauty. She used to have the finest skin complexion, but not any more. Her skin was dehydrated and wrinkled. She lost her hope of marriage. She lived in shame. She felt that her body was filthy and smelly. Verse 16 says that she had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and that all her money was gone. She went to many different doctors for help her. They would suggest all kinds of testing, including many blood tests and even MRI. They also prescribed various drugs. Yet, instead of getting better, she grew worse. Finally, the doctors would say, “I am sorry to say this, but the prognosis is not good.” Her medical bills were mounting and her HMO would refuse to pay the bills. Now she had no money left. She was completely helpless.

At the time of helplessness, she heard about Jesus. Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom of God. Furthermore, he healed the sick and drove out the demons. It was the time for her to decide whether to resign herself to her fate, or make a leap of faith to come to Jesus. What did she do? By faith she overcame her feeling of self-pity and despair. She decided to come to Jesus. But this wasn't easy. The Jewish law did not allow her to appear in public because, with her bleeding problem, she was considered ceremonially “unclean.” But the law or not, she had to come to Jesus. She believed in the healing power of the Lord. All she had to do was to come to him to receive his healing touch. Indeed, her coming to Jesus was a beautiful act of faith. Her faith in Jesus was so strong that she thought to herself, “*If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed*” (28). She didn't even have to bother him. So she quietly came up to Jesus in the crowd and touched his cloak (27). She had amazing faith in Jesus. And more importantly, she acted on her faith. Her faith was more than an idea in her head. She came to Jesus by faith. May God help many young women (and men) to come to Jesus by faith!

Second, a confession of faith. (29-33) What was the result? Look at verse 29. “*Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.*” As soon as she touched the fringe of his clothes from behind, the power of Jesus came upon her and she was healed instantly. Her long suffering was over just like that. She was freed from her suffering. She felt in her body that she was totally cleansed. She felt like a butterfly and wanted to dance for joy.

Look at verse 30a. “*At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him.*” Many people were bumping into Jesus. But their incidental touching was very different from the woman's touch of faith. They could not experience what the woman experienced. Only this woman felt the healing power of Jesus in her body. But she was so shy that she could not come forward publicly to tell her story. She wanted to slip away quietly after the “hit-and-run” encounter with Jesus. But Jesus would not let her.

Jesus turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” The disciples replied, “You see the people crowding against you, and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’” (30-31) Look at verse 32. “*But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it.*” The woman had planned to come up behind him just to touch his clothes for healing and disappear quietly.

She did not want to bother Jesus. But when she saw that Jesus kept looking for her, she couldn't hide herself any longer. "She came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth" (33).

Why was Jesus so insisting that she come out? He wanted to heal not only her body, but also her soul. She was healed physically, but she needed a spiritual healing. What if she had gone away without a confession of faith, without a personal conversation with Jesus? Without a personal relationship with Jesus, she could have remained a spiritually sick woman because of her sins. Physical healing does not necessarily result in spiritual healing. So Jesus helped her confess her faith so that she could be healed spiritually. It is important for us to have a clear confession of faith or a clear testimony about God's grace upon our lives. A public confession of faith is part of one's spiritual healing process. Romans 10:9-10 says, "*That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*"

Third, "Daughter, your faith has healed you." Look at verse 34. Jesus said to the woman, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." Jesus blessed her faith. She had said to herself, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." She had amazing faith. Jesus rarely admired anyone, but he admired this woman for her faith. There are many people who are helpless like this woman. But they often refuse to come to Jesus by faith. So they remain helpless. Let's pray that we may have faith in Jesus like this woman. Let's pray that God may restore this country to be a nation of faithful people.

III. "JUST BELIEVE" (35-43)

Meanwhile, there was a man in the crowd who was holding his breath while Jesus helped the woman. It was Jairus. As Jesus helped the lady, precious time was ticking away--time that Jairus could not afford to waste. Indeed, the worst thing that he could imagine happened during the delay. While Jesus was talking to the woman, his little girl breathed her last and died. Some men came from the house of Jairus and said, "Your daughter is dead. Why bother the teacher any more?" (35) Humanly speaking, the messengers' advice seemed to be reasonable. The fact was that the girl was already dead. "What good is it to have a doctor over if your daughter is already dead?" However, spiritually speaking, their words poisoned Jairus' mind and planted doubt in his heart. Jairus had simple faith in Jesus. He had said, "If only Jesus came and laid his hands on her, she would be healed." Now his faith began to wobble. Their advice almost made Jairus give up his hope. The devil seized the moment and whispered to him, "See, Jesus doesn't care about you. The woman was a chronic patient and your daughter was an emergency case. Why did he have to waste all this time until it's too late for your little princess?" The devil hit Jairus hard.

Amazingly, Jairus did not give up. It seems as though he had understood Jesus' delay as a test of his faith. He had waited patiently for Jesus to finish his conversation with the lady. Now he trembled at the news of his daughter's death. But he still waited on Jesus patiently. He had the patience to wait on Jesus' mercy. His patience came from his faith in the Lord. It is important for us to learn this faith to wait on God. King David's secret of success was that he did not do anything by his own ability. David waited on God until he was instructed by God what to do. For example, 2 Samuel 5:19 says, "... so David inquired of the Lord, 'Shall I go and attack the

Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?’ The Lord answered him, ‘Go, for I will surely hand the Philistines over to you.’”

Jesus knew that the devil was attacking Jairus to make him give up his faith. How did Jesus help him? Look at verse 36. *Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”* Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.” Jesus did not say, “Don’t be afraid; I am going to raise your daughter from death.” Jesus knew that Jairus was afraid. Who wouldn’t be afraid in this situation? His precious pumpkin was dead. And the messengers told him to give up. They wanted him to be realistic and began to worry about funeral arrangements. But Jesus told him to “just” believe. What does it mean to just believe? It means to believe in Jesus in spite of the impossible situation. It means to basically trust in Jesus for his love and mercy. Jesus challenged him to trust in the Lord. He challenged Jairus to make a decision of faith to believe in God in the defining moment in his life. Jesus did not promise what Jairus wanted. His faith was even more important than his family. It concerned eternity. How did Jairus respond? Once again, Jairus showed that he was a man of faith. Without uttering a word, he led Jesus to his house. He decided to believe in Jesus.

When Jairus reached home, he found a funeral atmosphere. Everyone was crying and wailing. The fear of death was on their eyes. But Jairus remembered the words of Jesus, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.” He probably repeated the words to himself. Jairus listened to Jesus’ words instead of the advice of the messengers. “Just believe”--this sounds easy. But it is not easy for us to just believe in God when things happen all around us. Jairus had to ignore the messengers’ reasonable advice. He had to listen to Jesus’ words in the midst of crying and wailing. When Jesus saw his “just believing” faith, he was very pleased.

How did Jesus do? First he said to the people who were in the funeral mood, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” (39) Jesus said this because in him there is no death. But they laughed at him. They were cynical toward Jesus. They ridiculed him in their hearts. Jesus put them all out because they made an atmosphere of unbelief (40b). He took the child’s mother and father and the three 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!”) (41). Immediately the girl stood up and walked around. Mark, the author, says that she was just 12 years old. She could have died at the age of 12, before her life had fully blossomed. Jesus gave this young lady a new life because of her father Jairus’ “just believing” faith. Jesus gave her a new life so that she could grow up to be a beautiful woman.

From this passage, we learn that Jesus wants us to be men and women of faith. He challenges us to believe in him even when scary things happen in our life. When we go through problems in life, all we want from the Lord is to take away our pains. But Jesus wants to give us something more precious, something more permanent. He wants us to have faith. He didn’t want the woman to slip away quietly without establishing a personal relationship with him. He asked her to give a public confession of faith. He challenged Jairus to overcome his fear by trusting in him.

May God help us to be men and women of faith! May God heal many teenagers and college students from their sufferings of sin and death as we serve them with the word of God! May God help us to have “just believing” faith! Let us read the key verse (36): *Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”*