

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 9/12/04 Brad Brandt

Mark 5:21-43 "Big Problems for Us, No Problem for Him"*

Main Idea: We learn three amazing truths about Jesus in Mark 5:21-43 that remind us that problems that are big for us are no problem for Him.

I. Jesus gives mercy to the meek (21-24).

A. Jairus asked Jesus for help (21-23).

1. He was desperate.

2. He believed Jesus could make a difference.

B. Jesus went with Jairus (24).

II. Jesus gives power to the powerless (25-34).

A. The woman had turmoil (25-26).

1. She had physical problems (25).

2. She had financial problems (26).

3. She had emotional problems (26).

B. The woman had faith (27-29).

1. She believed Jesus could do what others couldn't do.

2. She acted upon her belief.

3. She experienced what she expected.

C. The woman had fear (30-33).

1. We don't deserve the Lord's help.

2. We deserve His judgment.

D. The woman had freedom (34).

III. Jesus gives hope to the hopeless (35-43).

A. Jairus learned his daughter died (35).

B. Jairus learned to exhibit faith rather than fear (36).

1. When we live by our feelings we experience fear.

2. When we take Jesus at His Word we're living by faith.

C. Jairus learned that Jesus can do the impossible (37-43).

1. The Lord sees what others miss (37-40).

2. The Lord does what no one else can do (41-43).

Response: Our problems are occasions for us to trust the Lord.

Problems. We all have them. Health problems. Family problems. Personal problems. Relational problems. Work problems. And more.

What do you do with your problems? Some people run from them—or at least they try to run. Others roll up their sleeves and attack problems—and they pride themselves at being problem-fixers, without any help, thank you. Some folks become anxious. Others look for ways to drown out the problem—with a bottle or music or a hobby. Others run to people for help. And so on. In reality we've all probably responded in several of these ways to our problems.

What should we do with our problems? Chuck Swindoll offers wise counsel, "Every problem is an opportunity to prove God's power. Every day we encounter countless golden opportunities, brilliantly disguised as insurmountable problems."

Problems are wonderful opportunities to see God work. But if we don't know the Lord, or don't know Him well, we'll miss out. We won't see Him, only the problem.

You say, "I want to learn how to see God more clearly in my problems. What do I need to do?" We find the practical answer by examining the lives of two people who faced significant problems—one a father with a dying 12-year-old daughter, and the other a woman who'd wrestled with a disease for twelve years. Both responded by doing the same thing. They came to Jesus. What happened? We'll see this morning.

Our text is Mark 5:21-43. We learn three amazing truths about Jesus in this passage that remind us that problems that are big for us are no problem for Him.

I. Jesus gives mercy to the meek (21-24).

Verse 21 provides the setting—"When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake." In our last message we traveled with Jesus to the region of the Gerasenes. The Lord left Galilee, silenced a storm at sea en route, and upon landing on the eastern shore met a demoniac. Jesus liberated the demon-infested man by casting the spirits into a herd of swine. The people of Gerasene responded by begging Jesus to leave their region, and so Jesus and His disciples left by boat and returned to the northwest side of the lake, probably near Capernaum.

Mark says a large crowd gathered. It's ironic, isn't it? The Gerasenes were glad to see Him go while the Galileans were glad to see Him come. Two people in particular were waiting, both with problems, the first a man named Jairus.

Verses 22-23—"Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with him, 'My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.'" Note that...

A. Jairus asked Jesus for help (21-23). The text states that Jairus was a synagogue ruler. The title indicates he was a man of considerable importance, in charge of the administration of the local synagogue. Barclay describes him as "the president of the board of elders responsible for the good management of the synagogue."

At this point I must remind you that the synagogue officials didn't have too high of an opinion of Jesus. Not long before this, the Lord challenged their petty rules by healing a man on the Sabbath in the synagogue, and consequently the Jewish leaders began to plot how they might kill Jesus (3:6). Later the teachers of the law in this very region accused Jesus of being demon-possessed (3:22).

So basically the religious leaders didn't like Jesus. They felt threatened by Him. He didn't fit into their mold.

A person who makes a judgment of another before he has examined the evidence is guilty of prejudice. Prejudice means "a judging beforehand." Here's an example...

"When Sir James Simpson discovered its use as an anesthetic, especially in the case of childbirth, chloroform was held to be, 'a decoy of Satan, apparently opening itself to bless women, but in the end hardening them, and robbing God of the deep, earnest cries, that should arise to him in time of trouble.'"

As a group the Jewish leaders wrote off Jesus. But here's one who didn't. Jairus actually came to Jesus to ask for help. Why? For two reasons...

1. *He was desperate.* He came and fell at Jesus' feet. Why, he even *begged* Jesus to help him.

Ponder that. It took great humility for this synagogue ruler to come and ask Jesus for help. Keep in mind, Jesus wasn't too popular with the folks Jairus ran with. It seems strange that he would leave his daughter on her death bed to go searching for Jesus. Why didn't he send messengers? Perhaps he came because he knew nobody else that would go. He was a *desperate* man.

It's amazing what a person will do when they see their *need*. I read this week the story of a Russian man named Valentine, a one time celebrity soccer player who later became a prosperous businessman. He had everything going for him. But he also family members who loved Christ and came under conviction. He decided to kill his parents to get rid of that conviction, but God wouldn't let him go. Valentine ended up in church on Sunday and as the Word was preached the Holy Spirit broke him. He fell on his knees and cried out to God to save him.

What causes a self-sufficient man to cry out to God? He won't unless he sees that he's not self-sufficient, unless he sees his *need*.

2. *He believed Jesus could make a difference.* "Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live," Jarius said to Jesus. Jarius had heard the stories of Jesus' miracles. It's quite possible he'd seen firsthand what Jesus had done for others—some suggest he was in the delegation that went to Jesus at Capernaum in Luke 7:3 to ask Him to heal a centurion's servant.

But it's one thing to know that Jesus can do something for *others*. It's another thing to act on that knowledge, believing that He can do the same *for you*. Jarius had nowhere else to turn. Only Jesus could help him. The question was, *would He?*

That reminds me of the following story. One dark rainy night a salesman had a flat tire on a lonely road. But to his dismay he had no lug wrench. Seeing a nearby farmhouse, he set out on foot. Surely the farmer would have a lug wrench, he thought. But would he even come to the door? And if he did, he'd probably be furious at being bothered. He's say, "What's the big idea getting me out of bed in the middle of the night?" This thought made the salesman angry. Why, that farmer is a selfish old clod to refuse to help me. Finally the man reached the house. Frustrated and drenched, he banged on the door. "Who's there?" a voice called out from a window overhead.

"You know good and well who it is," yelled the salesman, his face red with anger. "It's me! And you can keep your old lug wrench! I wouldn't borrow it is it was the last one in the county."

There are lots of reasons people refuse to come to Jesus with their problems. "He's too busy with other concerns." "I'm not sure He can do anything." "Maybe He doesn't have time for me." Jarius, a desperate dad, asked Jesus for help.

How did Jesus respond? Verse 24—"So Jesus went with him." If you think about it, that's quite amazing.

B. Jesus went with Jarius (24). The Lord went to help a man who represented the very system that had been hounding Him and was already plotting to kill Him. He went *with* Him! How do you explain that? In a word, *mercy*. The Lord doesn't treat us as we deserve.

Remember the third beatitude? "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth (Matt 5:5)." Jarius, a powerful man, was willing to humble himself and admit his need. Jesus loves that.

You say, "Will Jesus help me with my problems?" The question is yours to answer. *Will you humble yourself and admit you need His help?* Jesus gives mercy to the meek.

II. Jesus gives power to the powerless (25-34).

Verse 24 concludes, "A large crowd followed and pressed around him." In the crowd that day was another desperate person, a woman. In the unfolding drama we learn four things about her.

A. The woman had turmoil (25-26). Verse 25—"And a woman was there." There she is, unnamed in

the text. Tradition says her name was Veronica and that she came from Caesarea Philippi. Three things contributed to her turmoil.

1. *She had physical problems (25)*. "And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years." Apparently, she had some sort of uterine disease, perhaps a hemorrhage which caused chronic bleeding. She'd battled this ailment for over a decade.

2. *She had financial problems (26)*. "She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse." The KJV says she "had suffered many things of many physicians." It's interesting that in his parallel account Luke tones down the account, with no mention of her great loss of money to the doctors.

Even today a person with a troublesome disease hears lots of recommendations. "You should try this. I'm sure it'll help you."

The Jewish Talmud itself gives no fewer than eleven cures for such an ailment, as Barclay explains, "Some of them are tonics and astringents; but some of them are sheer superstitions like carrying the ashes of an ostrich-egg in a linen rag in summer and a cotton rag in winter; or carrying a barley corn which had been found in the dung of a white she-ass."

This woman tried everything but the only thing she got was poorer. And the problem wasn't only physical and financial.

3. *She had emotional problems (26)*. In fact, a woman suffering from a bleeding disorder in first century Israel faced great hardship. According to the law she was ceremonially unclean. Consequently, her husband, if she was married, could divorce her. She was excommunicated from the services of the synagogue. She was not allowed to have contact with people.

What a tragic way to live! Twelve years of physical, financial, and emotional agony. Indeed, the woman had turmoil.

B. The woman had faith (27-29). Verses 27-28—"When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, 'If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.'" Note three things about this woman's faith.

1. *She believed Jesus could do what others couldn't do*. "If I can just touch His robe, I'll be healed," she said to herself. "Jesus can do what the doctors have failed to do. I know He can, I *believe* He can."

2. *She acted upon her belief*. She *came to Jesus*. Of course, her predicament was embarrassing. To go and tell Jesus in public about her problem was unthinkable. As I just mentioned, her ailment made her ceremonially unclean—she was supposed to avoid contact with people. But she needed Jesus. He was her only and last hope. So she decided to try to touch Jesus without Him or anyone else knowing.

Her faith seems to be mixed with some superstition. It was a common belief in that day that the power of a healer was transmitted to his clothing. "If I can just touch His clothes," she told herself. Nonetheless, she acted upon her belief.

My friend, if faith is real it takes action. Hell will be full of people who "believed" Jesus could save them, but they never acted on that belief. They never came to Jesus. What's more, churches are full of people who "believe" Jesus can do great things, but they're coasting along in frustration because they refuse to act on that belief. Not this woman. She believed Jesus could do what others couldn't. She acted upon her belief.

3. *She experienced what she expected*. Verse 29—"Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her

body that she was freed from her suffering."

That's astounding. Her faith was weak, timid, and perhaps somewhat superstitious, yet it was faith. And the Lord honored it. Due to the kindness of God even imperfect faith at times brings blessings. She did not go home disappointed.

There's a lesson here for us, as Wiersbe reminds us: "Not everybody had the same degree of faith, but Jesus responds to faith no matter how feeble it might be. When we believe, He shares His power with us and something happens in our lives."

Think about something. There were others in the crowd who came to Jesus. They even touched Him. But nothing happened to them, no miracle. They left in the same condition as they came. What was the difference? They didn't have faith. Being around Jesus doesn't change your life. Believing in Him does.

The contrast between Jairus and this woman is striking. Jairus is an important community leader. This woman is a "nobody"—yet Jesus accepted them both. Jairus was about to lose a daughter who had blessed his life with twelve years of happiness. This woman just lost an affliction that caused her twelve years of misery. As a synagogue ruler Jairus undoubtedly had money. This woman is bankrupt. But Jesus was the answer to both.

The woman had turmoil. She had faith.

C. The woman had fear (30-33). Verse 30—"At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, 'Who touched my clothes?'" Remember, the sovereign Lord doesn't ask questions to gain information, but for teaching purposes. "Who touched my clothes?" He asked.

Verse 31—"You see the people crowding against you,' his disciples answered, 'and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" Luke 8:45 says that Peter did the talking.

Verse 32—"But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it." The suspense grew as Jesus made eye contact with the men and women around Him. Finally, the "guilty" party stepped forward.

Verse 33—"Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth." Note those final words, *told Him the whole truth*, the whole, embarrassing truth about her problem and about her faith.

You say, "Why did Jesus make the woman go public? Why didn't He let her remain anonymous?" Be assured it wasn't to harm her (He's not going to rebuke her), but to help her in even greater ways.

For starters, Jesus wants her to know that it was her faith, not the mere touching of His robe, that healed her. If He hadn't stopped her she would have left clinging to her superstitious notions (and telling others) about the miracle. "Your *faith* has healed you," Jesus emphasized.

Furthermore, Jesus made it clear that it wasn't enough simply for her to believe in her heart. He wanted her to confess *with her mouth* (as we must, according to Rom 10:9).

It was a costly confession. Cole comments, "For a woman to speak in public before an Asian crowd, and above all to speak of such personal matters, would be very humbling for her, but humility is an essential within the kingdom of God."

Perhaps the reason we struggle with Jesus making this a public matter is because we tend to forget two things.

1. *We don't deserve the Lord's help.* So often we have the notion that God exists for us. If He can help me, He owes it to me to help me. So what if a person wants physical healing and not spiritual transformation? That's the person's business, isn't it? If I want God to heal me—and no more—I've got a right to His healing help.

Beloved, the fact of the matter is this. We don't deserve the Lord's help. Rather...

2. *We deserve His judgment.* "For the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23)."

D. The woman had freedom (34). "He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.'"

If the woman had slipped away in the crowd, like she intended, she would have returned home physically whole, that's true. But Jesus had something greater in mind for her, spiritual wholeness.

He calls her "Daughter," the only time in the gospels that Jesus addressed a woman by that title. The word translated "healed" is *sesoken* which can mean "saved." Here Jesus seems to have both physical healing and spiritual saving in mind. "Your faith has *saved* you, both physically and spiritually."

Put it all together and Jesus is saying, "Daughter—you who are now part of my family—your faith has not only resulted in physical healing but spiritual healing, too. You can go home whole now. Your suffering is over."

Jesus gives mercy to the meek. He also give power to the powerless.

III. Jesus gives hope to the hopeless (35-43).

At this point, the attention returns to Jairus. Jairus is about to learn three things.

A. Jairus learned his daughter died (35). "While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. 'Your daughter is dead,' they said. 'Why bother the teacher any more?'"

The messengers utter two tragic sentences, one a statement of fact, the other a question. The statement—"Your daughter is dead," followed by a question, "Why bother the teacher any more?" I'm sure these fellows meant well, but they could use some help in ministering to those who lose loved ones—we could all use it probably.

We tend to say the craziest of things in times of loss. "Praise the Lord, your daughter is in heaven, Jairus! Keep your chin up. Remember, all things work for good!" All true, for sure, but in terms of timing, lacking and even out of place.

Jesus showed what He thought of their suggestion in verse 36—"Ignoring what they said [there are times to refute people for things they say, but at other times it's best simply to ignore, such as here], Jesus told the synagogue ruler, 'Don't be afraid; just believe.'" With the Lord's help Jairus is about to learn something else.

B. Jairus learned to exhibit faith rather than fear (36).

Think of what's going through the mind of Jairus right now. "Lord, I know that woman needed your help, but my child was dying when I came to You. I told You that if we didn't get there quickly, it would be too late. Couldn't you have helped her later?"

The Lord's delays often seem puzzling to us, don't they? "What's He waiting for?" we wonder. "I asked Him

for help, and I thought He was going to help, but now it seems like He's busy with someone else."

I love this insight from J. D. Jones, "The discipline of delay is hard to bear. But the delay is not due to the fact that God grudges to bless us; it is because He has other and better blessings in store for us than those for which we ask."

Don't be afraid; just believe, Jesus told Jairus—literally, "Be not afraid, go on believing." In other words, "Jairus, when you came to me a few minutes ago, you believed I could help you. Don't stop now. Don't give in to your fears. Keep on believing."

Notice the contrast between fear and faith.

1. *When we live by our feelings we experience fear*. "It looks bad, Jesus, that You delayed. I don't see how it's a good thing that You took so long getting to my daughter. I feel like You made a mistake, Jesus."

We do the same when we live by our feelings. "Lord, I've lost my job." "Lord, the doctor says I've got a disease." "Lord, my boyfriend broke up with me." In all these it doesn't *feel* like God is up to anything good. But for His children, He is, and we, like Jairus, have a choice to make. Fear not, keep believing.

2. *When we take Jesus at His Word we're living by faith*. Faith means you respond to a situation based on what you know about Jesus. Is He true? Is He reliable? Is He able to make a difference? Then I will trust Him regardless what my feelings say.

C. Jairus learned that Jesus can do the impossible (37-43). Two things are true of the Lord, and Jairus observed both that day long ago.

1. *The Lord sees what others miss (37-40)*. Verse 37—"He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James." We're not told why. Would it be too crowded in the room? More likely, what Jesus was about to do was so spectacular that Jesus wanted only a few to see it—remember, He's heading for the cross.

Verse 38—"When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly." Matthew 9:23 says there were flute players at the house, too, professional mourners, if you will. In that day when a death occurred, there were guidelines for mourning. A mourner wasn't allowed to work, shave, get dressed up, or wear shoes. He had to eat in his own house and wasn't allowed to leave town for thirty days. It was customary to eat sitting on the floor, using a chair as a table.

Verses 39-40—"He went in and said to them, 'Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.' But they laughed at him."

The fact that their tears turned to laughter so quickly seems to indicate the superficial nature of the grief of these mourners. Tears in the eyes don't necessarily indicate a broken heart.

By saying the girl is asleep, Jesus isn't saying the girl didn't die. Luke 8:53 says, "They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead." They knew she was dead, and so did Jesus. But to the believer death is like sleep, a temporary rest that will soon end. And Jesus knew this girl's sleep was about to end.

By the way, here's why Christians bury their loved ones, not in a graveyard, but in a *cemetery*, "a sleeping place." The point again is, the Lord sees what others miss.

2. *The Lord does what no one else can do (41-43)*. Verse 40 again, "After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was." Faith opens up opportunities to see the Lord work in new ways. The lack of faith forfeits those opportunities.

Verse 41—"He took her by the hand and said to her, 'Talitha koum!' (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Jesus and the disciples were bilingual. Here Mark recounts (as we've mentioned before, telling the story from Peter's perspective) the very words Jesus spoke, Aramaic words, *Talitha koum*, literally, "Little lamb, get up!"

Verse 42—"Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished." Note that. She not only stood up, but she began to *walk around*. Jesus not only restored her life, but healed her from the affliction that took her life in the first place.

Verse 43—"He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat." The fact that God can do miracles doesn't remove our responsibility for human care. Give her food, Jesus said. But don't tell people, He also said.

Why keep it silent? Jesus knew that if this news spread too quickly, He'd have more than crowd control problems. He'd have pandemonium. Though He healed the sick and even raised the dead, that was to prove His credentials. The reason He came was to give hope beyond this life, and to do that He Himself had *to die*. That's why He came. To give His life as a ransom payment for sinners, climaxed by His own conquering of death.

Remember, though Jairus's daughter received life again that day, she eventually died again. Her greatest need remained. It's our greatest need, too. She needed a Savior.

One more thought. Jesus didn't fear making contact with untouchables. We've seen Him touch a leper, now a dead body, things a good Jew never did so as to avoid ceremonial defilement. But when Jesus touched unclean things, rather than becoming unclean He made them clean!

And so He does with us. He makes sinners clean. Yes, Jesus gives mercy to the meek, power to the powerless, and hope to the hopeless.

What are you facing in life right now? Problems? Realize this, my friend...

Response: Our problems are occasions for us to trust the Lord.

Let's learn from Jairus and an unnamed woman this morning. *Don't be afraid. Just believe.*