

Exegetical Notes, Mark 5:21-43

“A Sick Woman”

“Little Girl, Arise!”

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen, Cornerstone Fellowship

101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320

610-384-1375

charleshjensen@aol.com

Mark 5:21-43

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.

- Jesus is now back on the west side of the lake near his home base, Capernaum.

Verse 22-24a

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.” So Jesus went with him.

- A synagogue was a building in which a local congregation of Jews met for study. Worship was not conducted in the synagogue as long as the Temple stood in Jerusalem. It was a place of study.
- The “synagogue ruler” was the person who was responsible for the building. He was not the rabbi, the teacher in the synagogue. He was the person who kept the building in order, more like a janitor.
- The man’s name, Jairus, is introduced into the story most likely because he was known in the church. People knew this man by name.
- Jairus’ daughter was dying of some undisclosed illness. In desperation, he pleads with Jesus to come and pray for her. Putting his hands on her was part of praying. Jairus hopes that Jesus will be able to heal his daughter. Remember that Jesus was already known as a healer. See Mark 3 and 4. Jairus hopes that Jesus can help his little girl.
- At Jairus’ request, Jesus went with him to pray for his daughter.

Verse 24b

A large crowd followed and pressed around him.

- Apparently many people overheard Jairus' request of Jesus. Wanting to see a miracle, they followed along as Jesus made his way to Jairus' house. They were excited and anticipatory, so they pushed extremely close to Jesus.

Verse 25-26

And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 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.

- In the crowd was a woman who suffered from some kind of hemorrhage. The exact nature of her problem and its physical cause are not discussed in the text. However, she had suffered from this condition for twelve years.
- She had sought the help of many physicians and had spent all of her savings seeking medical treatment. But nothing helped. In fact, she was getting worse.

Verse 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."

- The woman reasoned that if she just touched Jesus' clothing she would be cured. So she came up behind him and touched his cloak, his outer garment.

Verse 29

Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

- As soon as she touched Jesus' cloak, the woman was healed.

Verse 30-31

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

- Jesus was aware that someone had touched him and that power had gone out of him. So he asked who it was that had touched him.
- To the disciples this was an unreasonable question. There were so many people crowding around him and they were pressing so close to him. The disciples wondered how Jesus could distinguish one kind of touch from another.

Verse 32-34

But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

- Jesus would not let the issue drop. He knew that a healing had happened and he wanted to lift this event into the crowd’s awareness and to reassure the woman.
- Eventually the bashful woman who had hoped to recede into the background stepped forward. She told Jesus the whole story while the crowd listened.
- Jesus told the woman that she was “healed” by her faith. The Greek word used means “saved.” He also told her that the suffering she had endured for twelve years was over.

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?”

- As Jesus was reassuring the woman that she was healed, men arrived with the bad news that Jairus’ daughter had died. Their conclusion was that the matter was settled and that there was now nothing Jesus could do for her. Therefore, they reasoned that there was no reason for Jesus to go out of his way.

Verse 36

Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

- Jesus pays no attention to the report of the girl’s death. He tells Jairus not to worry but to continue to believe.

Verse 37

He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James.

- See exegetical notes on Mark 1:14-20.
- Jesus sent everyone away except the first team of disciples.

Verse 38

When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly.

- Believing that the little girl had died people had started mourning her passing in the customary way. Apparently they were making quite a scene.

Verse 39-40a

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.

- Jesus questioned the reason for the commotion. He told the people that the little girl was not dead but simply asleep.
- The people laughed at Jesus because they knew the little girl was dead.

Verse 40b-42

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. He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”) Immediately the girl stood up walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished.

- Jesus healed the little girl. Whether she was in a coma or actually dead is uncertain. None-the-less, Jesus awakened her and her cure was instantaneous and complete.
- Those who saw what Jesus did were astonished.

Verse 43

He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

- Jesus was afraid that people would misunderstand what he had done. The Jewish leaders did eventually insist that he did such things as

raise the dead by the power of Satan. See Mark 3:20-30. So, he told these people not to tell what had happened.

- The child's hunger is a sign that she was well.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermons entitled *A Sick Woman* and *Little Girl, Arise!* They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship* & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)