

Jesus restores life for worship

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[0 : 0 0] 5. Now, this isn't to say that you don't pay careful attention when you're reading the Bible. I'm sure you do. But if you pay particular attention to this reading, not because I'm reading it, somebody else can come and read if they want to, but because of it's one of those passages in Mark, as Mark often links two stories together. He's doing it all the time. You get, you know, the fig tree and the temple and Jesus and the paralyzed man and the tax collector and all of these stories are put together for reasons.

And the same thing here. It just so happens that they are together. So we're going to pick it up in chapter 5, verse 21, and we're going to read through to the end of this account, which is to the end of chapter 5. So now hear God's word.

And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jarius by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet and implored him earnestly, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death. 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 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 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 garments? 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. 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 had 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 someone 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. 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 such a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead, but sleeping.

[3 : 4 6] And they laughed at him. But he put all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. 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 them that no one should know this and told them to give her something to eat. Well, may God bless us with his word, which is a blessing in all circumstances.

And we'll come back to that after this next hymn together. If you open your Bibles again then to Mark chapter 5.

As you do, you may remember, or perhaps you don't, but children have a distinct way of learning. You tell a child something, even in Sunday school, and this is something that you observe over the time. But, you know, I guess a teacher would know it more, being with children every day and that.

And you tell them something, they know the answer. Or you tell them what the answer is, and they know it, and they're able to show the working out. And then, much later on, because of it's a, it's a, not a complex situation, but there's more to it, you say something else about it.

[5 : 46] And the child pipes up and goes, well, I thought you, I thought you said it was this. And, and children, as they learn, think that it's either one thing or the other. But as you grow up, you begin to realize that it can be several things. You know, because issues can be complex. Several things can be true about it. So it's not either or, it's both and. Okay, more things can be true about the same thing than just one thing. So it's not a question of, I thought you said it was this, and now you're saying that it's this, as if you're saying something different. But rather, what you're saying is the same thing, you're just taking it to perhaps a deeper level, or a level which, you know, you need to be at to understand it slightly differently.

Well, Mark writes in exactly the same way. Okay, Mark has shallow ends and deep ends. And of course, he will take you gradually into a text. And then all of a sudden, he throws words in there, and you think, oh, you're saying something else there that I didn't notice before. And I think that's the privilege of being able to read the Bible, that it doesn't matter how many times you have read it, you're not, you've not, you've never got to the point where you know it so well that you don't need, right? You think you can just do it off the top of your head. You know, there are some verses like that where you can clearly quote, and you've just got them. But Mark, in particular, has a way of saying, oh, you think you know what this is about? Read it again. And Mark draws you in to a deeper meaning, a both and. Yes, it was what you always thought it was, but it is also this.

Now, we've actually completed the Gospel of Mark in a series of messages. I also taught through the structure of Mark in the Bible study of how Mark is structured like a creation week. But having done all this, it doesn't mean that we can then move on and leave Mark behind and concentrate on something else, as if there's nothing else Mark can teach us. So as we come to this passage, I don't think it's probably unfamiliar with any of you. It may be more familiar with some than others, but it is still something that calls us to pay much attention to. So here's the situation. Here's the summary.

Jesus has two things to deal with at the same time. Jesus is faced with two situations, but one which he is unaware of, you could say, in the movement. You know, Jesus is on his way to heal a young girl. The ruler of the synagogue, Jairus, comes to Jesus and tells him that his daughter is so ill that she is on the point of death. I mean, in other words, you know, she's not just poorly. She's not just got a cold here. It's quite obvious that she is ill and she's going to die. And obviously, he gets his diagnosis right because later on, there are people who come from the house to where Jairus is saying, your daughter has died. So Jairus knew what he was talking about.

Okay, he understood the condition of his daughter well. He knew where she was physically, that she really is at the point of death. So he's not over-egging things just to get Jesus to the house. He is deadly serious about the condition of his daughter, and he was proven right. My daughter is on the point of death, and later on, she actually dies. But on the way there, as you notice in the story, a woman tries to push through the crowd to get to Jesus, touching Jesus, realizing that power went out from him, Jesus stops. Now, Jesus has heard everything that we've heard, that Jairus' daughter is on the point of death, and Jesus, knowing all things, would have known. But he stops. And therefore, when you stop, you take up time, and you now have two situations to deal with. And the argument could be made, yeah, but I got here first. Okay, my daughter's really sick. I got here first. And we've all seen examples of that, perhaps in the hospital, in A&E, where there's arguments over who gets to be seen first, based on who got there first, when the nurses who are skilled are able to work out the serious injury compared to the not so serious. And therefore, it's much better to take people on the basis of which is the most urgent. That would clearly be the best way to categorize and classify how to deal with people in a hospital. I'm not planning to run the NHS, but that that just, that just, in fact, I actually know the Christian man who was offered the job, going off slightly tangent, well-respected Christian man, highly capable, highly capable, and he turned it down on the, on the, he says it's unfixable because of the given structures that it has. Anyway, back to the point. So, we understand that some things are more urgent than others, okay? But Jesus, you would think that Jesus would understand that, but this is where we, where we have a problem because we don't often see things from his point of view. He feels this power go out from him and he wants to know who it was that touched him. Now, the woman, we know why the woman touched Jesus because she had a condition all of her own. She had it for 12 years, this discharge of blood. She realized that if she could touch Jesus, that she would be made well, and this was also proven to be true. And then Jesus turns, wants to start, the disciples think that, come on, Jesus, you're in a crowd full of people. Everyone's touching you. Everyone's rubbing up against one another. Everyone's touching you. But Jesus knew specifically that someone had touched him. Someone that drew power out of him. And he eventually commends the woman for his faith.

[12 : 23] Now, he turns around and says, who is it that touched me? Which is the worst thing, which is the worst thing that this woman could have heard. Okay, she wouldn't have minded Jesus saying anything else.

But to ask that was the worst thing that Jesus could have asked. And we get to find out why in a moment. When Jesus finds out who it is, he doesn't condemn her. He doesn't tell her off.

In fact, in verse 34, he says, daughter, your faith has made you well. Your faith has made you well. And as he's still talking to the woman in question, people from the house come to Jesus, telling him or telling the others that the little girl has died. Okay, verse 35, your daughter is dead.

Why trouble Jesus or why trouble the teacher any further? Okay, don't bother Jesus anymore. It's, okay, it's all done and over. Okay, there's nothing that can be done here. Now, Jesus says later on, she's not dead, but sleeping. They laugh at Jesus. But the reason that they laugh is not a nervous laugh, but because they think that Jesus is talking nonsense. But again, this is not so much an issue of seeing something different than Jesus, but rather not listening to Jesus. You know, in other words, if Jesus says she isn't dead, if they truly believed who Jesus was, then I would take Jesus' word over my own. Or I would take Jesus' word over. But Jesus sends them out. He allows a few to stay, the mum and dad and a few others. And he touches the girl by the hand. Again, something that shouldn't have happened.

Okay, so you've got a whole scenario here in the story of several things that shouldn't be happening that are actually happening. And then it says this, that the little girl was 12 years old.

[14 : 22] Now, Mark could have left that out, but he doesn't. So here's a few observations. Mark is wanting you to pay attention to what Jesus is doing. And the way Mark gets you to pay attention is by drawing parallels between things that are the same, even though they are different. So if we want to know what Jesus is doing, we have to look at what Jesus is doing. But before we get there, here's a few other parallels.

The first thing to notice is that Mark seems to be quite keen on mentioning the synagogue. In fact, it's mentioned a few times. Okay, Jairus has come from the synagogue. But why is the synagogue such a prominent feature here in the passage? Well, the synagogue is where God's people meet together to worship God. It's where God's people meet together to praise God. And this is this synagogue where he could have left it. He could have mentioned it once and then moved on. He mentions it a few times. And he mentions it where you think, well, it doesn't actually need mentioning. You know, for instance, in verse 38, they came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue. Well, why not just say they came to Jairus's house? Why is Mark making us understand it in that way? Well, these are all important. Another thing to notice is that the woman had a discharge of blood for 12 years and the girl's age is 12 years old. Mark is purposely parallel, drawing a parallel between how long this woman has been ill for, how long this woman has been in the condition that she has, to how old the girl is at the present time. Again, Mark is making another very important point. Okay? It is true, everything that Mark is saying, but there are other things which are also true, which he is saying.

You'll also notice that the issue of touching is a prominent one. The woman reaches out and touches Jesus in the crowd, and Jesus reaches out and touches the hand of the little girl. Okay? In both occasions, you have this touching. Now, that wouldn't be at all surprising until you consider, under Levitical law, that you're not allowed to do that. Okay? You're not allowed to touch people given the conditions. Okay? A woman with the type of condition that she had is not allowed to touch anybody else, and under Levitical law, no person is allowed to touch a dead body. And Mark knows that.

Mark knows that most of his readers would know that if they've read the Old Testament. And so, he's purposely drawing these things out so that you would understand what he's saying. And then, of course, you have this wonderful phrase of daughter. Jesus refers to the woman that is healed by touching him as daughter. Daughter, your faith has made you well. Your faith has healed you. Your faith is, right, daughter. And then, of course, we hear that the daughter is on the point of death. Your daughter is dead. Okay? So, Mark is, all of a sudden, what looks like two independent stories. Mark is purposely drawing out the things that are exactly the same about them. Now, it would be fair to say, on the surface, okay, these are the sort of the first-hand answers, that Jesus Christ has power over disease and death. And that's good. Jesus does have power over disease and death. And that is a point that is being made. But that's not the only point that's being made. It's clear that faith here is also a focus because Jesus commends the woman for her faith. Okay? Daughter, your faith has made you well.

But it's also true that Jairus has faith in Christ for his daughter. I actually taught about this in the Bible study once, didn't I? About how important it is, the faith of one person for another. You know, so often we teach in the church, you've got to have faith all by yourself. Yet there's plenty of examples in Scripture. The centurion who had faith in Christ for his servant who couldn't get out of bed because he was ill. Jairus, who has faith in Christ on behalf of his daughter. His daughter can exercise any faith at all. She's dead. But Jairus exercises faith in Jesus on her behalf.

[19 : 02] Perhaps that's something we should take a look at another time because that's really, really important. You know, we focus quite a lot on your individual faith. That is important. But there are other levels here which equally need to be understood. Now, because this woman has had a discharge of blood for 12 years, and the fact that she is the same age as the, or it's the same length of time, period of time, as the daughter, who is also 12, Mark is making a point.

He is making a powerful connection between the two. Okay? Between the two. Something is true about both of them here which is the same, even though they are different. Also with the touching. In both cases, Jesus is making a point about touching when touching is not allowed. If they're going to follow the letter of the law, then you should not be touching. Let me put it this way. When Jesus asked who was it that touched him, the woman rightly feared for a number of different reasons because she would have known that because she was ceremonially unclean because of her condition, through no fault of her own, she has this condition. That means she's unclean. That means she's not allowed to come into contact with other people. That means she's not allowed to touch other people.

So how many people do you think she touched to get through the crowd to get to Jesus? Well, I would imagine quite a lot. Okay? Quite a lot to get to Jesus. So on the way in, she's unclean, but on the way out, she's perfectly made whole, perfectly made clean. So she fears for the obvious reasons she would have understood that being ceremonially unclean, she could not come into contact with anybody else. And Jesus is making the point that because she is ceremonially unclean, she would have also have been a person who could never have attended the synagogue, the women's section. And this is why the synagogue is mentioned. A person who is ceremonially unclean in this sense is a person who's not allowed to enter into the temple of God to worship God with the rest of God's people. She's not allowed, right? Because of her uncleanness, she is separated from that type of environment. She's not allowed to attend the worship of God. And so for 12 years, for 12 years, she's been an outcast. For 12 years, she's been on her own. For 12 years, she's been separated from the living God and in the worship sense and from the people who belong to the living God because of her condition. When Jesus is in the house of the ruler of the synagogue, we have this thing mentioned again, Jesus reaches out and touches the hand of the little girl. Again, not something you're allowed to do, okay? You're not allowed to touch the hand of a dead person because if you do, you'll become unclean. And Mark knows this. Mark understands that everyone else knows this, but this is Jesus. And Jesus is making a really important point here about the two things that have happened that should never have happened. Touching. The two people being touched should not have come into contact with anybody because of the condition that they were in, the little girl being dead and the woman having the discharge of blood. And Jesus, by using the word daughter of the woman, is making a connection to the little girl who's a daughter of Jairus. And the reason why Jesus is making this connection is because he wants you to see that the woman's condition is the equivalent to the little girl's. That the woman's condition before God and before her community is the equivalent as the little dead girl's. In other words, her uncleanness parallels the girl's death in the sense that worship of God is not possible. She's not able to worship God. She has been separated. For 12 years, she has been as good or as bad as being dead. That's the kind of point that Jesus is driving home here. Death separates people from the living. And this woman has been separated from the living God through her condition. In other words, she's the equivalent of being dead. Alive but dead. So her situation is super serious. Really serious. Just as serious as the dead girl. And these are the truths that Mark is bringing out for us. To get us to see the parallel between the little girl who's 12 years old and is dead and the woman who's been suffering for 12 years is equally, in the eyes of

Jesus, dead. Because she's unable to worship God and come into the temple. So here's a few considerations that I think we need to make here. One of the things is we must be really clear why Jesus has come. What actually has he come to do? Well, on the surface, we can say he's come to cure disease and death.

That's true. I mean, that's really true. And that's really, really good. But Jesus has also come to restore people back to worship. Okay? Because that's also death. People who do not worship God, who are made to worship God, are dead. And that's the parallel that Mark is drawing here. That the girl's condition, or the woman's condition rather, is the equivalent of the girl's. That she, not being in the worship of God, is dead. Jesus reverses that in the sense that he healed her. The power came out of him, and she is now made well. Daughter, your faith has healed you, made you well. Salvation, faith in Christ, restores you back to worship. It gives you life, but that life is defined as being worship.

[25 : 49] You read Romans 12. What is the first thing that he says after he gets you to consider the gospel? Therefore, present yourself to God as a living sacrifice, for this is your reasonable worship.

Your whole life has been saved for the purpose of worshiping God. And this means a couple of things. Number one, that God puts worship on a level that perhaps we don't. You know, we can reduce worship down to perhaps a few songs, a few prayers, a few certain things. But God is saying that worship is the whole way of life. And this is something that's been expressed by Jesus here and elsewhere.

It's also true that worship is no longer confined to a single place. Okay? It is no longer confined to a single place, but it does happen in places. Okay? It's not confined to a place because we worship God wherever we are, but there are different forms of worship, and this must be considered. Worship is this, the creature responding to the creator properly in every area of life.

That's worship. Now, for some, the moment you say, well, worship isn't confined to a place, for some, this gives them reason enough to then be absent. Okay? If worship is not confined to one location, i.e. a church service, i.e. the synagogue, i.e. whatever, then I cannot be absent from worship because worship is everywhere. But that's the very kind of thinking that the Bible tells you not to do.

The very kind of thinking that the Bible encourages you not to proceed in. In fact, the Bible clearly teaches in Hebrews that you are not to neglect the meeting together. You are not to neglect that coming together. And this is because that while it is true that there is no defined place, it's not equally true that all places are a place of worship. So I'm going to do a little thought experiment with you, something for you to imagine for a moment. Not that I want you to do it, but I would like you to imagine it just to root it in real life. I want you to imagine that you are living in sin. Okay? I want you to imagine that you're living in sin. Now this, I want to put a disclaimer, this is not an encouragement in any way for you to go and live in sin, but I want to ground it in real life. And living in sin is literally living contrary to God's ways of worship. Okay?

[28 : 29] That's all that living in sin is. It is contrary to God's way of worship. Now you should not be comforted if someone encourages you in that. Okay? Whatever it may be, social media, the pub, okay, a number of other things, you should not be comforted in it. Even if you got, I think it's called a Facebook like. You know, you think, well, Daniel's come over to the dark side. No, I really haven't come over to the dark side, but I am aware, at least I've been made aware, that there are such things as Facebook likes. You post something and people can like it. Well, imagine for a moment that you're living in sin and someone gives you a Facebook like. Now that's not something that you should be comforted in. Neither you should be comforted by the fact that if someone gives you balloons or a card or flowers or chocolate saying, welcome to your new home. Neither you who are receiving those gifts or the person who's sending you those gifts are actually engaged in worship.

Now we might say, well, that person's living in sin, but the person giving the gift isn't. No, because living in sin is anything contrary to the worship of God. And that's the point that Jesus is making here. It is true that the worship of God is not conditioned, reserved only for the synagogue, but it is equally true that not all places are a place where God is worshipped. And that's the point.

This woman, in her condition of being unclean, is not in a position where she is worshipping God. She is unclean. She is ceremonially unclean. And Jesus is healing her back to life, to life. And life is defined as the worshipping God in spirit and in truth. This woman is not separated from God by distance. This woman is separated from God by being unclean.

In the same way someone living in sin is not separated from God by distance. They are separated from God by living in sin. They're living contrary to the way that God has declared. And that's the condition. That contrary condition is the very thing that Jesus saves this woman from, heals this woman from. Jesus is not elevating worship to a brand new high. He's simply getting us to see its proper place in the life of a person. In the same way, some things belong in certain locations. Okay? I am often told that doesn't go there. Okay? It doesn't. I mean, I always put it there. I know, but it doesn't go there. Well, if that's true on an earthly level, then it's equally true when it comes to God. God has the right to say, that doesn't go there. But I've been putting it there. Okay. Okay. But it doesn't go there. That's not where it goes. And worship goes right at the center of a person's life. This woman, who is the equivalent to this girl, dead, has been restored back to worship. Remember what Jesus said to the woman at the well who was living in sin? Okay, she's had several husbands and the man that she's with now is not her husband. What's the first thing that

Jesus gets her to understand? Worship. There's coming a day when you'll worship God in spirit and in truth. He does the same for the woman at the well that he does for this woman here. So here's the conclusion. As a Christian, we can be like the child who understands things on the A level, the B level, the C level, the D level. But there are always more levels to understand things on. It's called growth. It's called learning. It's called, I don't know it all, but I would really like to know more.

[33 : 00] But I don't want to know more for the sake of knowing more. I want to know more so that I can change more. Because we're to grow in the knowledge of God and salvation and his word. We are meant to understand what Jesus has come to do so that we can understand what Jesus is actually doing.

What is Jesus doing with me? Well, I can answer that the moment I know what Jesus has actually come to do. And because God in Christ is the author of life, not death, life, not death, this means that life looks a particular way. And the way that it looks is like worshipping God thoroughly. Life, as defined by God, is an act of worship. Amen.