

Bible Study Guide: Week of 6-21-2021

1. Read through the passage below
2. Read my notes and commentary
3. Read the questions at the end and ponder or discuss with others

Pastor Andrew

Mark 5:21-43

²¹When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. ²²Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet ²³and begged him repeatedly, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.”

²⁴So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.” ²⁹Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?” ³¹And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, ‘Who touched me?’” ³²He looked all around to see who had done it. ³³But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

³⁵While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader’s house to say, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?” ³⁶But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.” ³⁷He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. ³⁸When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹When he had entered, he said to them, “Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.” ⁴⁰And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child’s father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha cum,” which means, “Little girl, get up!” ⁴²And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. ⁴³He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

²¹When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. ²²Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet ²³and begged him repeatedly, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.”

The flow of this narrative of what seems to be a healing miracle is interrupted by a second healing miracle. I say “seems to be” because, as we know, by the end of this narrative the little girl will have died. Jesus demonstrates even greater power than his previous ability to heal sickness by restoring the girl’s life to her after she has died. The same one who has power over demons, unclean spirits, illnesses, and even the sea itself now demonstrates he can bring someone who has died back to life again. This even, of course, foreshadows his own eventual resurrection and, by extension, our eventual sharing in the resurrection of Christ. It is important to note the distinction between resurrection and resuscitation: this girl is resuscitated, not resurrected. Jesus is raised and will never die again. This little girl, presumably, lived a normal life and then died at a later time. That does not diminish the miracle, it merely distinguishes Jesus’ resurrection as especially significant and unique.

The synagogue leader comes to Jesus with no hint of distrust or malice. Even though Jesus has clashed with religious authorities in Mark’s gospel, Jairus seems entirely open to Jesus’ saving power. Whether this is genuine faith or the desperate action of a concerned father, we cannot be sure.

²⁴So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.” ²⁹Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?” ³¹And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, ‘Who touched me?’” ³²He looked all around to see who had done it. ³³But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

Again, this story of the woman with the hemorrhages interrupts the flow of the story of Jairus’ daughter. The two female figures are connected, however. Both are called “daughter”—for Jairus’ little girl the term is literal; for the woman Jesus healed the term is used to indicate her restoration to community. The bleeding she suffered would have caused her to be ritually impure for 12 years (see Leviticus 15:19ff). The little girl, meanwhile, is only 12 years old. As long as she has been alive, this woman has lived as “dead” to her neighbors and family because of her isolating disease. Further, she has become destitute because of trying to find a cure. Despite this woman’s seeming shame, fear, and trembling, Jesus addresses her kindly and joyfully, reminding her of her status as a daughter of Abraham. He commends her faith and declares her cured.

³⁵While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader’s house to say, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?” ³⁶But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.” ³⁷He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. ³⁸When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹When he had entered, he said to them, “Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.” ⁴⁰And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child’s father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha cum,” which means, “Little girl, get up!” ⁴²And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. ⁴³He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

The delay caused by Jesus’ helping the woman with the hemorrhages ostensibly causes enough of a delay that Jesus is “too late” to heal Jairus’ daughter. The messengers from Jairus’ house bring the worst news imaginable: “Your daughter is dead.” They assume Jesus is powerless to turn back the power of death and encourage Jairus to dismiss Jesus. Jesus speaks of the child as “sleeping”—a common Greek idiom as seen in John 11:11 when Lazarus died. This figure of speech is also used in the epistles, for instance in 1 Corinthians 15:18. This term was often used euphemistically to soften the blow of death, as when we say someone has “passed away” rather than saying that they have died. Often in the New Testament, however, it is used to indicate the temporary nature of death for those who are in Christ—when we close our eyes in death, we know we will open them in resurrection. Therefore, we are only “sleeping,” not permanently dead. Jesus’ use of this idiom prompts laughter from those gathered around. To them, such a statement seems like a sick joke; Jesus intends it to be a promise of comfort, however, as he raises the girl up. Interestingly, Jairus’ name comes from a Hebrew verb meaning “he will arouse” or “he will awaken” or “he will enlighten.” That name takes on addition meaning in light of this powerful sign Jesus performs in raising his daughter up. As is common in Mark’s gospel, Jesus commands the people there to tell no one about this sign. He also tells them to feed the child, perhaps just to give her new strength or perhaps (as with Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances involving food) to prove that the little girl really is restored to new life.

Discussion/Reflection Questions:

- 1. Have you or a loved one had an experience like the woman who had “endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse?” How did you experience Jesus’ love and presence in the midst of the struggle?**
- 2. Have you ever prayed for healing or for a miracle? (How) did God answer that prayer?**
- 3. This miracle for the woman with the hemorrhage happened as an interruption of Jesus’ other miracle. How can you find ways to do ministry in your life even in the midst of interruptions?**