

Two Desperate Women

Sermon Preached by Phil Kayser at DCC on 2021-07-18

Introduction - the context (4:35-5:20)

I love following a map and seeing how Christ traveled from place to place. Many times it opens up passages and gives insights that might not otherwise be seen. For example, we saw with the Syro-Phoenician woman that Jesus went out of His way to travel 52 miles north - way out of Israelite territory, in order to interact with that Canaanite woman and then came right back again. And that showed that He really was not a reluctant Savior. She was the *only* reason He went there. His discourteous language was actually designed to draw out her faith. But the geography shows that He made a special trip for her.

We have something similar happening in chapters 4-5. This special trip was to convert a demon possessed man. In chapter 4 Jesus had been teaching the multitudes in this same location that Jairus meets him by the Sea of Galilee. So he had been here the day before. In chapter 4:35 Jesus said, "On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." To cross over at night is very inconvenient all on its own, and to do so after a long day of ministry was doubly difficult. He falls asleep and the disciples wake him because the boat is sinking in a storm and the boat is filling with water. This means that Jesus must have been extremely exhausted - to be able to sleep with water washing over you. Anyway, He does the impossible - with a word He calms the storm. And they land on the other side of the lake.

Chapter 5 shows him healing a Gentile mad-man who had a legion of demons inside of him - a man who went from stark naked and cutting himself with stones and unable to be bound with shackles to a man clothed and in his right mind and a follower of Jesus. That's all Christ intended to do on that side of the lake. He made a night trip and braved a dangerous storm in order to heal this man and then came right back the next day. And our story begins in verse 21.

The timing (Mark 5:21) - delay for Jairus' daughter

It says,

Mark 5:21 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.

Jesus was always deliberate. He had finished His business among the Gadarenes and was now returning. The reason I find this interesting once again has to do with the timing. Jairus' daughter might not have been this close to death the day before when he was in the same area. But God makes sure that Jesus was delayed by the Gadarene demoniac and not available on this side of the Sea of Galilee so that more glory would go to His name with these two women.

Here's the point: nothing in life is by accident. Even delays are ordained by God. Your traffic delay that you were fretting over might have saved you from a car accident. It's not a thing to get frustrated over; it's a thing to thank God for. And we can thank Him in faith even when we don't know the reason. John Wesley once got his wagon majorly stuck in mud and since this was going to make him late to a meeting, he wondered why the Lord would allow that, but he was praising God anyway - there must be a good reason. Well, because of that delay, Wesley was able to minister to a desperate man who had lost everything. Without that delay in the mud, the connection would not have happened. And Wesley had just the right money to help this man out and other details showed that God was in this delay. Delays are a kind of divine providence. And every one of us have experienced providential delays. The question is, how do we respond to them? I would encourage you to thank God in faith for those delays and see what God is going to do through the situation.

The desperate condition of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:22-23)

Verses 22-23 show the desperate condition of Jairus's daughter.

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."

Jairus is called "one of the rulers of the synagogue." Synagogues (like churches) normally had plurality of elders, with the ideal being one elder for each 10-20 families. But he was the head pastor and from what we can piece together from all of the accounts, quite well-to-do. He was a man of status and a man of wealth. But wealth can't always buy you health. God can bring any of us to our knees no matter how prepared we think we might be. He was certainly desperate.

Here he says "My daughter lies at the point of death [ἐσχάτως ἔχει]" and in the parallel in Matthew 9 he says, "My daughter is right now come to the end [ἄρτι ἐτελεύτησεν]." It's mistranslated that she had already died. Putting the two accounts together, it says, "My daughter lies at the point of death. She is right now come to the end" with the implied phrase, "is right now come to the end of her life." So there is no contradiction between the two passages. Two different words were used to clarify how serious her condition was - death was imminent.

But Jairus has faith that even at this late stage, Jesus can heal her. He appears to be a believer in Jesus. So he was not one of those rabbis who had resisted Jesus. In fact, he is willing to take the risk of alienating the religious establishment by identifying with Jesus. He may even have been one of the rabbis that believed John the Baptist's message and was baptized by John.

In any case, the text says, "And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet." Matthew adds that he fell at Christ's feet *and worshiped Him*. No Jew would ever worship a mere mortal. This shows some theological insight into who Jesus was. For any Jew to worship Jesus, He must have thought that Jesus was God, because Jews would never worship a mere man. So there was something special about Jairus and his family.

In any case, I believe he was a believer and that his daughter may have shared in her father's faith. But painful things happen to believers too, don't they? We like to think that if we are faithful to God that bad things won't happen to us, but the fact of the matter is, they do. Believers get cancer, and have stock losses, and get into car accidents. Obviously God can and often does bless us by avoiding many of those same things in miraculous ways. But He doesn't guarantee that He will. Don't question God's love for you simply because you are experiencing difficult providences. Those difficult providences are often designed to cause us to grow strong in faith - just as they did with Jairus.

Anyway, Jairus traveled alone to Jesus because he couldn't bring his daughter - she was too sick to travel, and he needed to get Jesus to her right away. Unlike the woman in the next story, he thought Jesus needed to lay hands on the sick for the sick to be healed. It's interesting how people can assume what must happen in the future based on what has happened in the past.

This text says that she was a *little* daughter to him. She's his baby, so to speak. The word speaks of the daughter being very special. Luke adds that this was his only daughter and that she was twelve years old. His earnest begging shows how serious the situation with his daughter was. He was about to lose the only child that he had. Verse 24 shows that Jesus agrees: "So Jesus went with him." Jairus is no doubt relieved and filled with hope.

Christ delayed by crowds and a woman (Mark 5:24ff;)

But verse 24 shows two more things that delayed Jesus - a delay that was no doubt very frustrating to Jairus. He had perhaps been waiting for Jesus to arrive on the shore for a long time - wondering why he had left. And now there are two more delays that God orchestrates for His own glory and in order to strengthen the faith of Jairus.

First, verse 24 says, "a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him." This is the first cause for delay. The Greek word for "thronged" means to be so pressed between people that it is almost impossible to move. The Lexham Research Lexicon defines it simply as "to squash in and around on all sides."^[^1] He is squashed between people. BDAG dictionary defines it as, "to crowd around so as to leave little room for movement." This would have been extremely frustrating for Jairus as time was of the essence and they were moving extremely slowly. But God controls even huge crowds for His glory. He controls traffic jams for His glory.

The second delay was caused by this woman with the flow of blood. And Jesus stops to talk to her! Jairus was perhaps getting anxious with these delays, but he doesn't say a word. He trusts. And this is something that I needed to learn several decades ago. Anybody who rides with me knows that I like to get places quick. I'm not as bad Jehu, who was described as a man who "drives furiously" (2 Kings 9:20). But I am goal oriented. But years ago I let that make me get very anxious and frustrated and sometimes even a bit upset with drivers, thinking, "Come on, come on, come one; we've got to get going. What's going on up there?" If there were delays that would make me late for an appointment, I would feel even more stressed. I had to confess that as sin and give it to the Lord. And one way that I conquered

this problem (for the most part) was to immediately thank God for the delays and see if I could see what providences God was working through that delay. It helped a lot. A second thing that I did was to make use of the delay to do something else that I had hoped to squeeze into my schedule - like memorizing Scripture. I always carried memory work with me so that I would have something to do at a doctor's office or a traffic jam. And I would thank God for the extra time for memorization. It helped me to relax in God's providence. Thirdly, I also thanked Him for anything else good that might come from that delay. If you study the providential delays that are strewn through the Scriptures you will find a wealth of information that will help you to stop getting frustrated and to begin to learn quietness of spirit from God's providences.

The suffering of the unnamed woman (vv. 25-26)

But let's pick up on this second desperate woman who is sandwiched into the story of Jairus' daughter. Jairus is not the only one who is desperate. And we tend to forget about the desperation of others when we are feeling desperate ourselves. This distraction would give Jairus perspective and actually increase his faith in Jesus.

Anyway, verses 25-26 start by describing the sufferings that this woman had endured. And wow did she have a lot of suffering.

Her suffering from the disorder (v. 25)

First, she had a medical condition that produced some degree of menstrual flow for twelve years. Many have made guesses at what would have caused this, whether fibroid tumors, infection, hormone imbalance, or something else. We aren't told. But in addition to the inconvenience and mess, this would have no doubt made her very weak and anemic. And Scripture is not shy in talking about the complications of women's plumbing. It no doubt includes all that information not only to let women know that God knows and cares, but to help men to be more sensitive to the issues that women face. This is a great story for men to think about.

Her social suffering (v. 25)

Anyone who knows the ceremonial law, also knows that this would have made for major social suffering as well. Let me read the law and then try to paint the picture of what would likely have been her daily experience. Leviticus 15:25-27 says,

Lev. 15:25 "If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her customary impurity, or if it runs beyond her usual time of impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her customary impurity. She shall be unclean. 26 Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her impurity; and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity. 27 Whoever touches those things shall be unclean; he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

This issue of uncleanness would have been a major inconvenience. She couldn't share food with people because touching the food would render it unclean. Others would have to draw

water from the well for her and pour it into her own bucket because she could not touch the rope. If she sat on anything in the public, others who sat on that same thing would be unclean until evening, and that would inconvenience them. She could not have sexual relations with her husband. Before long, everyone would become aware of her uncleanness and many would not want to be around her.

Why did God even put those kinds of laws in place? And the answer is that humans are so thick headed that they needed constant reminders of our spiritual condition and our need for grace. And God surrounded the Israelites with ceremonial laws that would force them to see their sinfulness and their need of Jesus. These were symbols of inward sin that defiles all of us and makes all of us unfit to approach God apart from the cleansing of His grace. Pharisees thought that they could keep the ceremonial laws, but Paul informs us that no one could. That was the point - all are sinners in need of Christ's grace. If a bug sat on you you could be rendered unclean.

But in Christ's day, the Pharisees made certain kinds of uncleanness of a higher order. God hadn't authorized that, but women's menstrual uncleanness was treated on a higher order by the Pharisees. So there was definitely social suffering for this woman. Because the text says that she had spent all *she* had instead of saying all that she *and her husband had*, some have thought that her husband had left her. I'm not sure we can say that for sure. But it is true that the Pharisees allowed for divorce for trivial reasons even though that was contrary to God's law. They would have allowed a husband to divorce such a woman. In any case she is single and she has social suffering. And her trembling implies that she was in danger of some sort - perhaps fearing that this crowd would have been roused to anger that she may have defiled *them*. It doesn't take much imagination to know that she experienced social ostracism and suffering.

Her religious suffering (v. 25)

But that same uncleanness would have kept her out of the temple and out of the synagogues. Josephus says that in his day, "the temple was closed to women during their menstruation" (War 5.227) So there was religious suffering. She wasn't even able to go to worship.

She was really hurting in a bad way. I'm very grateful that those ceremonial laws are no longer binding on women today. They had their purpose - especially teaching concerning sin and the cleansing of grace. But there is a reason why Paul said that no one was perfectly able to follow the ceremonial laws and why they were a burden. So she had suffering from the illness, social suffering, and religious suffering.

Her medical suffering (v. 26)

Next we see her medical suffering in verse 26. It says,

and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse.

The traditions of the scribes and Pharisees regarding medicine are not impressive at all. Let me read some of the weird remedies that doctors of her day prescribed for this precise condition. And the Talmud gives more remedies than I am going to read because some of them are absolutely gross.

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. But should this do no good, "Take a handful of cummin and a handful of crocus, and a handful of foenu-greek; let these be boiled, and given her to drink, and say, Arise from thy flux. But should this also fail, "Dig seven trenches, and burn in them some cuttings of vines not yet circumcised (vines not four years old;) and let her take in her hand a cup of wine, and let her be led from this trench and set down over that; and let her be removed from that, and set down over another: and in each removal say unto her, Arise from thy flux."[^2]

One remedy was to carry a grain of corn taken from the dung of a white donkey. These were the easy remedies. Others would have been more invasive, painful, and just useless. When you read some of the treatments for this condition you can understand why some first century writers preferred to die than to go to a doctor, and why one person mocked that there was little difference between a doctor and an undertaker, or between a doctor and a gladiator. He didn't have a very positive view of doctors. We've come a long ways in medicine, haven't we? Though medicine is still moving forward experimentally, and though some approaches to cancer are needlessly causing people to suffer, I am glad that I live in the twentieth century. Some of the treatments of her day would have produced suffering in itself. Obviously there were good physicians among the Jews, but those who followed the Talmud were not. The Talmud is filled with occult superstition.

And even today, there are times when the cure is worse than the disease. There are many people who have gone through endless tests, treatments, and have gone from doctor to doctor, with some concluding that it must be in her head. We need to be sensitive to even the medical suffering that some have gone through. And we shouldn't assume that just because doctors can't figure anything out that the person does not have legitimate physical maladies. This passage shows that Jesus cares about medical suffering.

Her emotional suffering (v. 26)

This verse also hints at her emotional suffering. She is obviously not married, and she would generally have been sequestered. She was lonely and isolated. She had endured this for twelve years. Each visit to another doctor would be embarrassing, and the loss of hope would have taken a toll on her emotionally. We don't often think about emotional suffering, but it is one of the worst forms of suffering out there. Loneliness, hopelessness, and anguish of soul are issues that God's grace specializes in ministering to.

Financial suffering

Verse 26 also mentions her financial suffering. It says, “She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse.” She doesn’t have any more funds to spend on doctor’s remedies. She is at the end of her rope, with her life draining away.

There are people out there with similar levels of suffering today. It may not be medical suffering, but they may have similar financial, social, religious, and emotional suffering. And you (as a friend of this suffering person) may be like the doctors - at your wits end with trying solutions that don’t work. You don’t know what more you can do to help. We shouldn’t have to wait till things are hopeless to turn to Jesus. We should pray to God before we take the aspirin, while we take the aspirin, and after we take the aspirin. If there is one thing that the book of Mark teaches us, it is that there is nothing too hopeless for the Lord. Amen? I have seen people anointed with oil and prayed over completely healed of things that doctors cannot heal. He *is* Jehovah Rapha, the Lord our healer. Praise God.

The strange plan of the unnamed woman (vv. 27-28)

Well, this woman becomes convinced that this is the case and comes up with a plan. This is actually a strange plan when you think about it because nobody has ever been healed prior to this by touching Jesus’ garment. But she doesn’t dare face Him in this crowd. Verses 27-28 say,

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.”

Though we have no record of anyone being healed by touching Jesus’s clothing, she became convinced that this would be all that was needed. She knew that she would be in trouble if she got into a crowd and they found out that she was unclean. It would be too risky to ask Jesus outright. So she decided to blend in with the crowd and touch the hem of his garment.

Interestingly, the word that she uses for “healing” is the Greek word $\sigma\acute{\omega}\zeta\omega$, which can also refer to salvation. She wanted to be saved from her disease, and Jesus has plans to save her soul.

By the way, she *was* taking a great risk, because if she had been recognized, she would be subjected to verbal abuse. But she was desperate, and desperate people will do desperate things. It is often not until people give up hope in themselves and give up on others that they come to Jesus for salvation. The Holy Spirit must convince them of the truth of Acts 4:12, which says, “nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” The Holy Spirit must convince them of the truth of John 14:6, where Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” So she is desperate in seeking salvation from the disease, but Christ introduces her to a far more comprehensive healing.

Just as a side note, Mark says that she touched his garment, but Matthew and Luke specify that she touched the $\kappa\rho\acute{\alpha}\sigma\pi\epsilon\delta\omicron\nu$ of his garment, which are the tassels that Numbers 15:38

and Deuteronomy 22:12 required every Jew to wear on the four corners of their garments. It's one of the ceremonial laws. Why do I mention this fact? Well, some people mistakenly think that Jesus violated the OT Sabbath and OT ceremonial laws and during His lifetime overthrew the ceremonial law. Nothing could be further from the truth. That would be premature. The ceremonial law could only be put aside by the final sacrifice - the death of Jesus. The fact of the matter is that Jesus only broke the unbiblical *civil* Sabbath laws and the unbiblical *civil* washing laws that had been established by the Pharisees. And by the way, those occasions give us permission to break unbiblical civil laws. Those were not in the Bible. But Jesus always upheld every law of the Old Testament - both ceremonial and civil, including the wearing of these tassels. And we keep the spirit of the ceremonial laws by trusting in Jesus.

The cleansing of this unnamed woman (Mark 5:29-34)

Anyway, in verses 29-34 we have the story of the cleansing of this unnamed woman.

An instantaneous and complete healing (v. 29)

She no doubt has her head covered and bowed down to avoid recognition, and as she pushes her way toward Jesus she would have had to have fought hard to get close to Him. Remember that the text says He was squashed on every side. The picture I have put in your outline does not do the crowd justice. Anyway, she managed to push her way close enough that she could reach out and touch the tassel of Christ's upper garment hanging below His waist. The moment she touched it, she was completely healed. Verse 29:

Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction.

Note that she alone is healed (vv. 30)

Here is something curious to notice: though lots of people were crowding Jesus and touching His clothing, *only she is healed*. I find that remarkable. Verse 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?"

Healing flowed from Jesus without any conscious effort on His part. It was *the Holy Spirit* who healed through Jesus. We see something similar with Peter in Acts 5:15, where people would line the streets so that when the shadow of Peter would touch them, they would be healed, or if they touched his handkerchief they would be healed. And the next verse says they were all healed. It wasn't Peter; it was the *Holy Spirit* working *through* Peter. And here there was no conscious effort on Christ's part to heal the woman. It was the Holy Spirit's power sovereignly working through Him the moment she touched his garment.

The other interesting thing is that Jesus *felt* power leaving Him. And many people who have prayed for healing over others have from time to time sensed the same thing happening to

them - like a course of electricity going through their body. This is the power of God flowing through Jesus as God's instrument.

Keep in mind that Jesus normally did not use His own divine power to do miracles, but as our representative chose to do miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit. So this was the power of the Holy Spirit at work through Jesus. And it illustrates that God is the sovereign dispenser of healing when and where He chooses. Many people touched Jesus, but only one touched him with faith and was healed. And God is the sovereign giver of faith as well as of healing.

But Jesus ensures that she has more than healing (vv. 30b-34)

But Jesus ensures that that there is more than just healing of a body that happens. He stops and says, "Who touched My clothes." He knew what had happened, but He is going to draw her out.

But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"

They are puzzled. But His eyes found her.

Mark 5:32 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.

She was trembling because she knew she had broken the law. She was trembling because she feared rejection. Rejection was part of her persona and had been for 12 years. She trembled because any ordinary man would have been made unclean until sundown - but not Jesus. Previously when he touched a leper, the change was not in Him - the change of purity went to the leper. The same was true here. But she didn't know that, so she trembled.

Jesus was not going to let this be an anonymous healing. He had more to do in her life. He wants to usher her into a far more profound healing - a spiritual healing that has either already taken place or is about to take place - the healing of her soul. And in her confession and telling of the whole truth, He must have gotten from her the confession that He wanted to hear, and is able to say in verse 34,

..."Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

What incredible words of comfort. Rather than rejection, He calls her "daughter." This is the only time Jesus addressed any woman in this way. He spoke of other people's daughters and of daughters of Zion, but this is the only time He calls a woman, "daughter," as in, His daughter. And to me this speaks volumes about Christ's insight into the needs of this woman. He is calling her an adopted daughter and He treats her like His daughter. Daughter. That address would have melted her heart.

He goes on, "Your faith." Those words from the lips of Jesus also speak comfort because only the elect can have true faith. He sees her faith.

"Your faith has made you well." That speaks to the healing. It will be a permanent healing.

“Go in peace” is more than a formality. It is pronouncing God’s shalom upon her, and as we have seen in the past, shalom amounts to the reversal of the effects of the fall. It no doubt reversed her poverty, her social standing, her health, and even her worldview. Go in peace is more than simply healing of her body.

“Be healed of your affliction.” That word for affliction is the word for scourging or punishment. It is literally be healed of your discipline or your whipping. That’s very interesting. In effect Jesus was saying that this blood flow was a discipline from God. Have you ever thought of your diseases as possibly being a discipline from God. The BDAG dictionary defines that word this way:

1. a flexible instrument used for lashing, whip, lash... [with the metaphorical meaning being] 2. a condition of great distress, torment, suffering, ...sent by God to human beings:

This is freeing her from something more than the disease itself. It is either freeing her from discipline sent from God or from the demonic (or both since God sometimes uses the demonic as a means of discipline). And that the demonic is often connected with disease is a common theme in the Gospels. In any case, her condition was like being whipped. And Jesus wants her to be completely free from it.

By doing this in front of everyone, it also frees her from social shame. Who is going to treat her like scum when Jesus piles word upon word of her acceptance by Him. Jesus ministers not only to the body, but also to the soul, the emotions, and the mind. The fall negatively affects the entire person - including the emotions. And restoration involves the social acceptance and emotional restoration of a person as well. They are drawn in just like a daughter would be.

And if you are one of those who trembles and doubts whether Jesus loves you, this story assures you that He will receive you. Jesus became flesh to redeem those in the flesh. He suffered to minister to those who are suffering. He was rejected so that we might not be rejected. Do not delay. Reach out your hand with faith and touch the Savior. Receive His healing and His love. One minute this woman was an outcast and the next minute she was adopted into the family of God - a daughter.

The girl who is now past hope (Mark 5:35-43)

All of that was an interruption to the main story, of Jairus’ daughter. But what a glorious interruption it was; what a worthwhile interruption! It was an interruption that no doubt increased the faith of Jairus. If even the touch of a garment could heal a person, how much more so Christ’s presence. So now the first story that was interrupted is resumed. But it is resumed with words that may have made him feel that these interruptions have made everything too late.

Words that could have removed all hope (v. 35)

Verse 35 shows that she was dead.

Mark 5:35 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?"

Fear versus hope (v. 36)

Well-meaning comments can kill our faith, if we let it. I've seen this happen over and over - where a person starts to have weak faith, and someone makes a negative comment, and the faith is dashed to ground. So verse 36 says,

Mark 5:36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe."

Faith and fear are on opposite sides of the spectrum. When we cast off fear and put on faith, that faith may enable us to face trials or it may enable us to escape trials, but it will cling to Jesus regardless of His sovereign outcome. The great man of faith, George Muller, said,

God delights to increase the faith of His children...I say, and say it deliberately—trials, difficulties and sometimes defeat, are the very food of faith...We should take them out of His hands as evidences of His love and care for us in developing more and more that faith which He is seeking to strengthen in us.

I love what he said - trials, difficulties, and sometimes defeat, are the very food of faith. They increase our faith. If we had a choice in the matter we would avoid all trials, difficulties, and defeats, but thankfully God is more interested in our growth than He is in our comfort. God had deliberately made this delay so as to strengthen this man's faith. He tests Jairus' faith with his call to put off fear and to only believe. Verse 37 goes on:

The healing (vv. 37-43)

37 And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James.

Interesting. Up to this point Jairus had been leading the way to the house, and now Jairus and everyone else is following Jesus.

I also find it interesting that Jesus didn't feel the need to make every healing a public healing. And Jesus didn't bring all twelve with him. This healing would only involve a few. Verse 38.

38 Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. 39 When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

This is a phrase that has puzzled many people. Was the girl merely in a coma? Most commentaries say, "No, she was really dead." Why would they say that when Jesus said "The child is not dead"? Let me read from Hendriksen and Kistemaker's commentary because I think they explain it quite well. They say,

That Jesus cannot have meant that the child had merely fallen into a coma is clear from the following: a. Luke 8:53 declares that the people knew that—she was dead. b. Luke 8:55 states that at the command of Jesus "her spirit returned." It is clear, therefore, that there had been a separation between spirit and body. c. In John 11:11 we have something similar. Jesus tells his disciples, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep." But in verse 14 he affirms, "Lazarus died." In both instances the meaning is that death will not

have the final say. Not death but life is going to triumph in the end. Also, just as natural sleep is followed by awakening, so this child is going to become awake, that is, is going to live again.¹

But the professional mourners had seen death many times, and they thought they knew better. Verse 40:

Mark 5:40 And they ridiculed Him.

The word for “ridiculed” is καταγελάω, and means to laugh at with ridicule. The fact that they could instantly go from wailing and crying to laughter and ridicule shows the hypocrisy of their mourning. And people can tell the difference between true empathy and worthless fake compassion. Theirs was a worthless mourning, so verse 40 says that Jesus put them out. The literal rendering of ἐκβάλλω is “drove them out” or “forced them to leave.” He does not want their ridicule killing the faith of the family. Jesus was not approving of these fake mourners.

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.

When you compare this girl to the previous woman you find a number of interesting parallels and contrasts. The woman was healed by her own faith; this girl was both resurrected and healed by her father’s faith. The woman is unknown and poor whereas Jairus had social status and apparently was wealthy. The woman approached Jesus from behind whereas Jairus approached Jesus to His face. Neither one had a human solution. Twelve years was involved with both. There were no doubt twelve years of joy in Jairus’ home while there were twelve years of grief for the woman. It was the same twelve year period. The woman was penniless, Jairus was apparently more wealthy, but both the rich and the poor can be just as subject to sickness and hopelessness.

In both situations Jesus was very sensitive to the needs of the sick person. With the woman He was sensitive to her social and emotional pain. With the girl, He not only raised her from the dead, He healed her of her disease and gave her sufficient strength to stand. But he was also sensitive to the fact that she had likely been without food for a while, so he asks them to feed her. To me this shows that God’s miracles do not replace common sense human care. She needed food to strengthen her body. Obviously Jesus could have nourished her body miraculously too, if He wanted to, but He lets us do what we can. This factors into the use of medicine as well. While we can always pray for miraculous healing, God also works through means - such as nutrition and medicine.

¹ William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark, vol. 10, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 213.

But he tells them not to spread this story. Jesus was not about publicity, fame, and fortune. He was not a MegaChurch preacher. He did not take advantage of sick people to get himself rich or to get his own private jets. He was about them. They were not lost in a crowd.

So this story of two desperate women shows us Christ's remarkable care for the hurting. And it also shows that Jesus cares for all kinds of people and provides for all kinds of people in all kinds of situations. The first five chapters of Mark were designed to show that Jesus is Lord of all and Savior of all kinds of people. He is Lord of demons, storms, sickness, and death. He is Savior of hated tax collectors (like Matthew), of crazy demoniacs, of men and women, young and old. And I would urge you to cast off any reservations about whether Jesus cares for you. Despite twelve miserable years that you might have had, He cares for you. He providentially allowed you to go through your misery because He cares for you. And may you come out the other end stronger in your faith as this woman and girl did. Amen.