

BIBLICAL INSIGHTS #114:
JESUS AND JAIRUS--A MIRACLE WITHIN A MIRACLE
By John Temples

The miracles of Jesus are an overwhelming proof of His divinity. We continue to be fascinated and amazed at them. On one occasion, there was a very interesting phenomenon: a miracle within a miracle. Or, if you please, a BOGO miracle--buy one, get one free! Jesus was on His way to a Jewish leader's house to heal his sick daughter, and on the way a diseased woman made her way through the crowd and touched His garment. She was instantly healed. The study of these events would be profitable. We will look at Mark's account, found in Mark 5.

The background: In the early part of His ministry, Jesus preached and did most of His miracles in Galilee, which was in northern Israel adjacent to the Sea of Galilee. After a grueling day in Capernaum, He instructed His disciples to take Him by boat to the eastern shore of the sea (about a six-mile journey). There, in the region of the Gadarenes, He healed a man possessed by a demon. He would have stayed longer, but the local people begged Him to leave, which He promptly did. Jesus will not force His way into anyone's life!

Now let us read Mark's account, beginning at Mark 5:21:

21 Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. 22 And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet 23 and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live." 24 So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

The place where this happened was presumably Capernaum. The man who came to Jesus was Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, hence a Jewish leader.¹ Verse 22 says Jairus fell at Jesus's feet. Matthew's account says he worshipped Him. This

¹ This account furnishes us with an interesting point. The records of the miracles of Jesus were not written in a "Once-upon-a-time-in-a-faraway-land" format. Mark gives many details, including the location, the name of the prominent man involved, and the fact that he had a young daughter. The gospels were written and published within 30 years after the events, at a time when eyewitnesses, both friendly and unfriendly, were still alive. These eyewitnesses could either verify or falsify the information contained in the gospels. This is one of many proofs that the gospels are reliable historical accounts and the miracles of Jesus were real.

is no small proof that Jesus was God in the flesh--He accepted worship. Jairus begged Jesus to come and heal his young daughter, who was near death. Luke tells us that she was 12 years old. Jesus immediately went with him, accompanied by His disciples. While they were on the way, another miracle took place:

25 Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, 26 and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. 28 For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well." 29 Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction.

We can feel for this woman. Not only did she have this malady for 12 years, it had drained her financially; and her particular condition made her ceremonially and socially unclean (Leviticus 15:19-30). And to top it off, no doctor could help her.

Medical science at this time was, shall we say, not very advanced. Here is a description of the cure of this flow of blood that was in use at the time: "Rabbi Jochanan says: 'Take of gum Alexandria, of alum, and of crocus hortensis, the weight of a zuzee each; let them be bruised together, and given in wine to the woman that hath an issue of blood. But if this fail, take of Persian onions nine logs, boil them in wine, and give it to her to drink: and say, Arise from thy flux. But should this fail, Set her in a place where two ways meet, and let her hold a cup of wine in her hand; and let somebody come behind and affright her, and say, Arise from thy flux.'

This woman did something very courageous: she made her way through the crowd and reached out to touch the hem of Jesus's garment, having faith that in doing so she would be healed. The hem was a tassel that every Jewish male was required to have on his garment. William Barclay writes, "Every devout Jew wore an outer robe with four tassels on it, one at each corner. These tassels were worn in obedience to the command in Numbers 15:38-40, and they were to signify to others, and to remind the man himself, that the wearer was a member of the chosen people of God."

She did touch Jesus's garment, and she was immediately healed.

You have to love this woman. Her faith may have been imperfect, and even based partly on superstition; but she had something a lot of us men don't have much of: GUMPTION. Gumption means "bold, energetic initiative; the courage to act."

While we're here, I can't help but notice a great lesson applicable to the Lord's

church: *This woman knew she had to touch HIS garment to be healed.* Many other men wore garments similar to the one Jesus wore that day. But she knew the difference between Him and other men. She did not say, "One garment is as good as another"; or, "I can touch the garment of my choice." I hear people today saying these things about the church. But if we want to receive Christ's blessings and His approval, then we have to touch HIS garment—obey His gospel and be members of His church, the one church of the Bible.

Another lesson is that we must purpose in our hearts to seek Jesus. Think about this: dozens or hundreds of other people touched Jesus as He walked, and they were not healed of anything. Why? They were not expecting it or seeking it. This woman was on a mission: she had a purpose.

Now, just as interesting is the reaction of Jesus. Look at verses 30-34:

30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" 31 But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" 32 And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. 33 But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. 34 And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Verse 30 says, "And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him [notice the power went out of Him, not His garment], turned around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched My clothes?'" This brings up a question that scholars have debated for centuries: How much did Jesus know and when did He know it? Did Jesus ask this question to publicize the miracle or because He really did not know the woman's identity?

Here are two possible explanations:

- Jesus was fully God and omniscient; but as a human He voluntarily laid aside some of the attributes of Godhood, including omniscience. He was not aware of the situation until it happened.
- Jesus knew the whole situation, but acted as if He did not in order to call the crowd's attention to the miraculous healing.

I go with possibility #2: Jesus acted as if He did not know the situation in order to make it a teaching moment. Power would not leave Him without His knowledge and His will. It is a fact that God (and Christ) asked some questions of human

beings not because they needed the information, but in order to teach or bring people to confront their spiritual situation. (God asked Adam, "Where are you?")

So Jesus exposes the woman and makes the situation known. Why? Not to embarrass her, but to bless her and highlight her example of faith. She was likely afraid Christ would resent her, an unclean woman, touching Him; but He put her fears to rest and spoke kindly to her.

The Lord had three purposes for making the healing known to the crowd:

1. To assure the woman that she was truly healed.
2. To have His miraculous power and grace magnified in the people; and
3. To honor the woman's faith and determination.

Special note on verse 34: It says, "And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction." There is a fine point in the Greek here that cries out to be noticed. Look at the expression "Go in peace." In the Greek text, the preposition--"in"-- is not the usual word for "in," which is *en*. The Greek word is *eis*, which means "to, unto, into, or in order to." Why is this significant? Because "go in (*en*) peace" suggests only a momentary respite from suffering, a temporary restful state--roughly equivalent to saying to her, "Have a nice day." Jesus really said, "Go INTO peace, meaning "enter into a permanent state of peace and abide there. Remain whole and well." Beautiful!

Before we do get back to Jairus and his daughter, let me read some very perceptive observations from the Bible Exposition Commentary:

"It is interesting that Jairus and this woman - two opposite people - met at the feet of Jesus. Jairus was a leading Jewish man; she was an anonymous woman with no prestige or resources. He was a synagogue leader, while her affliction kept her from worship. Jairus came pleading for his daughter, the woman came with a need of her own. The girl had been healthy for 12 years, and then died; the woman had been ill for 12 years and was now made whole. Jairus' need was public - all knew it; but the woman's need was private - only Jesus understood. Both Jairus and the woman trusted Christ, and He met their needs."

Mark now resumes the narrative of Jairus and his daughter. I wonder what Jairus was thinking as he witnessed all this with the woman? Was he thinking, "Oh, I wish this woman had not delayed us"? or, "Seeing Jesus heal this woman gives me hope"? Look at verse 35:

35 While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

Back in verse 23, we learned that when Jairus left his house to go to Jesus, his daughter was still alive but near death. Now, messengers come and tell him she has died. The servants of Jairus, and perhaps Jairus himself, evidently believed that Jesus had power to help his daughter as long as she was alive, but He was powerless to do anything for her after death. Jairus's reaction must have been sadness and despair, due to what the next verse says:

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe."

Fear and faith do not go together, do they?

37 And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. 38 Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly.

When Jesus got to Jairus's house, the scene was chaotic--there was a tumult and a crowd of people weeping and wailing. These were hired mourners. Albert Barnes writes: "The people of the East used to bewail the dead by cutting the flesh, tearing the hair, and crying bitterly. The expressions of grief at the death of a friend, in Eastern countries, are extreme. As soon as a person dies, all the females in the family set up a loud and doleful cry. They continue it as long as they can without taking breath, and the shriek of wailing dies away in a low sob. Nor do the relatives satisfy themselves with these expressions of violent grief. They hire persons of both sexes, whose employment it is to mourn for the dead in like frantic manner.... This grief does not cease at the house; it is exhibited in the procession to the grave, and the air is split with the wailings of real and of hired mourners." (Comments on Matthew 9:23)

Jesus immediately took control of the situation. First, He limited the number of people that were to go in with Him to Peter, James, and John and the mother and father of the girl (verse 40). Second, Jesus told all the hired mourners to get lost. He would not allow the resurrection of the little girl to become a circus.

39 When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping." 40a And they ridiculed Him.

It is obvious that the daughter of Jairus was truly dead. Note:

1. Jairus's servants told him that she was dead. They would not have brought such news to their master without being totally sure.
2. The family had already brought in professional mourners and started funeral arrangements.

So why did Jesus announce that the child was not dead, but only sleeping?

For one thing, to cause us to rethink our view of death. For the unsaved, death is the King of Terrors; for the child of God, it is merely a sleep from which he will soon awaken to a glorious new day. Death is seldom spoken of as a sleep in the Old Testament; but the New Testament writers rapidly adopted this beautiful full-of-hope term in the epistles (1 Cor 15:51, 1 Thess 4:13-15).

Another reason Jesus used the word "sleep" is this: He went to great lengths to preserve His hearers' freedom of choice to believe in Him or not believe in Him. He spoke in parables so that if the hearers were skeptical or dishonest, they would not be forced to subscribe to the truths He was teaching (cf Matthew 13:10-16). Verse 39 is an example of this "plausible deniability." Jesus knew very well that the girl was dead; but He described the situation as sleep because He knew He would soon bring her back to life, and so that if anyone wanted to deny the fact of the miracle, they could.

40b But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. 41 Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." 42 Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement. 43 But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat.

What we have here is yet another instance of a remarkable state of affairs I wrote about in a past issue of Biblical Insights: Jesus is "The Man Who Broke Up Funerals." It is an amazing fact that no one ever died in the presence of Jesus, and not one person who was dead remained dead in His presence. (Even the thieves on the cross died after He did.) Every funeral that Jesus ever attended resulted in a resurrection! One preacher whose website I consulted spoke of wanting some ideas for funeral sermons. So, he decided to analyze the sermons of Jesus. But he discovered that Jesus never preached any funeral sermons! Everything about Him was (and is) LIFE.

Jesus entered the room with the five witnesses, took the little girl's hand, and said "Talitha cumi." He was speaking in Aramaic, which was an ancient language

originating in Syria. Aramaic, and not Hebrew, was the common, everyday language of most Jews in Jesus's day.

You might wonder why the Jews, who were Hebrews, did not speak Hebrew. There are at least two reasons:

- Over the centuries, with many Jews being displaced from their homeland and many foreign occupying forces ruling their land, many Jews lost the knowledge of Hebrew.
- Aramaic was the language used in trade in the Middle East during the Old Testament period. If the Jews wanted to engage in international trade, they had to learn and use the language. (It's a similar situation with English today.)

Notice that Jesus specifically said, "Little girl, arise." We see the same scenario in the resurrection of Lazarus. Jesus was careful to say, "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11:43). Jesus had to be careful to be specific when He raised people from the dead, because John 5:25 says, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live." If He had just said "Arise," every single dead body in the world would have been raised!

In verse 42, we see the characteristic word "immediately" in reference to a miracle of Jesus. The girl did not just wake up in a stupor and gradually become stronger; she immediately got up and walked! When Jesus did a miracle, the results were immediate, instantaneous, and complete.

There's an interesting, "human-touch" footnote to this account in verse 43: Jesus said that something should be given her to eat. There's a connection between resurrection and eating that is curious and interesting:

- It's likely that neither the girl nor her family had eaten for some time, and food is needful for life. The website Bibleref.com says, "There are several reasons as to why Jesus may have asked the girl's parents to give her something to eat. They'd had an extremely stressful day, and focusing on the ordinary can go a long way in re-establishing equilibrium in a household. This also puts the parents' focus on the girl and her needs. Outside the door

are several professional mourners suddenly out of a job and a good part of the city waiting for news. The girl needs to be cared for, not made a spectacle of. The act of eating, in and of itself, serves as proof that the girl is alive and able to function.” (<https://www.bibleref.com/Mark/5/Mark-5-43.html>)

- One of the first things Jesus did to assure the disciples of His resurrection was to eat in their presence (Luke 24:36-43).
- After Jesus was raised from the dead, He hosted a fish dinner by the sea for His disciples (John 21:1-14).
- And when the Lord returns, and raises us all from the dead, what will happen? Well, first the judgment; but then--the marriage supper of the Lamb! Revelation 19:6-10 says, “And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, ‘Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, ‘Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ And he said to me, ‘These are the true sayings of God.’”

What an amazing account this is, of a miracle within a miracle! George Brooks writes: “The raising of Jarius’ daughter from the dead is a reminder that all who die in the Lord shall be raised because death is only a sleep (John 5:28-29, 1 Thessalonians 4:16). The raising of Jarius’ daughter from the dead is a reminder that death does not have the last word in the life of the Christian. As far as the Christian is concerned, death is not a period but a comma in the life of the child of God. The raising of Jarius’ daughter from the dead is a reminder that the day will come when there will be no more separation. We will be reunited with all those with whom we have shared fellowship on this side of eternity.”

(<https://www.preceptaustin.org/mark-5-commentary>)

--John Temples