

## Gospel of Mark Chapter 5 – John Karmelich

1. In the last lesson, my single word title for was "faith". I saw a common denominator in all the stories in that chapter about understanding what faith in God was all about. In this lesson, I expand that title to a big three word title, "Increasing our faith". In the stories in this chapter, I see as a common denominator that Jesus works with three individuals to increase their faith in Him in terms of believing in Him and what He is capable of doing with their lives.
  - a) I believe the stories included in this chapter of the Gospel of Mark were specifically chosen to give examples of how to increase one's faith in Jesus.
  - b) Remember that Mark's Gospel is not all-inclusive of everything that happened during the life of Jesus. Specific stories were chosen for the purpose of showing who Jesus was and why He came into this world.
  - c) Again, what I see as the common denominator in all of these stories in this chapter is that of "increasing one's faith". Let me explain what that means to you and me.
    - i) To believe in God is not a "flat-line" idea of believing or not believing. Faith must be exercised like a muscle. To develop strong muscles in one's body, one must use them or lose them. Those muscles only stay strong if we regularly exercise them.
    - ii) That idea of exercising our muscles is similar to what must be done with our faith in God. If we don't exercise our faith, we can lose our faith. To work on our faith actually increases our faith in God and makes it stronger.
    - iii) In this chapter, Jesus takes the faith of three individuals and works to increase their faith. One thing to catch is that God always works "just where we are at" in our life. God does not expect us to show great acts of faith if we barely trust Him. What I find in these stories are examples how God constantly works to exercise people's faith in order for us to draw closer to Him.
2. At this point, let me briefly summarize the chapter and then come back to the lesson title.
  - a) The chapter mentions three separate miracles that all happen within a short time span of each other. The first one is about Jesus removing a multitude of demons out of a single man. The miracle does show that Jesus is capable of releasing a multitude of demons out of a person. More importantly, the man that was healed was given a great opportunity to increase his faith in Jesus. At the time he was possessed, he had no idea who Jesus was, and all he cared about was being healed. Once Jesus healed him, Jesus told him to go home and tell his family what happened. The story ends with the point that the word about Jesus was spread to many towns in that area. Jesus took the very limited faith of one man and used that limited faith to teach a region about Jesus.
    - i) The lesson for us? We may be too nervous to get up on a podium and tell a large crowd about Jesus. However, God expects us to work with whatever level of faith we have at the moment. Even if we just have the faith to share our faith with one person, God may use that event to spread the word about God to others. In other words, let God work on us at whatever level we are at right now, and He can and does work to increase our faith in Him.
  - b) The second story is about a Jewish leader whose daughter was dying. Just so you know the second story and the third story are "intermingled". The point here is that a man who didn't believe in Jesus power to raise the dead, got to see a great miracle and presumably, now lived for Jesus and spread the word about Him.
    - i) The difference between the first story and the second story is the man in the first story was non-Jewish. Jesus used the healing of demons to increase his faith in God. In the second story, Jesus helped a religious Jewish person learn who Jesus was and increased his faith dramatically after witnessing a great miracle.

- c) In the third and final story of this chapter, Jesus healed a woman who came to Him secretly. All she wanted was to touch Jesus to end a physical problem she had for the last twelve years of her life. She didn't want anybody to know she touched Jesus and wanted to sneak away from Him as fast as she sneaked up to Him. The main point of this story is not that she was healed, it was the fact that Jesus announced to His disciples that He knew what she did, He knew she was now better and sought her out to get her to publicly admit what she did. Jesus can and does take people who need healing and He make their faith grow by giving them the mental strength to publicly admit their faith and share that faith with other people.
  - d) The point of these three stories for us is that God takes our faith where we are "mentally" at that moment and works with us to increase our faith in Him. In other words, God loves us too much to leave us alone. He works on our lives to help us grow closer to Him. Again, our faith is like a human muscle where one must "use it or lose it". In all three stories of this chapter, we have three different people, with three different understandings about who Jesus is before these people encountered Him. All three people ended up increasing in their faith in Jesus.
    - i) The lesson for us is not to read these three stories and think, "well, good for those people". The lesson is to draw close to God and stick close to Him, so we too, can increase our faith in Him as we go through our lives.
    - ii) With that happy introduction completed, ☺ it is time to start the text.
3. Verse 1: They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.
- a) We last left Jesus and His disciples crossing the Sea of Galilee. That was the story in Chapter 4 where Jesus rebuked His disciples for not believing they were going to make it through a storm and Jesus calmed the storm just by praying for it to end.
    - i) Now Jesus and the disciples have arrived across the Sea to their destination. One has to remember that this body of water is not that big, and is about 5 miles across and is about 8 miles in length. Also remember this Sea is a fresh water lake.
    - ii) It is also helpful to understand that not every border of this lake was "Jewish country". The region of the Gerasenes refers historically to ten towns (or villages) on the east side of the Sea of Galilee that were primarily non-Jewish in population.
    - iii) Therefore, those Jesus encounters in this story, will be a non-Jewish group.
4. Verse 2: When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him. <sup>3</sup> This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. <sup>4</sup> For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. <sup>5</sup> Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.
- a) The first person Jesus encounters when the boat lands is a man with an evil spirit.
    - i) This man came out from a cemetery (most likely a cave) where he lived.
    - ii) So why did this man live among the graves? The text implies this man was considered dangerous and a public nuisance. Verse 3 says that the man could not be bound up, even when they tried to tie him down with chains. The man had the super-human strength to break chains off of his hands and foot.
  - b) What popped in my head was, "How did the disciples know all of this"? I suspect that after the person came into his "right mind" after Jesus healed him (coming up), then the guy explained to the disciples his history of how he lived.
    - i) It also indicates that after he was healed, he retained a full memory of how he lived prior to being healed of this demon possession.
  - c) The related question is, "Why does God want us to know all of these details? Other than the fact this man was cured, why does the bible record all this information about his demon possession? It is so we can recognize demon possession when it happens.

- d) I've shared in previous lessons what experts know and suspect is true about people who are demon possessed. We get more information here about what happens when one is demon possessed. The idea is to learn to recognize the condition so we can pray over it.
  - i) The possessed man was strong enough to break chains. From what I have read and heard of demon possession, those that are under such a condition have tremendous physical strength. One case I heard of was that it took eight men to hold down a demon possessed person as they were praying over him.
    - a) The lesson for us? If you encounter someone who you believe is demon possessed, don't deal with him or her alone. At the least, get someone else who is also a Christian to pray for healing at that moment.
  - ii) The other thing we learn about those who are demon possessed is they like to harm themselves. In these verses, we read of this possessed man trying to cut himself with stones, presumably with the intention of hurting or killing himself.
  - iii) The point is when one is demon possessed like that, one would rather die than kept on living in that condition.
- e) So why would this man live among tombs and cut himself? I suspect, but cannot prove that both the cutting and the graveyard are symbolic of wanting death. It is to say in effect, "I can't stand being possessed like this and I want to die as soon as I can. It also says in effect that when one is demon possessed, one fights for control of one's life and that fight goes back and forth (internally) over who is in charge. I believe the self-inflicted pain is the man trying to rid himself of whatever is inside of him.
  - i) Did this man know who Jesus was? No. All this man cared about was getting rid of the demons and the situation just "worked itself out" so he could be healed.
- f) One more bit of background and then we can move on. If you read this story in Matthew's gospel (Matthew 8:28), there are two possessed men and not one. Is that a contradiction? I would argue no. I suspect there was one demon-possessed man who was vocal and the spokesman of the two. In Mark's gospel, he simply focused on the one who did all the talking (coming up in the next set of verses) and simply does not mention the detail of the second person who was there.
  - i) Let me put it this way: If both gospel writers mentioned the exact same details, historians would argue that they were collaborating their stories. By each writer mentioning different facts about the event, if anything, it supports the story as being historically accurate.
- g) So, if we see someone trying to physically hurt him or her self, can we assume they are demon possessed? I would argue it is a possibility to consider and only that.
  - i) I've always argued that Christians cannot be physically demon possessed. We can be hassled by demons to make bad decisions, but that is a lot different from being demon possessed. Other than Christians, I would argue that any other living human is "fair game" for demons to enter and harass, based on 1st Timothy 4:1.
  - ii) How do we get our loved ones who are not saved to avoid this possibility? The first answer is to get them to accept Jesus. If they don't do that, then if you can, we should warn them of "entry points" into the demonic world. Most cases of possession usually began when such a person played with aspects of the demonic world such as ouija boards or seeking psychics (i.e., "mind readers"). My point is such activities are no place for believers.
- h) Let's say we are living out the Christian life and to the best of our knowledge, have never encountered one who is demon possessed. Why should I know or care about this stuff?
  - i) The answer is to be aware of the signs of one who could be demon possessed and then get spiritual help when one sees this type of sign. The New Testament teaches us to invoke Jesus' name when encountering people who are demon possessed. (See Jude 1:9).

5. Verse 6: When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. <sup>7</sup> He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" <sup>8</sup> For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!"
- a) One thing to understand about evil spirits is that they must obey Jesus in His presence whether those demons want to or not. In other words, such spirits understand that Jesus is God and therefore, they must do whatever He says. Demons don't want to obey Jesus in the same sense that nonbelievers don't want to obey Jesus, but such demons don't have a choice when they are in His presence. That is why when encountering someone who we suspect is demon possessed to start praying just to "invoke" Jesus into the situation.
  - b) Notice that the demons inside of this man know that Jesus is the "Son of God". Verse 7 also has the phrase, "Swear to God you won't torture me". That phrase does not deny the deity of Jesus as God. It simply means that the demons understand that Jesus always does the will of God the Father and therefore, asking Jesus to "Swear to God" is simply an attempt to ask Jesus to not do the will of God the Father at this present moment.
  - c) Verse 8 says that the demons requested not be "tortured". A point here is the demons had no choice but to obey Jesus. At the same time, since Jesus didn't say where they had to go, the demon was begging Jesus not to send them into "torture". What does that mean?
    - i) It means that they know their eternal destiny is to suffer in hell. If that is true, why don't they plead with God to help them change? The answer is they choose to live for "this life" over the eternal life, the same way a nonbeliever cares more about what is happening to them in this life than the next life. Their goal is to get men and women to turn from God and they don't want to end that process.
6. Verse 9: Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." <sup>10</sup> And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.
- a) In Verse 9, Jesus asks what is the name of the demon inside of this man. I believe that Jesus asked this question not out of ignorance, but for the disciples and bible readers to understand that there were many demons inside of Him.
  - b) The word "legion" used here is a Roman term. It refers to a group of soldiers that usually numbers 6,000, but can be as few as 5,000. The point is, someone living in that culture at that time, would know that a "legion" refers to a large group. Does that mean there were 5,000 to 6,000 demons inside of this man? The text does not say, but there were a lot.
    - i) This teaches us that more than one demon can occupy a person. Verse 10 mentions that the demons requested not to be sent out of the area. Scholars believe demons are territorial and like to stay in the same general location.
    - ii) If you recall, this town where Jesus was at was "Gentile country". Why would so many demons want to be in this area? This comes back to a commonly held theory that there are far more demons in places where there is not a lot of prayer to God. In other words, one can find a lot more demons in places of the world where people are not praying to the God of the Universe to have them removed.
  - c) OK, its time for me to get off of my demonology kick ☺ and ask the important question: Why have this story here about Jesus casting out so many demons out of this man who was most likely, not even Jewish (again, Jesus and the disciples are in "Gentile" country)?
    - i) For starters, it is to show that Jesus' has the power and the desire not only to help Jewish people turn to God, but non-Jewish (i.e., "Gentile") people as well.
    - ii) It is also to show the extent of Jesus' power. Jesus not only has the power to eliminate one demon from a man, but "thousands" out of one man.
    - iii) More importantly, it teaches us what we can ask of Jesus for our lives. If Jesus cares about eliminating demons, then He also cares about the well being of any and all non-Jewish as well as Jewish people who want to have faith in Him.

- d) Think of this story this way: Did the man with the demons have any desire to follow Jesus as God? All that man cared about was having these demons out of him. Yet Jesus still took the time and trouble to heal this man and (coming up) take the trouble to tell the man to spread the word about Jesus to others in the area.
    - i) In a lot of ways, this man became a model of the Christian life. This man was as good as dead in terms of his spiritual condition. He suffered from "ailments" more powerful than he could handle, just as we people have no power to overcome sin on our own merits. After encountering Jesus, the man was in his "right mind" and will go and make a difference for Jesus. That's what God calls Christians to do.
    - ii) When we have been forgiven of all of our sins, God in turn asks us and go out and be a witness for Him. That is what this man will do and that is what we should be doing as well.
7. Verse 11: A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. <sup>12</sup> The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." <sup>13</sup> He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.
- a) Here we have the famous story of the "deviled ham", where demons ask to be sent inside of herd of nearby pigs. Yes that is a bad joke, but you will always remember it. ☺
  - b) A few questions come to mind: First, why did the demons ask permission to enter the pigs? I would argue that demons can enter any unsaved person anytime they want (based on Acts 19:13 and 1st Timothy 4:1), but at the same time, God protects animals from demon possession. Therefore, the demons needed permission to enter the pigs.
    - i) Why would Jesus permit this? Is it because pigs are not kosher? Remember that this location was Gentile country, so it was permitted to raise and eat pigs.
    - ii) For starters, it shows that animals can't stand being demon possessed as they immediately tried to kill themselves once the demons are inside of these pigs.
    - iii) Further, the loss of the pigs would be a "witness" to the people who lived in the area. The loss of about 2,000 pigs (See Verse 13) has to be a significant loss to their economy. It shows our dependence upon God for financial survival and Jesus has the power and will to make up for any financial losses if we are willing to trust Him. The town may be a lot poorer due to the loss of the pigs, but this town also had the privilege of learning about eternal salvation with Jesus being there.
  - c) Another question comes to mind: Does that mean there were at least two thousand demons? I don't know anything about pigs and "herd mentality", but I suspect that each pig had at least one demon inside of them. Think of it this way: When the first pigs hit the water, did it cause the other pigs to avoid running down the bank into the Sea? No, all the pigs made the decision to go over this edge. I take that as a sign that whatever entered the pigs was so painful to them, they didn't want to live any longer.
  - d) I also wondered how did the disciples know there were approximately 2,000 pigs? I suspect the answer came later, when the disciples encountered people from this town. It was probably reported at that time how many pigs were in this herd.
  - e) Finally, why would the demons desire to go into these animals if they were going to drown? I believe the answer is they wanted to do damage to the local economy. After all, the loss of the pigs will cause the townsfolk to ask Jesus to leave (Verse 17), so in that sense, it did accomplish their mission. Remember that the drowning did not kill the demons. They just moved on to someone else.
  - f) OK, enough pig commentary. ☺ Back to the text.
8. Verse 14: Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened.
- a) Those 2,000 pigs required people to take care of them. Those caretakers immediately went back to town and reported what had happened.

9. Verse 15: When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. <sup>16</sup> Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man--and told about the pigs as well.
- a) If you want a reason why Jesus permitted this to happen, think about the fact that the loss of the pigs drew people to Jesus. Remember that the purpose of Jesus coming was to explain and teach that He is the Son of God. Jesus can't do that unless He has an audience willing to listen to Him. These Gentiles were not aware of the miracles that Jesus did in Israel so there were no crowds drawn to Him. The loss of the pigs would draw a crowd.
  - b) Think about this from the town people's perspective. They were used to this guy living in caves where the dead were buried. When one becomes used to something, it probably didn't occur to them yet that that "crazy guy" is now better. However, the visual sign of all of their pigs being gone would get the town out to where this drowning occurred to see it for themselves what had happened.
  - c) This event gives Jesus' an opportunity to teach about Himself. Jesus had next to him, the guy who was "formerly crazy" and now is a living witness to what He can do. Jesus also had lots of people gathered around Him and wanted an explanation for this event.
10. Verse 17: Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.
- a) OK, why would these people want Jesus to leave the area? The most likely answer has to do with their loss of income from raising the pigs.
  - b) Unfortunately, lots of people reject Jesus for the same reason. Many people are more than happy to accept a God who will help them be financially successful or fulfill whatever is our desire of the moment. The concept of giving our lives to God who has allowed this "financial damage" (or whatever damage) to occur is too much for people to handle.
    - i) People blame God for allowing whatever negative thing happens in the first place, and therefore, they won't turn to God for help. It never occurs to people that God allows these negative things in order to get our focus upon Him and turn to Him for help. That is the case of these townspeople.
  - c) Notice Jesus does not force Himself on people who don't want Him. When these townspeople chose to reject Jesus, He grants their wish. God does not force Himself on people who do not choose Him. We must choose to accept God out of our own free will.
11. Verse 18: As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. <sup>19</sup> Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." <sup>20</sup> So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.
- a) In these three verses we finish this story. Since the town rejected Jesus, the only remaining question is the fate of the man who was healed of the demons.
  - b) The formerly demon-possessed man asked Jesus in effect if he could be one of the disciples and follow Him. Jesus says in effect, "No you can't. Just go back and tell your family how God has helped you and had mercy upon you."
  - c) So why did Jesus reject this man from following Him? The first reason is that he was not Jewish. If Jesus was going to try to witness to a Jewish crowd, He can't have a non-Jewish disciple, as the Jewish people would reject that messenger.
    - i) The next reason is that Jesus wanted this man to go be a witness to the locals of this area. In other words, the town gave up on Jesus, but He didn't give up on them. Jesus wanted to plant this man as a witness to others.
  - d) Even though this demon-healed man had limited knowledge of Jesus, that didn't stop him from going around and telling others about Him. Notice in Verse 20 that the man didn't just tell his family about Jesus, but he went around to the "Decapolis", which is the name for the ten towns in this area and told others about Jesus.

- e) Think about what this man then did: Did he have complete knowledge of Jesus? In other words, should our lack of complete knowledge of Jesus stop us from being a witness for Him? The answer is just because we can't answer every possible question about Jesus should not stop us from telling others about Him. God gives Christians the privilege of telling others about Him. A lack of complete knowledge should never stop us from telling others about Him and sharing with others how He has changed us for the better.
- i) Suppose we are too nervous to share our faith with others. Yes, some people do have more of a gift for being an evangelist than others, but that shouldn't stop us from being a witness for Him. It is simply a matter of sharing our faith with others. People can argue with "theories". They can't argue with how our lives have changed due to our encounters with Jesus.
  - ii) Now, since this demon-healed man is no long "dead", he spends the rest of his life making a difference for God. The idea for us to go do likewise.
  - iii) Meanwhile, it's time to move on to the next story in this chapter.
12. Verse 21: 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.
- a) In the last story, Jesus arrived at that town by traveling by boat to get there. Now Jesus and His disciples were back in the boat, sailing back to "Jewish" country.
  - b) There was a large crowd gathered to meet Jesus. Where Jesus landed was a place where Jesus had already done lots of miracles. Therefore, it is not surprising that a large crowd gathered quickly that wanted to touch Jesus and watch Him do more miracles.
13. Verse 22: Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet <sup>23</sup> 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." <sup>24</sup> So Jesus went with him.
- a) Let me first explain what is a synagogue ruler. This is not the head rabbi of that synagogue. This is a guy who is in charge of running the synagogue. Let me put this in "Christian vocabulary": Most churches have a board of elders who are in charge of deciding how a church service should run and what ministries should that church support. With every board of elders, someone has to be the leader to conduct the meetings. That is what we have here. This man named Jairus was the leader of the elders of that synagogue.
  - b) In other words, Jairus is the "big man" in town. Remember there was a large crowd around Jesus. All of a sudden Jairus shows up and everybody knows that this is the "big cheese". ☺ Therefore, the crowd cleared the way so that Jairus could speak to Jesus. I'm not positive that is how it happened, but that is how I picture it happening.
  - c) Also know that at this time many of the Jewish religious leaders have already rejected Jesus. Therefore, for the "head man of the synagogue" to come to Jesus for help, was most likely a sign of his future rejection by that synagogue.
  - d) All that Jairus cared about was he believed Jesus had the power to heal people of sickness and that his daughter was near the point of death. In Luke's gospel we read that this was his only daughter. (Luke 8:42). In other words, Jairus was desperate to try anything to save his daughters life, even if that meant being rejected as a local leader.
  - e) Jairus specifically asked Jesus to come home with him and touch his daughter. So why didn't the man just carry his daughter to Jesus? Maybe that thought didn't occur to Jairus. Maybe it was a case of simply finding Jesus first, and then asking for His help.
    - i) Jesus agreed to this request. Did Jesus do it because he was the "big man in town"? After all, if Jesus could convince this man, others might follow. I don't think that was the reason. I believe Jesus has a heart for all people and that is why he granted the request. We'll also discover the reason Jesus did this specific miracle ties to the next story that follows in Mark's Gospel.

14. Verse 24 (cont.): A large crowd followed and pressed around him.
- a) At this point in the story, Jesus was now on his way to Jairus' home. A large crowd of people wanted to see what Jesus was going to do and pressed around Him.
  - b) We will next read that this story of Jairus' daughter getting healed gets interrupted to tell the story of another woman getting healed. The point is the two stories are designed to be taught together and make a bigger point. With that said, let's go on to read about this story and then we'll tie the two stories together.
15. Verse 25: And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, <sup>28</sup> because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." <sup>29</sup> Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.
- a) In these five verses, we have the next miracle of this chapter. We have an unnamed woman who for 12 years had a non-stop flow of blood come out of her. The speed of the blood leak must have been slow or else she would have died of a lack of blood. Whatever it was, it caused a regular, loss of blood coming out of her body.
    - i) Some scholars suspect this woman was a Gentile. That is because the law forbids anyone with a blood flow to be out in public. (See Leviticus 15:25) No Jewish people were allowed to touch a woman when she had a flow of blood. If this woman was an observant Jew, she was supposed to separate herself from society.
    - ii) The text does say that she had spent all of her money seeking medical help. Without getting into gory details of what medical help was like in those days, let's just say I am positive this woman suffered at the hands of a lot of people.
    - iii) She was desperate to end this condition. She figured that if she just "touched" Jesus that would end this.
  - b) For this woman, secrecy was a big deal. If word got out about her condition, she would not be allowed out in public. She wanted to touch Jesus secretly so the townspeople would not know a woman with a "continuous blood issue" was out in the open. If others around her found out, they would send her away as a woman with blood issues was not allowed out in public. (Again see Leviticus 15:25 on this issue).
  - c) In Verse 27, she managed to touch Jesus' cloak. In Verse 29 she realized her problem was now over. For her it was "mission accomplished". Just as she snuck in, she can now sneak out knowing that she was now better.
    - i) As they say in the entertainment business, here is where the drama begins. ☺
16. 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?" <sup>31</sup> "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?' "
- a) Remember that Jesus was walking to Jairus' house when this event took place. There was a large crowd thronged around Jesus as he walked. Despite that large crowd, Jesus somehow knew that power left Him and Jesus asked, "Who touches my clothes?"
  - b) This is the only reference in the whole bible of "power leaving God". In other words, we don't know how power is transferred from God to heal people. We just know from history that sometimes people get miraculously cured with no human explanation. Therefore, we know that God has the power to work, but beyond that, we don't know how that happens. The shorter answer is, "If God wanted us to know how His power works, He would have explained it to us."
  - c) Next comes the issue of Jesus asking the question, "Who touched my clothes".
    - i) The view of most bible commentators is that Jesus already knew the answer. Jesus wanted the woman to come forth and explain what happened.

- ii) Jesus wanted the woman to come forth and publicly shared what happened. That is why Jesus asked the question, "Who touched my clothes?"
  - iii) Remember that the woman wanted to keep quiet about this as she didn't want others to know she violated Levitical laws by touching Jesus. Since Jesus made her well, Jesus himself did not violate any laws as Jesus now made her "whole" again.
17. Verse 32: But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it.
- a) In other words, Jesus was looking for her to put her trust in Him.
  - b) If you and I seek God for a miracle, is God then going to leave us alone and say in effect, "OK, I'm done with them and I can move on"? No, God wants all people who seek Him to keep on seeking Him and grow in their faith in God. Therefore, Jesus sought out the woman who touched Him so as to give her an opportunity to grow in her faith. I believe that ties very well to my lesson theme for this week. ☺
  - c) Remember that this woman was scared to publicly say anything. In the last story, the man who was cured of demons now wanted to go be a disciple of Jesus. In this story, the woman who was healed now just wanted to go live a normal life, yet Jesus refused to leave this woman alone at this point of her "small" faith in God.
18. 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.<sup>34</sup> He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."
- a) Again, this woman was scared to share the truth with Jesus as she was afraid of His reaction of a woman with a "blood issue" coming out to Him in public. She was afraid that Jesus was going to scorn her for violating Jewish laws relating to blood flow.
    - i) By the way, this action shows the priority in Jewish laws. The act of healing takes priority over other requirements of the law. In other words, we can come to Jesus at any time even if violates our church rules or other biblical laws. In other words, it is always the right time for us to come to God for help.
  - b) At this point, she just tells Jesus the whole truth of how she longed to touch Him and how she spent her life savings on doctors trying to make her better.
  - c) Instead of getting cursed out by Jesus, He says to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you." In other words, it was not the actual touch that healed this woman, but her faith in what Jesus was capable of doing to help her.
    - i) Don't take lightly the fact that Jesus called her "daughter". In other words, Jesus is saying that this woman is now saved for eternity.
  - d) All Jesus said after that was "Go in peace and be free from your suffering."
    - i) Some bible scholars speculate that she was not Jewish because if she was Jewish, a requirement would now be to bath herself and show herself to the priests that her ailment was now cured. Because no command was given to go perform ritual ceremonies to show her cleanness, some scholars suspect she was not Jewish.
      - a) I'll explain why that is significant later in this lesson.
  - e) Notice Jesus did not command this woman to go spread the gospel. All Jesus said in effect is "Daughter, you are saved and now go in peace and be free from suffering".
    - i) I suspect she lived a normal life after this. I'm also sure she is saved.
    - ii) The point is Jesus worked on her level of faith, which is still low at this point. All she could handle at this point is she no longer had the blood flow problem. She wasn't ready to take a bigger step of faith and the fact that she publicly admitted what she did was all she could handle at this point.
    - iii) Did God work in this woman's life after this? There is no record of it, but I suspect it is true. I suspect she then trusted in Jesus for her salvation. My point is God "never leaves us alone" but works with whatever level of faith we have at that moment. For this woman, she couldn't handle any more than what has just happened, so Jesus simply said in effect, "Go home and be well."

- f) Meanwhile, imagine how Jairus felt through all of this. That ruler of the synagogue must have thought, "You could have helped this woman any time you want. Meanwhile, my daughter is dying. Deal with this woman some other time and let's get back to what you agreed to do, which is to go help my daughter get well!"
- i) With that happy thought in mind, we can get back to the story of Jairus' daughter.
19. Verse 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?"
- a) Jairus' sick daughter was not home alone. Some of those who were with the daughter went to where "dad" was located to say in effect, "Your daughter is dead".
- b) In other words, everyone involved thought it was too late. Jesus is about to do a miracle to bring this girl back to life. What is impossible for us is always possible for God.
- c) We don't even know if this girl or her father ever became disciples of Jesus. My point here is that miracles are not limited to the "saved". God is more than willing to do miracles on the non-saved if, for no other reason than to draw them closer to Him.
- d) Now, onto the bigger question: Can we as Christians bring people back from the dead? Is that a spiritual gift we can have? After all, Peter prayed for a dead person and that person was brought back to life. (See Acts 9:40).
- i) I only know of one modern story like this from a bible teacher I respect. For those of you who have heard of Walter Martin, he was a wonderful Christian preacher who went home to the Lord roughly ten years ago. He told a story of when he was young Christian man, he, along with a group of missionaries, prayed over a young man who just died, and yes, he came back to life.
- ii) Does this mean we should pray over every person who dies? I guess so, but the important thing is that it is up to God, and not us no matter how hard we pray.
20. Verse 36: Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe."
- a) At this point, Jesus knew what was going to happen, but no one else did. There is one story in the Old Testament of a child being raised from the dead (See 2nd Kings 4:32-35), therefore Jesus was asking others to believe what was possible and recorded in the bible.
21. Verse 37: He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James.
- a) If you read the four gospels carefully, you get the impression that these three disciples are the "inner circle" among the 12 disciples. Why are they singled out is a mystery. The truth is we don't know why these three are the "inner circle". All we know is these three were singled out on more than one occasion, so we take it at that.
22. Verse 38: When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. <sup>39</sup> He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." <sup>40</sup> But they laughed at him.
- a) It is common at a Jewish funeral to hire professional mourners to cry out. It was a way of showing the community that someone has died here.
- b) When Jesus showed up with the intention of saving the girl, the same people who were mourning, were now laughing at Jesus. It shows how people who don't really care, but are "paid to mourn" can change their attitude very quickly.
- c) In Verse 40, we read of Jesus' reaction to those who were laughing at the possibility of saving the girl. Jesus cast the scoffers out of the house.
23. Verse 40 (cont.): 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. <sup>41</sup> He took her by the hand and said to her, "*Talitha koum!*" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!").
- a) In these two verses, we learn that Jesus took all the doubters and asked them to leave the house. In other words, Jesus asked everyone to leave other than the father and mother, and the three "close" disciples.

- b) In Verse 41, we have a rare case where Jesus is quoted literally and words are not translated for us. That refers to the words "Talitha koum" as recorded in Verse 41. For those who wonder what language Jesus spoke, the answer is "Aramaic".
    - i) A few words about "Aramaic": This is a "dead language". It is similar to Hebrew, but it is not Hebrew. It was the commonly spoken language in Israel at that time. Hebrew was a language studied by bible scholars, but it was not the common language of the Israelites at that time.
    - ii) So why was Jesus quoted in the original language here and not elsewhere? We don't know. Maybe because it was such a great miracle to have someone rise from the dead so that Mark wanted the world to know exactly what Jesus said.
    - iii) If Jesus spoke in Aramaic, why was this gospel written in Greek? The answer is that Aramaic was the common language in Israel, but Greek was the commonly spoke language through most of the Roman Empire. Therefore, to spread the Gospel, Greek was chosen as the language for the writing.
    - iv) So, does that mean we can raise people from the dead by quoting these exact words in the original language? I don't know, I've never tried it. ☺
    - v) I believe the more important point is simply that it was God's will to have this girl raised from the dead and Jesus was speaking to the girl, not to us.
  - c) This leads me back to the scoffers. Why didn't Jesus want everyone to see this miracle? After all, if Jesus wanted people to know who He is and why He came to the world, why did Jesus tell others to go outside? After all, I'm sure everyone would be quiet in a moment to see what this renowned healer would do at this point.
    - i) I suspect (but cannot prove) the reason Jesus told the others to leave is that Jesus wants to show His power only to those who are interested in seeing His power work. In other words, Jesus had the "scoffers" leave the room.
    - ii) Remember that Jesus' primary audience was his disciples and maybe Jesus only wanted to show this miracle to them, along with the parents of the girl.
  - d) I'm sure the parents of the girl had their own doubts of Jesus' power at this point. I suspect the dad was still mad that Jesus took the time to help the girl with the blood flow issue, and that delayed Jesus coming to help his daughter. So if the parents didn't have faith in Jesus, why keep them in the room? I suspect the answer is because they were in charge of their daughter and Jesus needed blood relatives to support the miracle.
    - i) Think of it this way: If the only people in the room were Jesus and His disciples, people would say "She was only sick and Jesus didn't really raise her from the dead." Having her parents as a living witness helped to validate the story as true.
24. Verse 42: Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. <sup>43</sup> He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.
- a) In Verse 42, the miracle occurs. Jesus gives the orders not to tell anyone about this. (Maybe that is also why Jesus got everyone else out of the room.)
  - b) Why would Jesus give the order of "silence"? The answer is Jesus still wanted to preach and Jesus didn't want crowds to "throng" Him as he went from town to town.
  - c) Did the parents actually keep quiet about this? We don't know. I would have a hard time keeping my mouth shut if it were my child. I'm sure the professional mourners must have thought, "Well, maybe she didn't really die yet and that is how Jesus helped her." I'm sure that was the common rumor going around town after that. Here were the parents and three of the 12 disciples who knew the truth, and Jesus gave the orders to keep quiet about it.
    - i) If Jesus gave the orders to not let anyone know, why did Mark record this miracle? The answer is (among other things) that the purpose of the silence is so Jesus could preach. Therefore, it was ok to talk about it once Jesus rose from the dead.

- d) Verse 43 mentions that Jesus told the parents to give their daughter something to eat. What was the purpose of that statement? Most likely, to prove that this girl was not some sort of ghost or zombie and that she really did rise from the dead. By giving her food, it is showing that she is really human again.
  - e) Let me end this with a short discussion of the fact that verse 42 mentions the girl was 12 years old at that time. Here's the question: What does her age have to do with anything? Why would Mark want us to know that the girl was 12 years at this time?
    - i) The only clue we have is the text also mentions that the woman who suffered from continuous blood flow (previous story) suffered from that disease for 12 years.
    - ii) Therefore, most scholars believe the two stories are somehow connected by the fact that both stories key on a common "12 year" reference.
    - iii) So how are they connected? We don't know for sure, but let me give a possibility: As I stated earlier, many scholars suspect that the woman with the blood "leakage" problem was not Jewish. Remember that Jesus never gave her the command to show her "cleanness" to the priests as required by the law.
    - iv) If the woman who had the blood flow problem was not Jewish and the girl who was raised from the dead was Jewish then consider the following:
      - a) While Jesus was on His way to save a "daughter of Israel", Jesus heals a Gentile of her disease. Think of the idea of Jesus saving "Gentiles" (i.e., anyone non-Jewish) prior to the salvation of the nation of Israel.
      - b) If the woman with the "blood flow" was Jewish, you can think of it as Jesus helping someone who ignored God's law on the way to helping someone who for the most part is obedient to the law.
25. The connection of these stories leads us back to our lesson theme about "levels of faith".
- a) The woman who had the blood flow issue for 12 years had enough faith that she believed that touching Jesus would heal her. She lacked the faith to go public with that faith, but Jesus worked on her level to increase her faith.
  - b) The girl who was dead, was not the focus of that story, her father was. The father did not believe Jesus could heal by just asking Him or praying to Him, but that Jesus needed to go to his house and actually touch his daughter. The point is Jesus worked on his level of faith and worked to increase the faith of the father when it was reported that the child is dead. Jesus increased the father's faith by allowing him to witness the raising of the dead.
  - c) This leads me back to the opening story in the chapter, which was about Jesus casting the demons into the pigs. I don't believe the story is to teach us so much about demons as it is to teach us about the faith of the man who was healed of the demons. All this man wanted was for the demons to leave him alone. After Jesus expelled the demons, He asked the man to go home and spread the word about who He was. Remember that Jesus was rejected at that location because Jesus caused a great financial loss with the death of the pigs. Yet here was this man, willing to spread the word about what Jesus did and how he was healed by Him.
    - i) In other words, Jesus worked on the man's newfound faith in Him and got the man to go be a great witness for Him in that area.
  - d) In summary, Jesus took the "little" faith of three people who wanted Jesus to help their situation and not only did Jesus grant all three of their requests for healing, but Jesus took each of those three and worked to increase their faith. That is the lesson for us.
26. Let's pray: Father, help us to increase our faith in You. In our times of doubt, strengthen us to trust in what You did and can do in our lives. Help us to strengthen our faith to go out and make a difference for You in this world. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.