

## Faith in the midst of Despair

Mark 5: 21-24; 35-43

Following the great miracle in Gadara where the demonic was healed, Jesus made His way back across the Sea of Galilee. Most agree He returned to the region around Capernaum, the home-base for His ministry. As soon as Jesus steps out of the boat, He is immediately met by a large gathering of people. Among those gathered that day was a man by the name of Jairus. He had a pressing need, and was determined to get to Jesus.

Our text today is likely very familiar to most of us and yet we never tire of reading this encouraging account. It is a dynamic story, filled with anticipation, despair, and eventual triumph. We may not be faced with a situation as severe as the one Jairus faced, but we often face situations that require the Lord's help. As we consider the [details](#) of this encounter, I hope you will find the encouragement you need and the help you desire for your current situation. I want to discuss: [Faith in the midst of Despair](#).

**I. An Urgent Request** (22-23) – As Jesus made His way to shore that day, He was met with a desperate situation that required immediate attention. Jairus brought his request to Jesus. Notice:

**A. The Presumption** (22a) – [And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name](#). We find that Jairus was a ruler in the synagogue. He was a man of position, prestige, and power. He had worked hard and achieved a prominent place in society. He was regarded as a man of influence, in charge of the local assembly at the synagogue. At first glance, all seems well. However, he is now in a difficult situation. His only daughter, according to Mark, was dying. All the prestige and power he had couldn't help her.

- He had heard about a Man named Jesus who he believed could heal her. But, Jesus was no longer accepted by the religious rulers. The Pharisees desired to get rid of Jesus. If Jairus went to Jesus, how would those with whom he worshipped respond? He could possibly lose all that he had worked so hard to achieve.
- Jairus makes a profound decision; he decides to put his family ahead of his own personal achievements. Jairus made his daughter the priority of his life. He was willing to risk it all to get her to Jesus.

**B. The Petition** (22b-23) – Here we read of the impassioned petition Jairus brought to Jesus. Notice:

**1. His Humility (22b)** – *and when he saw him, he fell at his feet.* The word fell means “*to descend from a higher place to a lower one.*” Here is Jairus, ruler of the synagogue, a man who has others in submission to him, bowing at the feet of Jesus. He has laid aside his pride and dignity. He wasn’t concerned with the opposition or prejudice of others. He has put his position, with all its security, fame, and authority on the line. He has humbled himself before the Lord. (As we come before the Lord, bringing our petitions, we too must come humbly before Him.)

**2. His Faith (23)** – *And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.* He makes no mention of his position or status. He immediately mentioned the dire need he faced. Jairus was confident that Jesus could bring healing to his daughter. She was at the point of death, and he knew that Jesus had the power to heal her if He desired.

- Notice the extent of his faith: *she shall live.* Jairus was aware that the situation was beyond his control. There was nothing he could do no matter how desperately he tried. He had learned to trust the Lord for things he couldn’t provide.
- I’m glad God is able when others are not. When you face situations that are beyond your control, and they are many, trust in Jesus – He will never fail! I’m glad there is hope for those who believe in faith. Honor Jesus with your faith; expect Him to do the unexpected!

**II. An Uncertain Journey (24, 35-40)** – As Jairus left with Jesus, heading toward home, he faced an uncertain journey. Consider:

**A. The Delay (24)** – *And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.* As they journeyed many followed them. Among the crowd were those who had desperate needs. In the verses we passed over, Mark records the account of the woman with the issue of blood. She had come with a great need, and as Jesus was ministering to her there was a delay in getting to Jairus’s daughter. He had placed his need in the hands of Jesus and fully trusted Him to provide for his daughter, even when delayed.

- God doesn’t always work when we think He should. There are times when we feel He has denied or forgotten our request. Always remember that a delay doesn’t necessarily mean a denial. God works in His time and He is never late. We may not always understand what God is doing in our lives, but we must trust Him in those times when it seems nothing is happening for our benefit.

**B. The Despair (35-36)** – While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? <sup>[36]</sup> As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, **Be not afraid, only believe**. As Jairus patiently waited on Jesus he heard some dreadful news – his daughter had died. He had done all he could and she was gone. Those who brought the news were saying – she is dead; there's no need to bother with Jesus any longer!

- Knowing the grief Jairus must have felt, Jesus said – **Be not afraid, only believe**. This means “*keep on believing, there's no limit to what faith in the power of God can do.*” We will all face those difficult times of despair, when it seems hope is lost. These are not the time to abandon our faith in Jesus. **Mark 9:23 – Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.** We must keep the faith even in our moments of desperation.

**C. The Doubt (38-40)** – And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. <sup>[39]</sup> And when he was come in, he saith unto them, **Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.** <sup>[40]</sup> And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. When they arrive home a group of mourners are already gathered. Jesus proclaims that she isn't dead, only asleep. With that the people begin to laugh and mock Jesus. Clearly they don't have the faith of Jairus. They haven't spent any time at His feet; they haven't heard His voice of comfort; they hadn't seen the miracle Jesus just performed. Jairus is still persistent in his faith. He has determined to trust Jesus no matter who else does.

- I'm glad our faith isn't dependent upon the attitude or opinions of others. The world may look at your situation and declare that is hopeless, but continue trusting Jesus. They don't know what you know. They haven't labored in prayer; they haven't heard His words of comfort as you have; they know nothing of the power of the God we serve. I am confident in my Lord's ability to meet my needs!

**III. An Undeniable Miracle (41-43)** – The concluding verses reveal the miracle Jesus performed at the home of Jairus. Notice:

**A. The Authority (41-42a)** – And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, **Talitha cumi;** which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. <sup>[42a]</sup> And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was *of the age of twelve years*. As Jesus encountered the young girl, He spoke directly to her need. He commanded her to arise, and she immediately stood and walked. Jesus

was not perplexed or concerned about handling the situation. He spoke with authority and provided for their great need.

- I fear we often forget the power available to us through the provision of Christ. He has the ability to speak to our need, bringing the solution He deems best. We have nothing to fear in Christ. He is more than able to provide for every situation. He is Lord over all, including death!

**B. The Astonishment** (42b) – [And they were astonished with a great astonishment](#). As the girl stood and walked, those who saw it were filled with great wonder. They were astonished at the power of the Lord. Apparently He had exceeded their expectations.

- I have often stood amazed at the power and compassion of our Lord. He has the ability to not only meet, but exceed our expectations. We likely fail to have many prayers answered because we lack faith. We must learn to come to Christ with our impossibilities, fully expecting Him to meet our need.

**C. The Affection** (43) – [And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat](#). As I pondered Jesus' command to keep her healing quiet, I wondered why He would require such a thing. There are many suggestions, and all are possible, but I believe He was genuinely concerned for the well-being of the young girl. She had been through enough and there was no need to create a public spectacle. She needed rest and nourishment, not to be paraded as a prize. Further commotion would not help her situation.

- Even though we know Christ as our Lord and Savior, too often we consider Him to be a distant Lord who is often unengaged from our daily lives. Everything we read in Scripture argues against such logic. He is not only a Lord of power, He is also a Lord of mercy and grace. He is concerned with our need and desires what is best for us. He cares for us, loving us as no other. Such compassion is difficult to comprehend, but I am thankful for the Savior's great love!

**Conclusion:** If this passage were all we had regarding the power of Christ, it alone reveals more than enough to trust Him unconditionally. We all have situations that bring heartache and despair, but we are never forced to face them alone. We need faith in Christ to meet our need, no matter how desperate it may appear. If you are struggling today, look to Jesus. If you are yet unsaved, come to Him and receive the gracious gift of salvation.