



CANYON HILLS

COMMUNITY CHURCH

Series: First and Best

May 7, 2017

First and Best – Part 3

Dr. Steve Walker

Before we get into Mark 5, let me give you the context of what has just happened in the life and ministry of Jesus. He has just gotten done doing an extreme exorcism of demons who were tormenting a man for years. He had been banished to living in cemeteries, graveyards, and caves on the edge, on the outskirts, of a lake, way out on the side.

Jesus shows up on that side of the lake and the demon-possessed man comes at Jesus, and Jesus casts the demons from the man into a herd of pigs. The herd of nearby pigs runs off the cliff and go into the sea and they all die. You remember that dramatic scene in the gospel of Mark. We're actually going to get there in our study of Mark in just a few weeks as we return to our verse-by-verse study in the gospel of Mark.

So, that is an amazing, crazy scene in the life and ministry of Jesus. After that, as you would expect, huge crowds are now following Jesus. They're catching up to Jesus. The rest of his life and ministry on earth is almost going to just look like a mob scene. Everywhere he goes, thousands of people are trying to get to him, to see him, to touch him, to talk to him...anything they can.

Today, in the midst of this mob-like reaction to this unbelievable scene with demons going into pigs and dying, running off the cliff, we're going to see that two separate people come into contact with Jesus. These people don't know each other. They possibly never even met each other until they got to heaven, I suppose. They both did something so startling that we're left with two examples of all-in faith, of trusting God, and of real devotion to Jesus.

I pray that their examples are going to move us today. I pray that we're going to grow in our trust and hope in God even more than we already do, and we're going to believe that God is not just a God of the past. He's a God of the present and he's a God of the future as well. I pray that's where we all go to in our lives this morning. So, with your Bibles open to Mark, chapter 5, let's go ahead and stand for the reading of God's Word. Pick it up in verse 21.

"And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side..." He had just gotten done with the demons and the pigs. **"...a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him [Jesus], he fell at his feet and implored him earnestly, saying, '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.'** And [Jesus] went with him.

And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many [doctors], and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, 'If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.'"

Father in heaven, I pray that you will make sense of this, that you will open our hearts and increase our faith. God, I pray that wherever every individual is this morning in their understanding and belief that you are good and all-powerful, they would move that needle of faith and today begin to trust you even more. I pray this in Christ's name, amen.

Two unrelated people... One is kind of an upper-crust, highly-esteemed Jewish religious leader named Jairus. The other is a woman. There's no description of her, no résumé... We don't even know her name. We do know she had no business being in the crowd that day, especially being next to Jesus, because Jewish law mandated that if *anyone* was bleeding, they had to be isolated until the bleeding, the wound, or the sickness was healed.

They understood that disease traveled through blood, and so anybody who had open wounds or who was bleeding in any way was unclean. They weren't allowed to be in public. They had to get clearance to rejoin normal life. They weren't allowed to worship at the synagogue at all with God's people, and so this was a really sad place to be.

1. *Tribulation is no respecter of man.* Trial and tragedy play no favorites when they come. As we've noticed, Jairus is very socially connected. He's well known. He's a distinguished, respected, successful, high-ranking Jewish leader, and so I think it's fair for us to just say he probably had access to good healthcare. He had access to good resources. This guy just lived at the upper-class level and would have been very capable of calling the best of the best to come help his daughter.

Yet we meet Jairus in the midst of a horrific trial of a dying child. I stand before you and say I can't fathom this kind of helplessness. I don't understand this kind of fear and sorrow, but I know some of you have and some of you can. I've been with some of you in these circumstances and I've watched grief where the only way I can explain it is that it's completely inconsolable.

There are no words that remove the agony of watching a child suffer and ultimately die. Jairus has a daughter who's not just sick; she's gasping for life, and Jairus has no human answers left. None of his resources, contacts, connections, positions, or money can do anything about this situation.

Then we have a woman. As the huge crowds continue to follow Jesus, and now Jairus, the woman who has been bleeding for 12 years is really suffering. We see here that there are so many doctors that there are too many to count. She's completely broke and she's no better for all of these years of doctors and spending money. She has depleted all of her resources. As far as we know, we don't get any hint that she has any family nearby. We don't know anything about her. In this moment, she's all alone and exhausted. It has been 12 years.

Again, I stand before you and I have no idea... I can't imagine what that feels like. The frustration of being sick, suffering, and in pain for that long... I know only people who have chronic pain conditions can possibly relate to what she's going through. Only people who have endured long periods of sickness actually know what this is like for her.

My point here is that life in a world that is broken by sin is going to be devastating at times. It's going to be scary. It's going to be dangerous because sin has broken our world. The apostle Peter wrote, "**Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.**" I don't think Peter is lacking compassion in this. I don't think Peter is being insensitive. I think he is speaking to us as believers and saying, "Don't be surprised by this."

The only real hope we have in a world broken by sin, where trial is inevitable, comes from the very words of Jesus himself, where Jesus said, "**I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.**" The one who saves us from our sins and gives us eternal life is the one who says, "This world is full of tribulation, but there's going to come a day when you're going to be part of a world, part of my kingdom, where you are going to live forever, and all of this brokenness and craziness is going to be over."

I think it's important for you and me to remember that the tribulations in our lives are not the result of some random karma. Going through really hard and painful things in life is not the result of just accidentally being in the wrong place at the wrong time. It is the result, first and foremost, of living in a fallen world, and so before we can even talk about trusting God, we have to be reminded that trials and tribulation are no respecter of man in this world we live in.

2. Humble faith will always move Jesus. What is so striking in this scene is how respectful and humble Jairus and the woman are. There's no demanding. There's no naming it and claiming it. There are no ultimatums given to Jesus. They weren't trying to manipulate Jesus and get him in the right frame of mind or position and have their words be just right. We simply see two people who are desperate and hopeful.

In this scene, Jairus pushes through this massive crowd. He lays all his dignity, pride, etiquette, and reputation on the line. With thousands of people crowded in around Jesus, he falls on his face, we see here in verse 22, at the feet of Jesus. He falls in a heap of utter desperation. His prayer is simple in verse 23. He implores Jesus earnestly, humbly, and he says, "She's at the

point of death. Please come and lay your hands on her." In verse 24, we see that Jesus goes with him.

Now, for the woman, it was a little different. Same day, same crowd... Her courage and faith may be even greater than Jairus'. She heard about Jesus' healing power. She's so desperate, though, she doesn't even want to speak to Jesus. She doesn't even want to risk sounding foolish, being humiliated, or having people grab her and say, "Get away from him!" She doesn't even say anything. She just says, "If I could just touch his sleeve..." Some of your Bibles say the hem on his sleeve. "...something will happen. Something good is going to happen."

Look at verse 30. **"And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my garments?'"** Jesus stops and he wants her to come forward. I believe Jesus knew who touched him, he being God in the flesh, but he wants her to come toward him.

He wants her to come face-to-face. He wants her to know that she is not going to be humiliated by him. In verse 33, it says, **"But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth."** She just prayed and said, "Here it is. Here's who I am."

I think, church, there's so much confusion in our world today with all of the false teachers and so-called faith healers we've seen in our lifetime, who turn people's pain and desperation into a circus. They make it look like real, true faith is some magic formula that only the few ever get to figure out, and that is a shame.

Some of you have been hurt by that. Some of you have heard that and maybe even been at least confused. You've prayed and you've been told that the reason you didn't get the answer you prayed for is because you didn't have enough faith. You weren't positive enough. Maybe you've been told it's because there's something going on in your life. There's some hidden, secret sin you need to dig up out of your past and bring forth before God will consider your prayers. Maybe it's other hurtful, harmful lies like that.

Jesus says simply, in Mark 11, **"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."** He doesn't tell us to figure it all out. He doesn't tell us to word it in the exact, perfect way. He doesn't tell us to be so positive that we've eliminated every ounce of wonder and doubt out of our brains. He just says, "Ask in humble prayer. Just believe."

3. *Answers to humble faith prayers are not all the same.* I want this to give us a lot of hope this morning. For the woman, she touches his garment, and in verse 29, it says, **"And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease."** Then you look in verse 34 and it says Jesus said to her, after she came to him and told him the whole truth, **"Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."** She felt it. She knew it.

I want to just say *wow*. There can be and there will be those incredible moments in our lives when God responds to our prayers before we even get off our knees. There are those special moments like that, but this is not a recipe. This is not some magical formula she knew that we don't know, because we also see in Scripture that sometimes, Jesus is asked for a miracle, and he just tells them to turn around and go home. What happens is, as they're walking home, the miracle comes. All Jesus calls us to do is to ask and believe, and the rest is completely up to him.

Now, for Jairus, it's a different story. If you look at verse 22, Jairus comes up to him, falls at his feet, and prays, "Please come lay your hands on her." In verse 24, it says Jesus went with him. Basically, I picture Jesus lifting him up, taking him by the hand, standing him up, and saying, "Come on. Let's go. We're going to your house."

I just wonder if you can feel, in this moment, for Jairus, that every single ounce of hope he might have had left just peaked. It just went through the roof. "He didn't embarrass me! He heard me! He listened to me! He didn't step over me! He didn't go around me! People didn't whisk him off! He just helped me up and said, 'Let's go.'" I can't imagine the heart rate of Jairus, the hope he had, the understanding that he has heard that Jesus has done this before, but, "He might do this for me right now!"

Then, look with me at verse 35. While Jesus is still talking to the woman, telling her to go be at peace, "**...there came from the ruler's house some who said, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?'**" Devastating. I can only think that every ounce of air in his lungs just went out. I can only think that at this moment, he can't even feel his legs. As he feels himself starting to just go down, the whole world just goes silent.

I just know some of you have been in that very moment. Some of you have experienced that. That thing you've prayed for... Not only does it go unanswered as you're praying for that, but the worst possible outcome actually takes place. There's an ending that is crushing and you can't even feel your faith anymore.

I know for some of you even sitting here today, it almost feels like everything you've always believed about God's goodness and power, faith, and prayer... It almost feels like even right now, for you, all of that is just drained out of you. "Do not bother Jesus. Your daughter is dead." In that moment, there is a deafening silence. You talk about a different answer...

4. *Sometimes the gap between the prayer and the answer is just as important in our lives.* Sometimes the time between our request and the answer to that prayer request is just as critical for us as the answer. I want you to look at verse 36 and following. "**But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, 'Do not fear, only believe.' And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James.**"

In essence, Jesus heard what they just told Jairus, and Jesus says to Jairus, "I know what it looks like, but this story isn't over. It's not over yet." I try to wonder what that walk to Jairus' house was like with Jesus, Peter, James, and John. It must have felt like days. It must have felt like

miles. I want to know what Jairus was thinking about at that moment, as he's walking along and he can barely feel his own body.

Is he thinking about, "I have to make funeral arrangements"? Is he thinking about his grieving wife who's going to fall into his arms at the door? Is he thinking about his other kids? Is he grieving the loss of a 12-year-old daughter? What's going through his mind? I want so badly to know what they talked about on the way to his house. I picture Jesus putting his arm around Jairus and just crying with him, just loving him, and just comforting him.

I think the moving part of this whole scene is that Jesus walked with him. Some of you are on that walk right now. There's no sign of life. There's no sign of anything good or any miracle in sight, and all I can do today for all of us is to encourage us to keep walking. Keep walking with Jesus, because that's what he promises he will do. The prophet Isaiah wrote these incredible words for a moment like today. He is saying,

"But now thus says the LORD, he who created you... 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.'"

What I love and see in that passage is not so much that God promises we will not experience the waters, floods, fire, and flame. He never promises that we will not experience those things. Those things are metaphors for the trials of life, and appropriately so. He doesn't promise that they won't come, but he promises, "You are mine. I call you by name. I promise I will not let this destroy you."

Isaiah said it a little differently early on in his writing. He said, **"You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock."** What if the goal of every trial and tribulation in our lives is that we will trust in the Lord forever? What if that's the goal of our lives? Trust in him forever. He's the Rock. Somewhere in the midst of that trust, there will come peace. Now look at verse 38.

"They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, 'Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping.' And they laughed at him. But 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."

I want to just stop right there and say they *laughed* at Jesus. In my mind, I think that had a tone. That demeaning laugh... You know the kind of laugh I'm talking about. It just has kind of a demeaning little tone to it, like, "Oh, Jesus. You're so naïve. She's dead. She has been dead a while."

There may be times when everyone in our life is sure that the story is over, and they kind of laugh at us holding out hope and faith. We don't blame them, in some ways. It looks dead. There are some times when we feel like laughing. We've been praying for a trial for so long, and nothing is happening. It's just getting worse and worse, and it feels like it never goes away. Sometimes comes along, like Pastor Steve, and says, "The story may not be over yet," and we want to laugh. We just want to laugh. We're in good company.

Look at verse 41. **"Taking her by the hand he said to her, 'Talitha cumi,' which means, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement."** For Jairus, the miracle of healing his daughter wasn't the best answer. Jesus wanted a resurrection. Maybe in Jesus' sovereign wisdom, the whole tragedy, prayer, and non-answer for Jairus was more about Jairus than it ever was about his daughter.

Here's my hope. I don't get this from the text, but this is what I want to believe. I want to believe Jairus went on to have one of the most powerful and influential testimonies for Jesus among the Jewish leaders and religious leaders in the first century than anyone else. I want to believe that in that journey from the healing to the resurrection, Jesus was accomplishing something in Jairus' heart that... I'm wondering if he might have become the single greatest Jewish evangelist that none of us ever heard of. In his sovereign wisdom, Jesus said, "Just keep walking."

I think some of us here who have been praying and have been devastated by what seems to be, at this point, a dead prayer by all outer appearances. Could it be that God is preparing you for a resurrection of faith, hope, and belief in the goodness and love of God that is going to go on to change you, your future, and the future of your loved ones, whatever the circumstances are, forever in a way that right now you can't imagine?

I want to be clear. I'm not suggesting that the answer will be what we want. I'm not suggesting that if we just hold on long enough, exactly what we want to change and happen is going to happen. I'm not teaching that if we just believe positively enough, that which has died, ended, or is lost in our lives will somehow miraculously come back to life. I'm not promising that, but what if the point is that the answer to our prayer might be something with greater joy, power, and influence for our lives and for the people we're praying for, forever?

In some circumstances, it's absolutely impossible to imagine that, and the beautiful thing is that God doesn't call us to try and figure out what he's up to. He doesn't call us to try and get that lesson learned right away. He doesn't call us to guess. See, what I think is so beautiful is that there's no hint in the story that as Jesus, Jairus, and the three apostles are walking to his house, that Jesus kind of got out of the crowd and just went, "Hey Jairus, I know that's what they said, but I'm about to raise her from the dead, so let's go!"

You don't get the sense that Jesus gave him any hint about what he was going to do, because somewhere in that little walk... I don't know if it was a block, a mile, or longer. Somewhere in that, Jesus was accomplishing his work, and when it came time for the divine answer, everything changed. Here's what he did tell Jairus, though, when they told him his daughter was dead. He

simply said, "**Do not fear, only believe.**" It's exactly what he tells us today. It's the same Jesus. "Just walk with me."

Some of you have already written your prayer requests down on this card, and maybe some of you just didn't know this was happening today, or you haven't really been sure what we were going to do, but that card is for every single one of us in this room who need God to intervene to write it down on this card.

Again, it doesn't have to be the story. God knows all the details. I want you to, by faith, say, "God, this trial, circumstance, or tribulation needs you. This needs a miracle. I need you to intervene." I'm just asking you to write it down. As soon as you write it down, I'm going to ask you to walk, symbolic of faith in Christ...

All over the room, across the back, there are four baskets. Across the front, I think there are four or five baskets all the way to the edges. As soon as you're done writing that prayer, all I'm going to do is ask you to come forward, drop it in these baskets, and then go back to your seat and start praying.

If you are physically able... I don't want you to let someone else carry it for you unless walking is too difficult, but I'm just going to ask you to walk and put it in, anytime you're done writing it, and just get back to your seat, and then we're going to pray together. You come.

I'm going to begin praying, and I know some of you are still coming and still getting back to your seats. That's okay. This whole walk is really just an expression of prayer, so let's just go to God right now and just be cognizant that there are still people coming. You might have to scoot your legs over or something.

Father in heaven, the beautiful thing is that a million years ago, you knew we would be here. You knew the burden, the miracle we would need. You knew the trial and the tribulation that this broken world would bring into our lives, and so God, in the name of Jesus right now, we ask that you would be blessed by our belief, our desire to believe the story isn't over.

We pray, God, that you are blessed by our faith right now, that somehow, some way, although we can't see it... It looks dead to us. It looks impossible. God, I know some people sitting here right now are so exhausted and so hopeless, and it just feels fearful to do this again. I pray that in this very moment, you would open our hearts and minds to see that you are real, good, and all-powerful.

God, we first ask that you would touch these circumstances, that you would heal, relieve, fix, win, and just turn things around. God, we pray that you will help us to believe that you can and might even choose to do that before we leave this room. God, if there's still a journey for us to walk with you, we pray that in this journey, we would learn to trust you forever, that we will find the peace. God, give us that peace that confirms that you are walking with us.

Comfort us, God, as we trust and believe that we can't see the ultimate end that you want to accomplish, but we know you have that end in your hands, in your sight. So, God, help us to just trust that our lives, our family, our friends, our loved ones, and our circumstances are all in your hands. We lay them in your lap right now, God. We just let go of them and we let you hold them now. These are yours. We commit to walk with you, God, our great God. Oh, we love you.