

## **Meet Jesus, Find Hope for our Fears**

### **Mark 5:21-43**

Let me ask you a question  
Many fears threaten to overwhelm us  
Fear of loneliness  
Fear of not being loved  
Fear of being controlled by someone or something else  
Fear of failure and rejection  
Fear of an unknown future  
And two of the greatest fears  
Sickness and death

#### **How do you deal with your fears?**

Before he became the most popular podcaster in the world  
Joe Rogan use to host a popular TV show called “Fear Factor”  
Where each week, three contestants would compete by tackling their fears head on  
There would usually be some sort of physical fear like a jump from a tall building  
A gross-out fear like eating live bugs or animal organs  
And then some sort of extreme fear like escaping shackles while being underwater.  
Now if I went on that show I would surely have been traumatised for life  
But usually the kind of people who went on that show  
Were intense, super motivated people  
I know a few people like that

But most of us are not like that  
We deal with our fears in other ways  
Some of us choose to avoid our fears hoping they’ll go away  
But knowing they usually get worse  
For example, they believe that procrastination is not really about being lazy  
But has some sort of emotional dysregulation like a fear of failure behind it  
Some of us withdraw and isolate with our fears  
We know that it would be healthier to reach out and to talk  
But often we don’t know where to start so it’s easier to pull away from others  
Some of us self-medicate when our fears feel overwhelming  
That might be alcohol  
Or some other drug or distraction to help numb the pain and distract us  
I comfort eat when I am stressed or overwhelmed about something  
Many of us turn to doomscrolling on our phones when we feel overwhelmed  
But the cruel irony is that we get trapped consuming even more negative content  
Feeding our fears and making them worse

Is there a better way?  
Is there hope in the face of our fears?  
I believe there is  
Today, we’re going to meet two people who were gripped by two of our biggest fears  
Sickness and death  
And when all else failed they turned to Jesus.

And here’s the point that I hope you’ll see today

## **Fear that meets Jesus with Faith becomes Real Hope**

Last week we learned that a lot of Jesus' public ministry takes place around the lake of Galilee in the north of Israel  
And in chapter 5, we're not told exactly where Jesus' boat landed but it's possible it's the village of Capernaum where we met Jesus last week  
And like last week  
It's not surprising that there is already a mob of people waiting for him  
Due to the popularity of his public ministry

And forcing his way to the front of the crowd we meet Jairus  
Someone who had a degree of status in this village  
He was a leader of the synagogue  
The local place of worship  
Where Jewish people would go to pray to God  
And to hear the Scriptures read and taught  
Jairus as the synagogue lead, would have had the role of choosing and supervising  
Those who read and taught the scriptures  
So Jairus is someone of influence  
He has some authority  
But that can't help him right now  
Because right now he is just a helpless father who's gripped by fear  
His young daughter is on the verge of death  
And it's likely that Jairus has heard the various reports in the village  
Of Jesus' power to heal sickness  
After all, he'd made a paralysed man walk again  
Maybe this Jesus can do something for my little girl, he thinks  
And we're told that he fell at Jesus' feet and begged  
This is not the normal behaviour of a respected Jewish leader  
But a man who is utterly helpless  
Doesn't care how he looks to others  
He pleads with Jesus in verse 24

"My little daughter is dying. Come and lay your hands on her so that she can get well and live." <sup>2</sup>

And to Jesus, Jairus is not someone of influence  
He is just someone who shows faith in Jesus in his hour of need  
Last week I described faith in Jesus as presented in the gospel of Mark as DDT  
Desperate Dependent Trust  
We saw this DDT when four friends brought their paralysed friend to Jesus  
Who forgave his sins and made him walk  
Jesus responded to their faith  
And now Jairus turns to Jesus with this DDT  
And true to form, the compassion of Jesus drives him to respond to his faith

There are often times when I feel very helpless in my job  
But the times where I have felt the most helpless is with families with sick or dying children  
Once I was with a couple at the Royal Children's Hospital  
It was late, about 10 or 11 at night  
And this couple's daughter needed urgent surgery

She had been born very premature at 27 weeks  
And there was a perforation in her intestine  
And I was with the couple when one of the surgical team said to them  
“Your daughter will die unless we operate”  
The surgeons went into the operating theatre with their tiny daughter  
Who could fit into one hand  
And the three of us sat outside the operating theatre  
I felt completely helpless  
And I can only imagine the fear and helplessness this couple felt  
The greatest fear of any parent is for their child to die before them  
And so I did the only thing I could do with them  
I prayed with them and we cried out to God for mercy and healing for their tiny daughter  
And God heard and answered those prayers  
As the surgical team were able to fix the perforation  
And that tiny baby is now a happy and healthy girl in primary school

You can imagine with this large crowd pressing on Jesus  
Progress is painfully slow for Jairus  
And the last thing Jairus needs is any delay

Well enter the bleeding woman in verse 25

The crowd was the last thing Jairus wanted  
But the crowd was exactly what this woman wanted  
Because she’s on a secret mission  
For twelve years she’s been suffering from chronic bleeding  
She’s spent all her savings  
On every medical treatment to no avail  
In fact, her bleeding is getting worse

Chronic sickness is so debilitating  
Many listening to this sermon  
Battle with the daily challenges of chronic conditions  
It might be pain and fatigue that brings exhaustion and casts a dark cloud on everything  
It might be a disability that severely limits your freedom to do the things you want to do  
It might be a mental illness like depression or anxiety  
It might be a condition that requires regular hospital visits like chemo or dialysis  
And sometimes the treatment feels as bad or worse than the condition

And for some, like this woman, sickness carries social stigma  
Because of her constant bleeding she was considered unclean  
According to the Old Testament law in the book of Leviticus  
Certain bodily discharges of men and women  
Made a person unclean for a period of time  
Now note, this was not regarding morality  
It’s not that this lady is sinning against God in her bleeding  
But her bleeding made her ritually unclean  
That means she could not worship at the temple  
And she could not come into contact with others  
So she shouldn’t actually be in this crowd  
Because everyone she came into contact with

Would also be ritually unclean

So imagine how much suffering this woman is going through  
There's the physical suffering – the actual bleeding  
The economic suffering – she's spent all her savings on medical treatment that doesn't work  
The emotional suffering – this has been going on for twelve long years  
The social suffering – she's isolated from people otherwise they become unclean  
The spiritual suffering – her uncleanness means she can't worship at the temple

And I'm sure the great fear that this woman carries  
Along with all who battle with chronic sickness  
Is this: Do I have to suffer like this for the rest of my life?

Now note, this lady is completely different to Jairus  
Jairus is an insider – a religious leader  
But she is considered an outsider – an unclean woman  
She has no status, no influence,  
Jairus falls dramatically in front of the crowd at Jesus' feet  
This woman quietly sneaks through the crowd to get to Jesus' feet  
But one thing she has in common with Jairus  
Is her faith – her DDT  
In a state of complete helplessness  
Her desperate dependent trust drives her to Jesus  
For he is the only option left  
Verse 28

<sup>28</sup> For she said, "If I just touch his clothes, I'll be made well." .

As I mentioned last week  
Faith in Jesus in the gospel of Mark  
Is not neat and tidy  
The woman's faith in Jesus is not picture perfect  
It's a bit transactionary isn't it?  
She's not after relationship with Jesus  
She wants access to his healing power  
And her faith has a good dose of superstition  
Jesus is like a magical talisman to her  
Touch him and you get healed

And so the secret mission is sneak in, touch his cloak, sneak out  
And so she quietly weaves her way through the crowd  
Maybe concealing her face so that no one recognises her  
And finally she makes her way to Jesus  
And the moment she touches his cloak  
She is immediately healed  
A stunning miracle occurs just as she thought  
She's been highly aware of her body for years  
And she knows something has dramatically changed  
That's the first part of the covert mission accomplished  
But now the rest of the mission is to quietly sneak away without anyone finding out.

Except she's busted

Jesus felt something happen too when the woman touched his cloak  
Power has gone out from his body  
And he knows someone is responsible  
He stops on his journey to Jairus' house  
And he looks around at the crowd  
And imagine for a moment how the woman is feeling  
Hoping against hope that Jesus won't lock his gaze on her  
Perhaps even worse now than the suffering of the bleeding  
Is the fear of shame in an honour shame culture  
Jesus might expose her for what she's done  
How she shouldn't be there  
How she's taken something from him without asking  
So rather than being exposed  
She decides to come clean

<sup>33</sup> The woman, with fear and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before him, and told him the whole truth.

Now think of how vulnerable this woman's situation is.  
Yes she's been physically healed  
But now she could be socially and spiritually condemned by Jesus  
Everything hinges on what Jesus says next  
Verse 34

<sup>34</sup> "Daughter," he said to her, "your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be healed from your affliction."

Jesus' reaction is filled with warmth and compassion  
Even though this woman never acknowledged Jesus  
Jesus will now acknowledge her  
She came to Jesus as a broken body  
But to Jesus she is much more than just a body to be healed  
She is someone made in God's image  
Precious to God  
Loved by God  
She came to Jesus unclean and anonymous  
But she leaves with the dignity of the Son of God calling her "Daughter"  
Instead of rebuking her for taking something from him  
Jesus commends her for her faith in him  
For it was not the touch that healed her  
It was her desperate dependent trust in Him.

The word Jesus used is "saved"  
Your faith has "saved" you  
When he could have said, your faith has healed you  
Which points not just to physical healing but a deeper restoration  
Restoration comes only come with God's salvation  
Peace with God  
Peace with others  
Peace and wholeness with yourself in your body, mind and soul  
An end to suffering  
Jesus brings much more than healing,

He brings salvation.  
Jesus could have let her leave quietly  
But I believe that Jesus stopped her to make a point to the crowd and to us  
You might come to me seeking one thing  
But I offer you so much more than that

Let me ask you this question  
**Is Jesus' worth meeting with your fears?**

Have you ever met someone like this?  
Look at his strength – the power to heal  
Look at his character – kind and gentle  
How many people do you know who are both strong and kind?  
Look at who he welcomes – both insiders like Jairus and outsiders like this woman  
And when this woman brought her fears to Jesus  
Jesus gave her much more than she could have asked for or imagined

Christian author Rebecca McLaughlin writes in her book, *Jesus through the Eyes of Women*

*Instead of humiliating this woman Jesus validates her. She's been excluded from the temple for 12 years and now she's welcomed by the one who is the temple where we meet with God. If we come to Jesus with our need, our desperation, and our shame, we can know he will receive us with tenderness too. He may not heal us here and now. He doesn't promise that. But when we come to him in need, he surely turns himself toward us and receives us, just as he received this woman's touch and justified her actions.*

Fear that meets Jesus with Faith becomes Real Hope  
Will you turn to Jesus with your fears?

Let's not forget about Jairus  
Because all this while  
When Jesus has stopped his journey and given his time to this woman  
The unthinkable happens  
Verse 35

<sup>35</sup> While he was still speaking, people came from the synagogue leader's house and said,  
"Your daughter is dead. Why bother the teacher anymore?"

<sup>36</sup> When Jesus overheard what was said, he told the synagogue leader, "Don't be afraid. Only believe."

Those words, "Your daughter is dead"  
Must have sucked the life out of Jairus  
A parent's greatest fear is realised in a moment  
What must have made it worse for Jairus is thinking "if only"  
Jesus was so near to my house  
"If only" I had gotten to him earlier  
"If only" he hadn't stopped  
"He saved this daughter"  
"But my daughter is dead"  
And In that crucial moment,  
Jesus says "Don't be afraid. Only believe"  
Fear needs to meet Faith

"The DDT you showed before"

"Don't lose it"

I want to show you *who* it is that you're putting your faith in.

They reach the house

And as Jesus does from time to time in Mark's gospel

He takes only his inner circle of three disciples with him – Peter, James and John

They will be the witnesses of what happens next

And like a number of cultures today,

It's likely that there were professional mourners at Jairus' house

Along with family and friends who were grieving.

In front of these people Jesus says in verse 39

"Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep."

The crowd move from weeping loudly to laughing at Jesus

Most likely because of the professional mourners in their presence

They find what Jesus says about this girl completely delusional

Jairus' daughter is well and truly dead not asleep

While Jesus might have been laughable to some present.

If you were a family member of the girl

You might take offense at what Jesus is saying

"Don't give Jairus false hope – she's dead, not asleep"

But Jesus is hinting something to us

Death to Jesus is like sleep he can wake us from.

And so Jesus shoos everyone away

Except the girl's parents and his three disciples

Jesus is not wanting a circus

This is a private moment for family

Verse 41

<sup>41</sup>Then he took the child by the hand and said to her, "Talitha kum" (which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, get up"). <sup>42</sup>Immediately the girl got up and began to walk. (She was twelve years old.) At this they were utterly astounded.<sup>43</sup> Then he gave them strict orders that no one should know about this and told them to give her something to eat.

Here in this young girl's room filled with death and grief

Jesus shows us once again His strength and kindness

He reaches out to touch the hand of this dead body

Something that should have made Jesus unclean

But this is the Son of God Most High

Jesus is not afraid of death's curse

Instead the power that healed the bleeding woman

Now brings the dead to life

And with those precious words, "Little girl get up"

Jesus performs another stunning miracle

Jesus wakes the dead as easily as I wake my children from a nap in the car

Those words Jesus said to Jairus, "only believe"

Would have been ringing in his ears

As he stood there dumbfounded at what he has just seen  
As with the bleeding woman,  
Jesus has done more for Jairus than he could ever ask for or imagine  
He came to Jesus with his fear and whatever faith he brought to Jesus  
He could never have imagined Jesus bringing the dead to life

I love that lovely side note  
While everyone else in that room was astounded with what they just saw  
Still picking their jaws up from the floor  
Jesus is the one concerned that the girl might be a bit peckish after dying  
So could someone get this girl something to eat  
Apparently dying gives you the munchies

But did you notice that Jesus said right at the end  
That everyone in that room was not to say anything about what happened  
Which is really surprising  
I mean why wouldn't you want to tell everyone about this?  
I think Jesus said this because he didn't want a spectacle, a side show  
He didn't want people bringing their dead to him all over Israel  
That would distract people from his main mission  
In fact, the bible says that Jesus only raised three people from the dead during his ministry  
No his mission was to die on the cross for our sins  
And then after that, in his own resurrection from the dead  
Jesus would show his strength to conquer the power of death once and for all  
And bring lasting hope to everyone  
His resurrection from the dead  
Opens a door for the resurrection of everyone from the dead

Jesus made this promise in John 11

<sup>25</sup> "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. <sup>26</sup>  
Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

This promise is read at Christian funerals all around the world  
It has brought lasting hope to many generations of people since Jesus said it  
Death – the greatest fear is no match for Jesus  
For faith in Jesus opens a door to eternal life with God in body and soul  
Jairus' daughter would die again even though Jesus raised her  
But the resurrection life that Jesus speaks of here  
This life will last forever  
This life will be rich in peace and joy  
Where God himself will wipe away our tears  
Where the fears of loneliness, sickness, death, suffering and pain  
Will be but a distant memory  
Fear that meets Jesus with faith becomes real hope

So let me ask you

**Could Jesus change *your fear* into real hope?**

Jesus said, the one who believes in me will live  
Not just exist and die, but truly live – with peace and purpose  
This is the Christian hope

Whatever fears overwhelm you now  
Could you bring these fears to Jesus?  
And sure your faith might be a bit sketchy,  
a bit superstitious  
But you see it's who you put your faith in that matters  
If Jesus really is the Son of God  
If he really is as strong and as kind as we've seen today  
And if he is willing to respond to your fears  
As he responded to Jairus and the woman  
Then I would urge you to give Jesus a chance

Just before Christmas I noticed that I was bleeding where I shouldn't be  
I went to the GP who ran blood tests and he said that we should just monitor the situation  
And then this Easter when we were up in Queensland on holiday  
The bleeding increased quite a lot and I made a telehealth appointment with my GP  
And he got me a referral to see a specialist  
And my mind was trying not to race about whether or not it was a tumour of some kind  
And there was this irony  
Because we were going to beautiful beaches like this one at Currimundi  
And I kept thinking whether or not this was the last time I would be coming to these places  
With my wife and kids  
And I shared what was happening with a friend up in Queensland  
And I said to him, because my humour can be quite dark  
The next time you see me at Currimundi  
You might be scattering my ashes  
After about a month and two visits to the specialist  
He confirmed that the bleeding was nothing serious  
But you see, it's just a matter of time  
Eventually something will get me and those I love  
Even as I say this I have two relatives in the grips of dementia  
Another relative who has had more than forty rounds of chemo for stage 4 cancer  
My mum battles daily with Parkinsons and Rheumatoid arthritis  
Fear threatens to overwhelm  
But Jesus stands before me and says  
"Don't be afraid, just believe"  
"Son, Daughter, your faith in me can save you"  
"The one who believes in me will never die"

If you're ready to put your desperate dependent trust in Jesus  
And ready to surrender all your fears to Jesus  
I would encourage you to talk to God  
A simple prayer like this

Dear God,  
I come to you with all my fears.  
You have power to forgive, to heal and to give new life.  
Please help me to trust in Jesus and give me hope.  
Amen

And if you pray a prayer like that  
This is the start of your new, hope filled life with Jesus

Share with someone who can help you continue in this new life with Jesus

If you're still trying to figure out who Jesus is  
And whether his death and resurrection are real  
Why not come to Christianity Explored with your friend or family member  
Come see if he is worthy of your faith

Fear that meets Jesus with Faith becomes Real Hope

Let me pray