

Peace & Healing in Chaos

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- [0:00] Good morning, Church. I'd like for you to turn with me to Mark chapter 5, verses 21 through 43. This passage contains an account about an extraordinary day in Jesus' life.
- And it's extraordinary not so much because of the miracles that Jesus worked, but because on this day, Mark lets us see Jesus on what you and I would normally call a very bad day.
- This passage shows Jesus when he's tired, when he's surrounded by chaos, when everything seems to be going wrong, when he's rejected, when he's questioned, and even when he's laughed at.
- And you know, I think that we've all had a lot of days like this recently with this pandemic going on when it seems like everything's going wrong. And so while we're looking at Jesus this morning, I want you to be asking yourself some questions.
- Questions like, How do I handle difficulties like Jesus faced? How do I react on bad days? What do I do when I'm slighted or when I'm wronged?
- [1:15] How do I treat others when I'm tired and exhausted? Do I respond with love like Jesus does? Do I respond with compassion? Do I come to Jesus in humility when I'm having a tough time?
- Do I need to come to Jesus today? Let's pray and ask our Lord Jesus to bless our time in his word. Oh Lord, we come to you and we just fall before you.
- We ask you, Lord, illuminate us in this hour. Comfort those who are worried, Lord. Calm those who are afraid. I pray, Lord, that you would help us to seek you out when things go wrong, to trust in you and to love others like you did when you walked on this earth.
- Lord, open our ears. Open our ears by your spirit to hear your word and plant it in our hearts this morning. And we pray all of this in the mighty name of Jesus.
- Amen. Now instead of reading the whole passage straight through, I think it will be helpful for us if we go verse by verse because in this case I think it will help us encounter Jesus more personally.
- [2:35] And before we start on the passage, I want to give you a little background to it because like most bad days, the one that we're going to read about really started the night before with a bad night's sleep.
- In the chapter previous to the one we're going to be looking at, in chapter 4, Mark tells us that the night before our passage begins, Jesus and his disciples had spent the night sailing across the Sea of Galilee.
- And Jesus was forced to sleep in the boat. Now this boat was probably just a regular old fishing vessel, and so no doubt it would have been uncomfortable for Jesus. But to make matters worse, a terrible storm suddenly arose.
- The ship started sinking. The disciples are terrified. They wake Jesus up and they ask him. In fact, they almost accuse him. They say, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?

And then Jesus miraculously calms the storm. The boat makes it to shore. Remember, immediately Jesus is confronted by a man who is terribly demonized with a horde of demons.

- [3 : 39] He casts them out. He delivers the man. He has mercy on him. But as soon as the people of the country gather around him and they see that he delivered a man from demons, they reject him. And they ask him to leave.

Now how would you like to start your day off that way? You wake in the middle of the night with your boat sinking and your disciples making unfounded accusations about you. And then later when you work a miracle, you get rejected because of it.

So Jesus has to get right back in his boat and sail right back across the Sea of Galilee. And this is where we begin our passage in Mark chapter 5, verse 21.

Mark writes, If you read the Gospels, you'll see that whenever crowds gather around Jesus by the seashore, he doesn't just hang out and relax.

He's always teaching them. And I think we can be pretty sure that this is exactly what Jesus is doing here. So it's been a mixed bag for Jesus so far.

- [4 : 47] He was rejected by one crowd across the Sea of Galilee. Here we see him being accepted by another crowd. But one thing we can know for sure is that Jesus is definitely tired.

But instead of packing it in and going home, he seems to be doing what he always does, continuing with his ministry and teaching the crowd. Now, if Jesus is like me, he's probably looking forward to getting some rest.

But this day is about to get a lot more difficult for Jesus because we all know what tends to happen on bad days. They tend to get worse. Unexpected things happen. Crises emerge.

This always happens, it seems, when we're least prepared for it, doesn't it? And this is just what happens to Jesus in verse 22. Mark says, So there comes along a synagogue official named Jairus.

Now, Jairus would have been an important man in his day, in his community, far more important than Jesus was at that time. But what does he do? Jairus humbles himself.

- [6 : 11] He falls before Jesus right in front of the crowd. And he begs him to heal his daughter. This would have made a striking picture to see a man of this standing falling before Jesus.

And notice what Jairus says. He calls his daughter, my little daughter. In the Greek, he uses what we would call the diminutive form of the word daughter.

It's a term of endearment. It means that he loves her. Now, we're reading here from the Gospel of Mark. But Luke has the very same story. And he adds that this little daughter was also Jairus' only daughter.

And we know from these two accounts, if we put them together, that Jairus' only daughter is at the point of death. And her father loves her.

And we can assume that Jairus saw that she was dying. He heard that Jesus was about. And he must have said to himself, If only I can get to Jesus. And so, in faith, he left his daughter's side.

- [7 : 11] He humbled himself publicly before Jesus. And he asked him to heal her. In difficult times, do you come to Jesus like Jairus did?

Have you ever experienced a crisis? Have you ever been confronted by something awful? Have you been faced with a situation so terrible you knew no human power could help?

And when confronted by these things, have you sought out our great healer, Jesus? Have you humbled yourself before him and asked him to heal and to rescue and to save? There are many people in our world and in our community right now who, in the midst of this pandemic, are facing situations exactly like Jairus faced right now.

And Scripture teaches us that Jesus is the good doctor. And that if we come to him in humility like this man Jairus did, then his delight is to heal and to save.

My friends, if you're suffering right now or if you have a loved one who is, I want you to follow the example of Jairus and go to Jesus in humbleness and call upon the one who is the healer of our souls.

[8:27] And he will come to your aid. And this is exactly what Jesus did in the next verse. In verse 24, we read simply, And he went with him. But something else goes with Jesus too, because verse 24 doesn't end there.

Mark also adds these words, And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. So Jesus is trying to get to that little girl and the crowd is jostling him.

They're pressing him. They're thronging him. They're trying to get close to him, trying to see him, trying to touch him. We see this all throughout the Gospels. The crowds gather around Jesus and they press in on him and they get in the way of his ministry.

The Gospels tell us that the crowds could be so bad sometimes that Jesus and his disciples could not even find time to eat. But here we have a bigger problem. There's an emergency.

There's a crisis. This little girl is dying and the crowd is getting in Jesus' way. Do you sense the tension and the stress growing as this day goes on for Jesus?

[9:34] But things are about to ratchet up a bit more for Jesus. Mark tells us in the next three verses, 25 through 27, he says, There was a woman who had a discharge of blood for 12 years and who had suffered much under many physicians.

And she had spent all that she had and was no better but rather grew worse. She heard the reports about Jesus and she came up behind him in the crowd and she touched his garment.

Now, do you see what's happening here? She, just like the crowd, is pressing in on Jesus. Everyone's trying to get a piece of him. Here we have a woman who was constantly bleeding for 12 years and she wanted to be healed.

And understandably, she came and she reached out to Jesus. But I want to know something. I want to know what she was thinking of getting in the way of Jesus at a time like this during an emergency.

Well, Mark tells us in verse 28, he says, For the woman 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.

[10:54] Do you see the power of Jesus, my friends? Just by touching his garments, she's healed. This is the power of a wonderful Jesus. But I want to know something else.

I want to know how Jesus will react to something that many of us might think is rude and presumptuous to just reach out and grab someone without their permission.

Mark says in verse 30, And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd. And he said, Who touched my garments?

Now imagine this scene in your mind's eye. Jesus is going to heal this dying little girl. There's not much time. He's fighting through a crowd who's thronging around him.

This poor woman who suffered so much and is in poverty pushes her way through. She reaches, she stretches, she touches Jesus' garment, and she's healed. But straight away, Jesus turns around and he says, Who touched my garments?

[11:58] And listen to verse 31, the next verse. Listen to how the disciples react to this. His disciples say to him, you see the crowd pressing around you and yet you say, Who touched me?

You know what's happening here. The disciples are questioning Jesus once again, just like they did in the boat the previous night. They think that Jesus is not making any sense.

They think, in fact, what most of us would be thinking in this situation, they would be thinking, What do you mean who touched me, Jesus? You see the crowd pressing around you. Everyone is touching you.

And why are you wasting time? This little girl is at the brink of death. The disciples are doubting Jesus. Only this time, they're doubting him publicly.

But look what happens in verse 32 and 33. And Jesus looked around to see who had done it. 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.

[13:09] Why is this woman so scared? Why is she fearful? Why is she trembling? Why is she falling down in fear before the man who just healed her?

For one thing, she may be afraid because, like I said, it's a bit rude to just grab someone. She might be afraid also because she knows she's holding Jesus up from an urgent task.

But there's another reason why, according to the Old Testament law, she was not supposed to be touching Jesus. The Old Testament law stipulated in no uncertain terms that anyone who had any kind of bodily discharge, like a flow of blood, was considered to be unclean.

And so this woman was ceremonially unclean. And Leviticus 15, 25 through 27, specifically states that if someone is unclean and they touch another person or they touch another garment, then that person or that garment becomes unclean also.

And so by touching Jesus' garments, this woman has just made him or at least his garments unclean. That's why she's afraid and why she's trembling.

[14:24] She knows she wasn't supposed to be touching Jesus. She knows she made him unclean. And by telling Jesus what happened, she's also telling him that she has presumptuously made him unclean without his permission.

But what does Jesus say? How will he respond? In verse 34, he says to her, daughter, your faith has made you well.

Go in peace and be healed of your disease. When someone makes you unclean, do you react in this way?

When you are slighted or taken advantage of by a desperate person, do you respond with love like how Jesus does? Close your eyes for a moment.

Do you see Jesus in this gospel story? He is in an ocean of chaos. The crowd is pressing in on him. His disciples are publicly questioning him. And this woman gets in his way and makes him ritualistically impure all while he's trying to reach a dying girl.

[15:37] But what does Jesus see? Jesus looks past all these things and instead he sees a desperate woman. He sees a woman who may not have been touched by another person in years.

He sees a woman who had suffered much at the hands of many and who was in poverty and in the pandemonium. In the midst of a crisis, he recognizes her faith.

He pauses. He speaks to her. And despite everything going on, he comforts her and he blesses her. My friends, this is how Jesus also sees you no matter how unclean you are.

Despite whatever impurity you have, despite all your sins, all your shame, whatever failure, whatever darkness might be in you, if you reach out to Jesus, if you say, if only I touch his garments, I will be made well, then just as with this woman, Jesus will be unashamed to be called your healer and your redeemer.

And he will heal and forgive you. And this is what Jesus also commands you to do for others. This woman, whom we're reading about, was an outcast.

[16:51] She was ritualistically unclean for 12 years. She suffered much through life. And so in her, Jesus saw not just a woman who needed a miracle cure for a physical malady.

He also saw a woman who was lonely and who was afraid and who was ashamed. And despite all of the bedlam, all of the pressure, all the tension Jesus is facing, he stops to help her.

He touches her soul. He comforts her. He restores her from her shame and from her loneliness. Do you love others like how Jesus loved this woman?

Do you love others how Jesus has loved you? Are you full of compassion and mercy when you're tired and overworked? Are you patient when wronged?

Are you gentle when others are harsh? Or instead, do you pay back evil for evil and anger for anger, slight for slight and shame for shame?

[17:56] Do you get swept up in the crowd? Are you carried away by worldly concerns about how unclean you might look to others? Or do you cling to the rock of Christ?

Jesus here is showing us not only how he reaches out to us, but also how we must reach out to others. If we return to our gospel passage in verse 35, we see that while Jesus is comforting this woman, something terrible happens.

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?

Jairus, the synagogue ruler, has just heard the most terrible news a parent could ever hear. The crowd is pushing in on Jesus. This little girl's life is hanging heavy over everyone.

Jesus is juggling several conversations. His disciples are squabbling with him. He's comforting a desperate woman and now this terrible news from messengers who from the sound of it doubt that Jesus can raise the dead.

[19:09] Why trouble the teacher anymore, they say. What does Jesus do? Remember that some of the disciples had just been criticizing Jesus for stopping and trying to figure out who touched him.

And they just saw that an unclean woman made Jesus unclean also and now they hear the news that they didn't get to this little girl in time. By many worldly standards, Jesus' decisions are not looking all that smart right now.

And this is precisely where many of us would snap. Where we would throw our hands in the air, we would give up, we would be exasperated, we would chew out the crowd, we would yell at our children or our family or our workers or our subordinates for not trusting us and for questioning our decisions.

But not Jesus. In verse 36, but overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, let's wait for a moment and let that siren pass.

But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, do not fear, only believe. Jesus pivots right from comforting a desperate woman to comforting a desperate, shattered man.

[20:33] Jesus knows that Jairus is overwhelmed with grief and despair at hearing that his little daughter has died. And so Jesus' number one concern is not his reputation, is not what people think of him.

His concern is for Jairus. And so he says to him, do not be afraid. In all this chaos, Jesus is still concerned about the synagogue official.

He knows what the man is going through. And just like he cared for that woman with a flow of blood, he's also caring for Jairus. In the next few verses, Mark tells us, and Jesus allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John, the brother of Jesus.

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. Jesus and a few of the disciples are inside the house now. They find another crowd. The crowd is weeping, the crowd is wailing, but Jesus says, why are you doing this?

[21 : 42] The child isn't dead, she's asleep. Now, why does Jesus say this? What does he mean by this? Why is he saying that the girl is not dead when we know that she's dead?

My friends, Jesus here is pointing out that death is nothing to the Lord of life. For Jesus, physical death is as easy to cure as waking someone up from a nap.

Jesus said the very same thing when his friend Lazarus had died. In the Gospel of John, chapter 11, verse 11, our friend Lazarus, Jesus said, has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.

With both Lazarus and this little girl, Jesus makes the profound point that he is the author of life. I am the resurrection and the life, he says, when Lazarus died.

God, and like Jesus does with many of his most profound teachings, he doesn't just come out and say this plainly. He puts it in the form of a parable or a puzzle, and he doesn't do this to trick people and test how smart they are.

[22 : 56] He does this to test their humility, to see if they're willing to humbly listen to his words and to think on them and dwell on them and contemplate them, and then if they still do not understand, to humbly come to Jesus and seek him out for help in deciphering them.

This is why Jesus spoke in parables, because parables are like self-sorting mechanisms. They reveal themselves only to the humble, and they shut out the proud.

Therefore, what Jesus is saying to the crowd is that because he is here, this little girl has not really died, she hasn't really been lost, because Jesus is going to raise her up, he's going to wake her up, and so the crowd should not weep, they should be rejoicing, the healer is here, the author of life has arrived.

But how will the crowd respond? In verse 40, Mark says, and they laughed at him. This is the fifth time on this day that Jesus has been questioned or scorned, first he was accused by his disciples when their boat was sinking, then he was rejected by the crowd for delivering a demonized man, then he was questioned by the disciples again after healing a woman in the crowd, then messengers doubted that he could raise the dead, and now when he in fact is about to raise the dead, people are laughing at him.

So what does he do? Verse 40 continues, but he put them all outside. We should be careful not to laugh at Jesus, or we'll miss out on what Jesus is going to do, because there's a dead little girl in that other room, and even if you've never heard this story before, you know what's coming, you know what Jesus is going to do when our healer sees that little girl and when his grace and his power washes over her.

[25 : 01] Listen to what happens. And Jesus took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was, and taking her by the hand, he said to her, Talitha kum, 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.

What a beautiful description Mark gives us here. Jesus takes that little girl by the hand, and he says, Mark quotes the original Aramaic of Jesus, Talitha kum, which means little one, arise.

Can you imagine being that little girl, being in the dead, being dead in the shadow of death, when all of a sudden you wake up in the land of the living to those beautiful words?

Little girl, I say to you, arise. And then most wonderful of all, you find yourself looking into the eyes of the savior of the world, who is holding your hand in his own.

Just picture that scene in your mind. But Mark hides another little gem here for us. You see, when our gentle Jesus took that little girl's hand in his own, he sent us a message about what he's here to do on earth and what we are to do as well.

[26 : 24] When he held that little girl's hand, according to the Old Testament law, Jesus made himself unclean once again. All dead bodies back then were unclean, according to Old Testament law, and according to Numbers 19:11, anyone who touched a dead body became unclean also.

Now, Jesus could have just spoken the words, he could have just raised her up with a mere word like he did with so many other miracles, but he didn't do that here. His kindness and his compassion were too much to worry about being unclean in the sight of others when he saw that helpless little girl lying there with her parents weeping by her side.

And do you know what? Jesus does this for each one of you. He comes to you when you're unclean. He comes to you when you're dead in your sins, when you're chained in the shadow of death, and he takes you by your hand, and he says, little one, I say to you, arise.

I remember when Jesus did this to me 19 years ago when I was wandering in darkness, and all of a sudden Jesus took me by my hand and said, arise.

And my friends, if Jesus hasn't done this for you yet, if he hasn't taken you by your hand and raised you up from the shadow of death, I want to tell you that he's standing at your door ready to come in.

[27 : 53] he's waiting just outside, as the scriptures say, as Jesus himself said, I stand at the door and knock. Will you let him in?

It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick, Jesus said, I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Jesus sees all your failure, all your weakness, all your shame, all your uncleanness, all your sins, he sees all these things, and he loves you anyway.

Awake, O sleeper, says scripture, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. You know, I think in a very real sense, this is exactly what the psalmist sung about in that reading we heard earlier from Psalm 73.

When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart, I was brutish and ignorant before you, I was like a beast towards you, nevertheless, I am continually with you.

You hold me by my right hand, you guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but you, and there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.

[29 : 14] My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Hallelujah.

If we return to our passage, we see that Jesus wasn't done with this little girl yet. In verse 43, and he strictly charged them that no one should know this and told them to give her something to eat.

Notice that Jesus is still concerned about that little girl like a good doctor with his patient. He doesn't just cure her and walk away. He wants to make sure she's totally healthy.

He knows she's had a big day and he wants to give her something to eat. Isn't that so beautiful of our Jesus? And Jesus does the same thing for us at the beginning of our new life in Christ.

He cares about how we grow and flourish in Christ. Christ, and this is just what he does with you when he raises you up from the dead. He doesn't just walk away, but he stays by your side and he nourishes and feeds your spirit.

[30:24] Now, we're still not done with this little girl yet. This may not be all we know about her and her life. The Bible doesn't have any more information about her, but 95 years or so after this miracle occurred, in 125 AD, a Christian named Quadratus wrote something very interesting about the miracles of Jesus and perhaps also about this little girl.

And I want you to hear what he had to say. Quadratus said this, but the works of our Savior were always present for they were genuine. Those that were healed and those that were raised from the dead were seen not only when they were healed and when they were raised, but were also always present, not merely while the Savior was on earth, but also after his death, they were alive for quite a while so that some of them lived even to our day.

Quadratus wrote that in 125 AD and he says that there were some whom Jesus raised from the dead who lived long enough so that he could remember them in 125 AD.

Now if we do some basic math and we think Quadratus was 40 years old or more when he wrote those words, it means that at least some people whom Jesus raised from the dead lived a long time afterwards, 60 or 70 years, and that means these folks were probably children when Jesus raised from the dead for them to live so many years afterwards so that Quadratus could remember them and if we go through all the miracle accounts in the Gospels, we find only one child whom Jesus raised from the dead, this little girl.

And while we can't be sure, we know that Jesus did many miracles that are not recorded, it certainly seems probable that this little girl lived a long life and she spent it as a witness, telling everybody about that day when she died, and how tired Jesus was, and how he was rejected, and questioned, and laughed at, but how much he loved her despite it all.

[32:47] And I don't think she would have thought of that day as a bad day for Jesus. I think she probably would have thought of it as one of his best. Oh, church, let us love like Jesus loves.

Be unafraid of those who are unclean. Don't give up on those everyone else has written off for dead. Don't worry when people criticize you or question you for following Jesus.

Don't be like the crowd and laugh at Jesus when he says he's going to wake someone up. Instead, follow the path of our Lord Jesus. Make the unclean pure.

Restore those who are ashamed. Forgive those who have sinned. Be compassionate. Be merciful. Comfort the brokenhearted. And when you stumble, cling to Jesus and he will do the same for you.

Let's pray together. Oh, Father in heaven, we thank you that you sent your Lord Jesus to walk on this earth so many years ago.

[33:52] We thank you for his miracles, but we thank you for his compassion and his mercy on the weak and the downtrodden. And we thank you for his mercy on us.

And Father, I pray that if there's any here who are afflicted, who are suffering, who are doubting, who are scared, that they would feel your comfort, they would feel you, take you, take you, take them by your hand.

Father, we thank you for your mercy, for the life and death and resurrection of your son, Jesus, and it's in his mighty name that we pray. Amen.