

He was a well-respected religious leader. She was ritually unclean. He was in charge of the local synagogue. She was forbidden to set foot in a synagogue. He enjoyed the admiration of the locals. She was an outcast. His name was Jairus. Her name was “anonymous.” He was a man, in a man’s world. She was an unclean woman, in an unkind world. He had a 12 year-old child. She had not touched a family member in 12 years since she started hemorrhaging. He had everything to lose in trusting Jesus. She had nothing left to lose. These two could hardly have been more different except for one thing; they were both desperate....5:21-23.

It’s every parent’s nightmare - sitting up at 3 a.m. with a sick child, praying the fever will break and that the child will recover. You may have made that anxious drive to the emergency room praying all the way that God will spare your child. Our hopes for the future are bound up with our children and grandchildren. If they die, hope dies. The future looks bleak without them. You will do anything when you are desperate. So this well-respected pillar of the community casts aside all pretense and falls to his knees in front of Jesus. No trick questions, no challenges to His authority, no manipulation or criticism, just one desperate request – please heal my daughter.

The story is interrupted by the desperate act of a woman suffering from a chronic condition...vv. 24-26. Whatever her medical condition was it rendered her ritually unclean. She was not only barred from the synagogue but for 12 years she had been untouchable. No one could get near her because touching someone who is unclean makes you unclean. So not only was she suffering physically but she was suffering emotionally and socially as well. She had exhausted all of her resources seeking treatment. And the treatment in those days could be exhausting. From Jewish writings, such as the Talmud, we learn of some of these ‘cures’: “One remedy consisted of drinking a goblet of wine containing a powder compounded from rubber, alum and garden crocuses. Another treatment consisted of a dose of Persian onions cooked in wine administered with the summons, ‘Arise out of your flow of blood!’ Other physicians prescribed sudden shock, or the carrying of the ash of an ostrich’s egg in a certain cloth.” And you can bet that none of these treatments came cheap.

Not surprisingly none of these “remedies” worked. So a desperate woman does something desperate – she touches Jesus...vv. 27-29.

Desperation is the mental and emotional state of those who are out of options. It doesn't matter if you are a big man or an unnamed woman, when you exhaust every human solution you will try anything. So the empty-handed often become open-handed. God gives grace to the open-handed. The Bible is clear, the only thing necessary for us to receive God's grace is nothing, and most of us just don't have it. But there is something we can do and this precious woman did it. We can get in God's way...vv. 30-34

The only proper response to Jesus is faith. A follower of Jesus believes in Jesus, relies on Jesus, trusts in Jesus. But let's be clear, faith doesn't heal anyone, Jesus does. There are some who take a passage like this and use it to point out that the greater your faith the more likely you will be healed. But elsewhere in the NT Jesus emphasizes that it is not the amount of faith that is important but the object of our faith. Great faith in thin ice will get you cold and wet. Faith the size of a mustard seed in the proper object of faith, thick ice, will get you across the frozen lake dry.

A popular heresy among Christians is that we are saved by faith. This makes salvation dependent on us. We are saved by grace. We are saved by grace THROUGH faith. We cannot be saved APART FROM faith but we are not saved BY our faith. Salvation cannot be earned. It is a gift given to those who realize their total inability to do anything that will contribute to their eternal salvation. This woman simply got in Jesus' way looking to Him to provide what she could not. Grace is God doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Jesus lived a perfect and sinless life. He died not for His sins, but for ours (2 Corinthians 5:21). In place of our wretchedness, He offers righteousness. Relying on Him alone will save you, just as this woman's faith saved her. Faith is the only appropriate response to the grace of God.

Meanwhile back at Jairus' house, his daughter is dead...vv. 35-36. Fear is the opposite of faith. Fear forces us to take our eyes off of a sovereign, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-caring God. Jesus says, "Believe."

When they get to the house the funeral has already begun...vv. 37-43.

Two desperate people, different in every way except in their response to Jesus. They have every reason NOT to believe yet they believe. What a contrast between their response and the response from those in Jesus' own hometown...6:1-5.

“He could do no miracle there,” (Matthew’s version - “And he did not do many mighty works there”) does not mean their unbelief drained Jesus’ power like kryptonite did to Superman! It simply means that the purpose of Jesus’ miracles was to produce faith in those who believed. Jesus did not waste His time and energy on trying to convince the unconvinced. A miracle is “first and foremost a sign pointing beyond itself to the identity of the one behind it and behind all other miracles. Like every miracle that ever was, it is a sign from beyond this world, pointing us to the God beyond this world, to the God who came into this world to lead us back to Himself and who is Himself the way back.” Metaxas, *Miracles*, p. 87

Are you desperate, desperate enough to believe? Or do you still think you can find a way to solve your problem? Jesus will do no miracle where self-sufficiency reigns. Mark emphasizes our desperate condition by recounting four strategically placed miracles back to back. The calming of a storm, the deliverance of the demonic, the healing of a hopeless woman and the raising of a dead girl; all forces we are helpless to overcome. Jesus demonstrated His authority over nature, demons, sickness and even death. In each of these cases the individuals involved were completely helpless and hopeless. There was no human solution to their problem. The storm on the lake terrified experienced sailors. The demoniac could not be subdued by anyone. The hemorrhaging woman had been seeing doctors for twelve years but only got worse. The young girl was no longer sick, but dead. In the most hopeless cases Jesus brings healing, deliverance, and salvation.

- If you do not believe do not expect a miracle. (6:1-5).

- If you do believe, keep believing even during God's divine delays. The miracle of raising the little girl was interrupted by the woman who touched Jesus' garment. We all experience times in our lives when we think everything around us is collapsing and God seems to be puttering around heaven, totally unconcerned about our trials and tragedies. Maybe these delays are by divine design. Jesus didn't rush to Jairus' house just as He delayed at the report of the sickness of Lazarus. This only allowed Jesus to do a greater miracle by raising the girl from the dead. When He did act there was no question of who should receive the credit and the glory. When God delays it is not due to His lack of concern for us, for He is sensitive to the most insignificant needs (such as a meal). It is the purpose of God that these delays will result in greater glory for Himself, and greater faith for us.