Jesus in the Face of Life and Death

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 January 2023

Preacher: Matt Coburn

[0:00] It's one of those moments that you do not forget. The call comes. They got the results of the biopsy.

They want us to come in and meet with them. The news is not good. Not good at all. In that moment, the emotions flood, shock.
I can't believe this is happening. Fear. How can I face the unknown? Don't want to suffer. Don't want to die. Desperation.
Is there any way we can get out of this? You look for something, anything that might help you.
Johnny Erickson Tata is one of my heroes in the faith.
If you don't know her story, you should acquaint yourself with it. She was paralyzed when she was 17 in a diving accident. She has been a quadriplegic for over 55 years.
[1:04] In her struggle after her accident, she was brought to faith. And through her faith as she grew, she founded a worldwide ministry to help those facing physical disability.

In a letter that she wrote, a blog post five years ago, she wrote reflecting on her 50 years. She said this, Recently, I was at my desk writing to Tommy, a 17-year-old boy who just broke his neck body surfing off the Jersey Shore.
He's now a quadriplegic. He will live the rest of his life in a wheelchair without use of his hands or legs. When it comes to life-altering injuries, quadriplegia is catastrophic.
Halfway through my letter describing several hurdles Tommy should expect in rehab, I stopped. I felt utterly overwhelmed, thinking of all that lies ahead for him.
I've been there. And even though a half a century has passed, I can still taste the anguish. Hot, silent tears began streaming. I choked out a prayer.
[2:15] Oh God, how will Tommy do it? How will he ever make it? Have mercy. Help him to find you.

In response to this boy's situation, she points him to the only place she knows to find hope in the face of sickness and death.
I don't know where you're at this morning. Maybe you are here today facing these things. Chronic illness. Aging parents.
Death of a loved one. It's very real and poignant for you today. And maybe not. Maybe not today. Maybe not this year.
Maybe not this decade. But someday, you will. And our passage this morning from the book of Mark is one in which Jesus encounters those who are facing these very things.
[3:21] So if you want to turn with me, page 789 in the Pew Bible. We're in Mark 5. We're starting in verse 21 and reading through to the end of the chapter.

We're going to look at how Jesus interacts with those who are facing sickness and death. So let's go ahead and read this together.
These are, if you've grown up in church, these are well-known stories. But let's read them hopefully with some fresh eyes this morning. See what God's word has to say to us.
Mark chapter 5, starting verse 21. And when Jesus had crossed again into the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him, and he was beside the sea.
Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name. And seeing him, he fell at his feet and implored him earnestly, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death.
[4:22] Come and lay your hands on her so that she may be made well and live. And he went with him. And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him.

And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for 12 years. And who had suffered much under many physicians. And had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 17:59:34

worse.
She had heard the reports about Jesus. And came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.
And immediately the flow of blood dried up. And she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, Who touched my garment?
And his disciples said to him, You see the crowd pressing around you? And yet you say, Who touched me? And he looked around to see who had done it.
[5:29] But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling. And fell down before him and told him the whole truth. And he said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well.

Go in peace and be healed of your disease. While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, Your daughter is dead.
Why trouble the teacher any further? But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not fear, only believe.
And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John, the brother of James. And they came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue. And Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.
And when he had entered, he said to them, Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead, but sleeping. And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was.
[6:38] And taking her by the hand, he said to her, Talitha kumi, which means, Little girl, I say to you, arise.

And immediately the girl got up and began walking, for she was 12 years of age. And they were immediately overcome with amazement. And he strictly charged that no one should know this and told them to give her something to eat.
Let's pray together. Lord, we thank you this morning for your word. We thank you that in it, Lord, you have revealed yourself to us.
Lord, we pray this morning that you would help us. Lord, help our minds to grasp and understand what you are teaching us. Lord, help our hearts to be humble before your word, to receive the truth and to respond, Lord, rightly.
Lord, we pray this morning that by your spirit, we might sit under your word together. And I pray that you would help me this morning to speak as I ought for your glory and for our good.
[7:43] We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. What does Jesus do in the face of suffering and death? This is the question which these stories address, and we will look at them together.

Now, for a little bit of background, we're getting back into the Gospel of Mark after a bit of an Advent hiatus. Going back to Mark chapter 4, verse 35, there are three stories expressing Jesus' power.
At the end of chapter 4, Jesus shows his power over the sea and calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee. The beginning of chapter 5 that Pastor Nick preached on last week, Jesus frees a man from demon possession in the country of the Gerasenes.
And then today we see Jesus in the face of sickness and death, demonstrating his power again.
And as you read the story, you probably noticed that this is what commentators call a narrative sandwich.
Right? There are two slices of bread about the ruler of the synagogue, Jairus. And then there's the meat in the middle, which is a story about a woman. And they reinforce one another. And in fact, by making it a sandwich of two stories around the same theme, we see a fuller vision of Jesus' character and work than we would have on their own.
[9:00] And that's why he does that, and that's why we're dealing with these stories together. And what we're going to see as we look at this passage this morning is two very simple, very profound things.

First, we will see that Jesus meets us in our fear of sickness and death. And then that Jesus restores us from the power of sickness and death.
So if you're taking notes, that's our outline. We've got two points this morning. First, Jesus meets us in our fear of sickness and death. Now, Jesus has been over across the Sea of Galilee in a region called the Decapolis, the Gentile Virgin.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 17:59:34

He's now gotten back in a boat. He's come back across into the Jewish section. And as has been the practice, he's surrounded by crowds as soon as he arrives.
And the story begins because a man, a ruler of the synagogue, Jairus shows up, a ruler of the synagogue wouldn't have been a rabbi or a teacher, but someone who had actually the practical organizational role of making sure the synagogue worked, that people were there to do their things, that the supplies were made.
[10:09] That's what his role was. It was a significant one and an important one. He would have been used to being able to be in control of his life. And yet he faced a situation in which he was not in control.

For his daughter was sick. And he didn't know what to do. Now, in the middle of the story, we'll see this woman come in.
And what I want to do is actually draw some parallels and also distinctions between these two characters as they come to Jesus. He comes with this need to, this desire, feeling out of control, looking for help.
He comes in fear because he can't do anything to save his daughter.
Then there's a woman. A woman comes seeking him as well. But she has been coming with a different kind of fear because she's been ostracized by her illness.
[11:12] In the Jewish world, if you had the kind of disease that she had, you would have been declared richly unclean. That would have prevented her from going to the temple. Would have prevented her from normal interaction because she would have made others who interacted with her Richly unclean and unable to participate in temple life.

So she was ostracized by her chronic illness. An untouchable outside of the community of faith. And they both come in fear.
Hoping that Jesus might help them. They both come in faith. It's remarkable. They both express this. Jairus says, if you come, you can heal her and give her life.
The woman says to herself, if I only touch his garment, he can heal me and free me. But they come with some distinctions between them as well.
Jairus is an important person in the community. Jairus is a powerful person. And you see this. It's remarkable. He gets a name in the story. Which is actually, it stands out because often people don't get names in Mark's story.
[12:26] And the woman doesn't have a name. But he gets a name. Jairus. And he comes. And when he comes, he comes face to face to Jesus. He does fall on his knees before him. But he calls Jesus.

Come to my house. Come and be the solution to my problem. She, however, as an outcast, as a woman, doesn't even dare to approach him from the front.
She comes to him from behind. Says, if I can only touch him. She comes as an untouchable, poor, and alone.
He had all these resources. She had nothing. She had wasted or used up all of her resources. And had nothing to show for it. And yet, for both of these, Jesus meets them.
Jesus looks at Jairus in his desperation and says, I will come with you. And remember that Jesus didn't always do this. Remember we saw back in chapter 1, verse 38, that there were many people thronging at Jesus' door.
[13:36] Many more people to be healed and for their demons to be cast out. And Jesus said, no, I've got to keep going because I'm here for a greater purpose than simply healing everybody.

So Jesus didn't always heal, but he did. He responded to Jairus in compassion and began to go with him. He also met the woman in a remarkable way.
Because she tried to sneak up and be healed without having to actually interact. She wanted his power, but didn't dare believe that he would want a relationship with her.
But when it happens, Jesus knows something has happened. And he stops. And I hope you got the slight humor in the story. Because Jesus, you know, imagine you're at a football game, right? After the football game, as the crowds are going out, you know what those masses of people are like? Where you're jostling and elbowing your way just to get through. This is what Jesus' situation is.
[14:38] And suddenly he says, whoa, who touched me? And his disciples are looking around going, you've got to be kidding me. Everybody's touching you. You're in the middle of a mob. What

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 17:59:34

do you think?

I have no idea what you're asking for. But Jesus does, because he knows something had happened. And in fact, the verb tense in verse, let me find it for you.
Verse 38, no, verse 32 says, and he looked around to see who had done it. The verb tense there is actually, he kept looking. So he asked the question, the disciples were like, I have no idea.
And he kept looking. He was persistent in wanting to find her. Because he wasn't happy with just letting her be healed. He wanted her to be restored to a relationship with him.
He wanted to know who she was. Jesus saw their need. And he met them with compassion and with help.
[15:42] And friends, this is good news. Because we know that in those moments of diagnosis, in those long years of chronic illness, in the face of death, whether sudden or not, it's so easy to doubt that God is with us.

It's so easy for fear and desperation to drive us away from God. It's easier for us to shake our fist at him than fall on our knees before him.
When we're overwhelmed and despairing, this passage reminds us that Jesus will meet us there.
You know, some of you, please don't laugh at this.
Stephen Curtis Chapman is one of my favorite Christian artists. He's old and he's kind of corny. I get it. But he's also lived a lot of life.
And in fact, one of his albums, Beauty Will Rise, was written after his daughter was killed in a tragic accident. It was a meaningful album for me during the season of my first wife's illness.
[16:56] Here's some of the words that he wrote that I think capture what I want you to see from this part of the passage so far. When you think you've hit bottom and the bottom gives way and you fall into a darkness no words can explain and you don't know how you make it out alive, Jesus will meet you there.

When the doctor says, I'm sorry, we don't know what else to do and you're looking at your family, wondering how they'll make it through. Whatever road this life takes you down, Jesus will meet you there.
He knows the way to wherever you are. He knows the way to the depths of your heart. He knows the way because he's already been where you're going.
Jesus will meet you there. And when we realize that we're out of control over the most important things of life, when our situation seems impossible to change and impossible to bear, this passage reminds us Jesus meets us there.
But he doesn't just meet us to walk with us. He also meets us so that he might restore us to life, overcoming the power of sickness and death.
[18:28] For this is what this passage says as you look at the parts of the sandwich. Let's look at the bread first. What happens to Jairus? It's remarkable, by the way, did you see that Mark started calling him the ruler of the synagogue again?

And he lost his name in the second half of the story. It's just an interesting note. I'm not even sure what to make of it, but I thought I'd point it out to you this morning. But it's fascinating, right?
Because Jesus says, I'll go with you. And then there's this interruption. You can imagine Jairus standing there going, are you kidding me? My daughter's dying? What in the world is going on?
His impatience, his confusion, his frustration, his desperation, right? And then people from his house come and they say, don't bother.
It's too late. She's died. And Jesus overhears. And if you see, my ESV has a footnote.
[19:26] That overhearing, that word has lots of connotations. It does mean overhearing as in hearing something that wasn't directly meant for you. But it also means ignoring it, like you heard it and ignored it, or you heard it and discounted its truth.

And Jesus was doing all of these things. He heard this report. She's dead. Don't bother anymore.
And Jesus, instead of receiving that word, he looks at Jairus and he says, do not fear, only believe.
He knew that at one level they were saying something true, that the girl was dead. But he said, but their position was that that dead death was final.
And Jesus looked at him and said, don't believe that lie. And so they go on and they come to the house and they're professional mourners.
And this is typical in the first century. Even poor people would hire people to come in to mourn. And on a side note, maybe there's something healthy for us to learn in our modern day culture where we

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 17:59:34

privatize grief rather than do it in community.
[20:42] That's a society, that's a freebie. But they do this and they come in and Jesus says, why are you doing this? And they mock him. And can you imagine Jairus again thinking, am I just a fool?

What is he gonna do? But Jesus says, mourners, clear out. And he brings in his three disciples and parents' kids and he looks at the girl and he says, get up.
He doesn't just comfort, but he restores. And he doesn't just resuscitate. Everyone knew she was dead.
Jesus raises her. He resurrects her to new life. He grabs her hand, which is a remarkable thing because the body would have made him richly unclean.
He grabs her hand and instead of him being unclean, she becomes clean again as she is restored to life. Jesus brings her to an immediate and a full recovery.
[21:51] She gets up, she walks around, she eats food. Can you imagine the joy that Jairus and his wife felt? Can you imagine the wonder of the people?

She was dead and now she's alive. So that's the meat or that's the bread. How about the meat of the sandwich?
This woman approaches Jesus from behind thinking if I only touch his garment, I'll be healed. And it works. She touches the garment and power comes. And Mark has no problem saying, I don't know how that happens.
I just described it. That's what she said. This is the eyewitness account. It happened this way, right? Right? She touched his garment and the power came out.
The power to heal flowed immediately and she knew it in her body. She who had lived for 12 years with this ongoing chronic condition, imagine what relief and joy she would have felt.
[22:56] It's finally over. But Jesus isn't willing to let her simply be healed physically. He wants her to be restored. And so he seeks her out.

He seeks to find her. She who has no name in the story is pursued and known by Jesus. She who is outcast is touched by Jesus.
And he looks at her and he says, my daughter. He embraces her with his words. Says that she is loved and welcomed.
So he shows the power to restore from sickness and death. Though the man and the woman both come in fear and desperation, they walk away with joy.
Because Jesus has come into the world with this purpose. To meet us and to restore us. With Jesus coming, sickness and death no longer are inevitable and unstoppable.
[24:06] For he has the power to heal, to restore, to save. And at one level, that's what this story is all about.

And we could close in worship that Jesus has come to do this. But you and I both know there's a question. Isn't there?
Because if Jesus has that power to meet us and restore us and heal us, but he doesn't do it all the time in this life, does he? He doesn't heal everyone.
It sure seems like sickness and death still take hold. In fact, death is one of those things that is an inescapable human condition right now.
So how do we understand this? Well, that would be a whole other sermon or a Sunday school class or a seminar or a seminary class. But let me say a few things in response to this question.
[25:09] First of all, this passage reminds us that Jesus can and does heal us powerfully. He does it all the time. Sometimes he uses the very normal means that we have come to trust in and don't even see God's hands in it.

We have doctors and medicine and all sorts of natural means that God uses to heal and restore people from sickness. and to even bring back from cardiac arrest and from moments of death.
And we know from the testimony of the church throughout the world and even here in the western world that God can and does at times heal people miraculously. That by the power of his spirit he intersects in someone's life and he heals them and he frees them from disease and he even raises from the dead.
Just as he did for Jairus' daughter and for the woman he can and does do that today. But as we have acknowledged he doesn't always do this in this life.
The testimony of both the Bible and history show that God's greater purpose is not simply to alleviate some suffering from sickness and death. One of the most remarkable things is that

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 17:59:34

everyone that Jesus healed in the Bible still died.
[26:34] Lazarus was raised from death and he still died again. He didn't he wasn't raised to eternal life when he was raised in John 11. So we need to recognize that the Bible acknowledges what we see that Jesus has all this power and yet he doesn't instantaneously and immediately fix all of these problems.

Thirdly what the Bible does say and what this passage does say to us is that there is healing for all who have faith in Jesus.
Healing will come either in this life or in the resurrection but sin and sickness and death no longer have the last word for Christians. So he tells Martha Lazarus' brother in John 11 I am the resurrection and the life whoever believes in me though he die Jesus acknowledges you will die and yet you will live.
That any healing that Jesus does now in this age is a sign of a greater and eternal healing that is to come. For friends this is the very core of the gospel.
This is what the Bible tells us. When God created the world before there was sin there was no sickness and there was no death when sin entered into the world all of the world was put under the curse and the sickness and death that entered into the world was the result of the rebellion of humanity against God.
[28:10] Now listen to me very carefully here. That does not mean that if you got a cold this week it's because you sinned. Okay? It is because we live in a fallen world under the curse that came into the world because of human sin that all of us are now subject to sickness and death.

And so they are part of our world in this age and they are inevitable. But when Jesus comes into the world bringing the kingdom he comes with the good news that that curse will not last forever.
He comes to reverse that curse and to begin the work of redeeming a people for himself.
Redeeming them from sickness and death yes but even more so redeeming them from sin.
So his earthly ministry comes with signs of renewal and reversal. He heals. He casts out demons. He feeds the hungry.
He forgives sin. He raises the dead. All of these are signs pointing ahead to the greater and fuller victory that Jesus will accomplish through his death and his resurrection.
[29:22] For ultimately Jesus did those things on his way to enter in to the curse for us. To take on the penalty of sin for us by taking on death itself as he hung on the cross for us.

He shed blood for the woman who was cursed by a flow. He entered into death so that he might raise a 12 year old girl.
Jesus went to death in our place for us so that he might restore us and rescue us from it. But Jesus didn't simply die.
If he had died he would have been just one other person under the curse. But three days later he rose from the dead and in doing so he showed that death could not hold him.
He defeated the power of sin and death by rising from the dead forever and on the basis of his indestructible life he now offers to all of us the greatest hope that we could ever have.
[30:28] Though we die yet we shall live. Because we are joined with him by faith into his death so we are joined by faith with him to a resurrection that will be ours forever.

This is what we read in Isaiah 25. Death will be swallowed up forever and God will wipe away all tears and we see it in Revelation where there is no more sickness and no more sorrow no more mourning no more pain and no more death because the finality has come.
and friends this is our hope this is our hope in the face of sickness and death. Many of you know our dear our dear brother Rick Schneider went to be with the Lord after a years long battle with sickness but he wrote Pastor Nick and I sorry he wrote us a letter before he in the last few weeks of his life a lot of it was thanksgiving some of it was thanks to you all as a church for the ways that we have loved his family over the last couple years but he wrote this in the last few weeks the Lord has overwhelmed me with a sense a vision of the wonder of what he has prepared for us the beauty of it all the vistas the tastes the fellowship with Jesus with each other no eye is seen nor can the mind of man imagine it's quoting from 1 Corinthians can you believe this he says as you read this
I am walking with two legs at work I am free of ALS and I am experiencing the love of Jesus in ways I cannot now imagine friends this is the good news of the gospel Jesus looks at us and he says to us do not be afraid but believe let's pray oh Lord we have touched on deep waters and weighty things but Lord we know that there is an indestructible hope that we have because Jesus is raised

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 17:59:34

from the dead and he is our living Lord and Savior oh Lord I pray this morning that this word would be a comfort to those who are grieving would be a strength to those who are weak and Lord would be
Lord a bolster to all of us that we might know just a little more deeply the hope to which we have been called that we might in that have great joy in knowing and worshiping you we pray this in Jesus name amen amen have Say em have■ us we might have have us have come in say■ dedans in a man has come go on

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 17:59:34