



Mark 5:22-43

Family Foundations: Faith in Crisis

Tragedy brings a great dose of reality into our lives. No family is immune to emergencies.

I know what it is to hear the medical doctor on the phone saying, "Wil, you need to come to the hospital. Your son will not live much longer." Ann and I know what it is like to have a beautiful daughter with cerebral palsy and hear her ask, "Dad, why can't Jesus fix my hand?" We have been there when the phone call comes saying your loved one has just died. We have sat by our loved ones in the nursing home and have heard them cry out for the Lord to come and take them home to be with Him. We have sat in silence and waited for the last breath.

Where is God when the family hurts? We prefer that there be no surprises in life. We love it when the day is bright, beautiful and sunny. But please, no hurricanes. We can thank the Lord that life comes one day at a time. Adversity does not skip your house or mine. It comes, and sometimes it comes in truckloads.

George Washington Carver once said, "How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these."

In the gospel of Mark, chapter five, we encounter a father with a daughter near death. There is an emergency in the home of Jairus.

THE PEOPLE IN OUR STORY (5:22-27)

There are four people we want to watch carefully in this historical event in the life of Jesus. There is a synagogue official named Jairus who has a twelve-year-old daughter near death, and an unnamed Jewish woman with an incurable disease. We will watch Jesus as He ministers to each of these individuals.

Jairus the synagogue official

The synagogue official held a position of honor, responsibility and power in Israel during the time of Jesus. The ruler of the synagogue was a respected Jewish layman with responsibility for the physical upkeep of the synagogue and the worship services. He was chosen from among the elders and would decide who would be called upon to read the Scriptures, preach and keep

decide who would be called upon to read the Scriptures, preach and keep order during the services. He was not doubt wealthy and a man of influence in the community.

This Jewish man came to Jesus out of desperation for his twelve-year-old daughter who was at the point of death. We see the various stages of her illness. Evidently she was so ill when he left home that he did not think she would be alive when he returned home. Mark says, she was "at the point of death," and Luke the physician said, "she was dying." The man was faced with a crisis in his home. Matthew sees the ultimate issue; "My daughter has just died."

At various times in my ministry I have had medical doctors say to me, "Wil, it is out of our hands. We have done everything medically possible. You call your missionary friends together and pray." This was the situation in the home of Jairus. It was out of his hands. Not all of his earthly possessions could change his daughter's health. She lay dying when he left the house to look for his only hope for her.

Almost as soon as we meet Jairus in the crowd following Jesus we are introduced to a nameless woman.

An anonymous outcast woman

The woman is already bankrupt because she has spent all of her money on doctors and medication to no avail. She "had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse" (v. 26). Her illness has lasted the lifetime of Jairus' daughter. The woman had an incurable hemorrhage that has wasted away her body over the years. Her condition had steadily grown worse. Moreover, according to the Jewish law she was ceremonially unclean (Leviticus 15:25 – 27). She was an outcast. Anyone who came in contact with here was considered "unclean." We see her slipping silently through the crowds trying to get to Jesus.

Both of these individuals need the urgent attention of Jesus.

THE PLEA OF FAITH (5:22-24, 27-29)

Jairus makes his verbal plea.

Jairus came up to Jesus and "fell at His feet, and entreated Him earnestly, saying 'My little daughter is at the point of death; please come and lay Your hands on her, that she may get well and live'" (vv. 22-23).

Observe the confidence of Jairus. It is the language of assurance. We don't know when he first encountered Jesus. Perhaps it was in his synagogue. Not all of the religious leaders were hostile toward Jesus. Here is a man of faith coming to Jesus and humbling himself before Him and making his plea for help.

The woman's plea is silent.

This unknown woman interrupted Jesus. Not intentionally, however. She tried her best to keep anonymous. The last thing she wanted to do was attract attention to herself. She had heard about Jesus so she "came up in the crowd behind Him, and touched His cloak" (v. 27).

The Gospel writer lets us listen in on her faith. She is talking to herself. Literally, "she was saying." There is a conversation going on in her mind and heart. Faith is always talking. She was saying to herself, "If I just touch His garments, I shall get well" (v. 28). She kept telling herself that if she could "just touch His garments," she would be healed and then she could slip away unobserved. No one would ever know!

So she crept up in the crowd and touched the hem or border of his garment (Matthew 9:20; Luke 8:44).

THE POWER OF FAITH (5:29-42)

The interruption by the woman

Life is full of interruptions. There are always people with needs who reach out and touch someone like the Master. This woman slipped up behind Him because He was her last hope, "and touched the fringe of His outer garment; and immediately her hemorrhage stopped" (Luke 8:44). Mark writes, "Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. Immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that the power *proceeding* from Him had gone forth, turned around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched My garments?' And His disciples said to Him, 'You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, Who touched Me?' " (vv. 29-31). It is almost comical. The question was absurd to the disciples of Jesus. Many people were crushing in on Him and touching Him. "A great multitude was following Him and pressing in on Him" (v. 24). A huge number of people gathered about Him and pressed the flesh. She had tried her best to keep her secret. But she is the only woman in the crowd that was healed. Jesus distinguished the touch of faith from the touch of the crowd. Jesus "looked around to see the woman who had done this. But the woman fearing and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth" (vv. 32-33). Jesus kept looking with a penetrating look into the crowd. She knew from experience what had happened to her body. It was not the touch of His clothing but her faith in Him that healed her. Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction" (v. 34). Jesus rewarded her faith.

The interruption of Jairus

With Jairus it was a different story. He had made his urgent plea to Jesus to come at once, and Jesus "went off with Him" (v. 24). However, during the interruption of the woman even worse news arrived by messengers from his home. While Jesus "was still speaking, they came from the *house of* the synagogue official, saying, 'Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?'" (v. 35).

They reasoned it was all over; she was dead. Don't worry Him any longer. They concluded that her death ended all hope. People did not expect Jesus to raise the dead. Don't aggravate or annoy the Teacher any longer. Why trouble Him with your tragedy?

Such a message jars us to our foundations. How would you have responded? I can hear the babble in our day saying, "I was here first! Why didn't He come on? Now it is too late. This outsider has stepped in and now my daughter is dead. I was at the head of the line. She pushed her way in and now she has stolen my opportunity."

opportunity."

Thank goodness, Jesus overheard the emotional conversation and said literally, "be not afraid; go on believing." "Keep on believing." "Stop fearing, only be believing." Don't quit! Keep on believing! Again, we hear faith talking. Jesus encourages the man's faith. It is easy to trust when things are going great. When we sense Jesus is walking with us we have no trouble putting our faith in Him. But suddenly the bright sunny morning changed into a tornado of grief. You have been there when the circumstances and feelings of crisis have overwhelmed you. What do you do when God seems to delay His coming? That is when the intimate love relationship with God is needed. When the hurricanes of life blow hard upon our faith, if we are walking with Him we lean upon His breast and draw our strength from Him knowing that He is the sovereign Master of the circumstance.

The circumstances were against hope and against faith. Jesus is always coming when we are hoping against hope. Jairus walked by the side of Jesus in a faith that may have been trembling, imperfect and full of questions. Do you wonder what was going on in the mind of Jairus? I think Jesus stimulated his faith. "Don't be afraid, only believe." If we could have put a tape recorder up to his head and recorded everything he was saying to himself and played it back for the whole world to hear we would have listened to faith talking. "Keep on believing . . . be not afraid . . . you saw what Jesus did to the woman who believed a few minutes ago. If He can do that for her He can do the same thing for my little daughter. 'Don't be afraid any longer, only keep on believing,' Jesus said. I saw God do it a while ago, and I shall see Him do it again! . . . Don't be afraid; only believe. Trust Jesus. Believe on Him."

What kind of stuff do you listen to when you are facing the sudden onslaught of a crisis? Do you listen to the rabble in your unbelieving mind or the stimulating voice of an intimate love relationship with Jesus Christ?

With sanctified imagination see Jesus and Jairus with Peter, James and John arriving at the home. As they arrived they could see the "commotion, and people loudly weeping and wailing" (v. 38). The hired professional mourners had already arrived at the home of Jairus and they could hear the monotonous wail at a high level of hysteria a block away. They had already gathered and were wailing loudly, weeping, and leading the family and friends in expression of grief. Matthew tells us the flute-players had already arrived. Jesus entered in the home and said to the assembled group, "Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep" (v. 39). The crowd laughed Him to scorn. "They jeered at Him," translates Weymouth. Note imperfect tense. They kept it up. They kept on jeering Him.

Jesus "put them all out" of the house, and took the child's father and mother and His disciples and entered the room where the child lay. Jesus took the child by the hand and said to her, "Talitha kum!" "Little girl, I say to you, arise!" (vv. 40-41).

Christ transforms the popular thinking about death. To the believer, death is only sleep. Our body will rest until the moment of resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). It is the body that sleeps, not the spirit, awaiting the return of the Lord and the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:51-58). In the moment of death, the spirit of the believer leaves the body and goes to be with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:20-23).

There is no one else to turn to when the joys of life are suddenly taken away. Does your family have this living faith in Christ?

THE PLAN OF GOD FOR THE FAITHFUL

Life is full of daily interruptions.

How do you handle the interruptions of life? What is your response to the press of the flesh as it makes its pressure for your time and attention? We meet people every day whose lives are full of needs. Some of the greatest blessings in the Christian life come from interruptions. There is the touch of a child needing a diaper change, the touch of the hand of an elderly parent needing special care, the phone call of a family member at the hospital with a friend, the cry of a teen who needs a kind ear. The interruptions go on day in and day out. Will you make a commitment to respond with the touch of the Master? For many of these individuals you will be the only response Jesus can give them as He touches their lives through you. Let Him see through your eyes, feel through your heart, think through your mind, walk with your feet and touch with your hands.

Jesus gave Himself to a soul in need.

Jesus gave Himself to that one unimportant woman in the crowd. We are quick to attach labels onto people according to their relative importance to us. However, to Jesus she had no man made labels. She was simply a human soul in need. He loves each one of us as if there was only one of us to love. Every time Jesus healed someone it cost Him something. It always cost to become involved in the lives of people in crisis. Jesus gave Himself to this woman in need, and if we choose to be become involved it will cost us something.

Don't argue with the unbeliever.

When you share your faith with a member of your family or colleague don't argue with them. Focus on the person and the saving work of Jesus Christ who died and rose again. State your convictions and let the Holy Spirit take it from there. Jesus knew perfectly well that no amount of human argument could demonstrate to them the accuracy of His spiritual vision. The Master simply rose in the quiet majesty of His presence and put the whole company of professional mourners outside. He did not argue with them. I refuse to waste my time with those who scorn, ridicule and express sarcastic attitudes toward Christ. Jesus put them all out of the house. That is what unbelief does. Jesus comes our way and invites us to join Him in His activity. If we focus our faith in Him we are invited to join Him and we see Him in action. If we turn away in unbelief we will never see what He will do in our lives. How many times do we miss the opportunity to join Him in what He is doing all about us in the interruptions in life?

Jesus is always coming our way and saying, "Fear not, only believe."

I decided a long time ago we have a choice. We can listen to the unbeliever in us as it is influenced by other unbelievers, or we can let faith do the talking. It is a choice we make daily. Do I choose to focus my faith in Jesus Christ or listen to the negative, defeating unbelieving noise of a faithless wailing crowd? Focus your faith on Christ. Don't get distracted by the religious fads. Keep your attention on Jesus Christ.

Only the living Christ utterly transforms our understanding of death.

When it comes time to pull the sheet over our heads, or we stand at the open grave of a loved one we have a message of hope in the living Christ. Jesus is alive! Because He is alive we too shall live. The Bible does not teach soul sleep. It teaches the resurrection of these bodies on some glad morning when Christ returns.

Please don't wait until a time of crisis to turn to God.

Decide today to establish a mature intimate love relationship with Jesus Christ. It is on a day like today that we decide to follow Jesus into a more intimate fellowship with Him. It may be that you need to believe on Jesus as your personal Savior. Confess to Him your need of His saving grace and believe on Him as the one

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Jesus as your personal Savior. Confess to Him your need of His saving grace and believe on Him as the one who died for your sin and rose from the dead. Here is [A Free Gift for You](#). that will share with you how to be saved right now.

It may be that you already know Christ as your personal Savior and you need to grow in your relationship with Him. Set aside some time each day to read His Word. Begin your day with a simple commitment. "Lord Jesus, this day is yours to live it through me to your honor and glory. Reveal yourself in me throughout this day and touch people's lives. Help me to grow in your love and faith in you."

Title: Mark 5:22-43 Family Foundations: Faith in Crisis
Series: The Christian Family

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