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The Awesome Power and Tender Compassion of Jesus Christ

Mark 5:21-43, Part 1

I. “We Are Weak, But He Is Strong”

A. Singing a sweet song to our kids

When our kids were little and Christi and I were putting them to bed each night, we followed some repeated patterns. We did effectively the same thing every night. And part of that bedtime ritual was singing the child’s song, “Jesus loves me.”

Jesus loves me, this I know

For the Bible tells me so

Little ones to him belong

They are weak but he is strong.

B. Dear friends, that is not just a message for children

1. To some degree, we all have to become like little children in order to be saved

NASB Matthew 18:3 Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."

2. We all have to come to understand how weak we are and how strong Jesus is
3. We absolutely underestimate both
4. We think of ourselves as so powerful

- a. The Tower of Babel displayed man arrogant over his technology, using his intelligence to build a tower to the heavens
 - b. If anything, the human race is even more arrogant now
 - c. We have actually built a rocket and flown to the moon less than seven decades after Orville and Wilbur Wright built the first airplane... and so we think we are powerful
 - d. We have ridden the coattails of modern science to defeat countless diseases, like polio and smallpox... and so we think we are powerful
 - e. We have flexed our muscles to build ever more powerful weapons, even harnessing the power of the atom to build thermonuclear weapons that can erase whole cities in an instant... and so we think we are powerful
 - f. We have probed the mysteries of the genetic code of nature and have developed seeds and genetically engineered living organisms... and so we think we are powerful
 - g. We have unleashed the power of the electron in digital technologies and have developed stunningly powerful computers that perform astonishingly feats... and so we think we are powerful
5. But friends, we are WEAK!
- a. We have not conquered nature... the wind still blows where it wills
 - b. We have not conquered space... for the distance to the nearest star will forever mock our insignificant achievement of landing men on the moon
 - c. We have not conquered disease... for people still suffer daily of diseases which have defied medical science
 - d. We have not conquered sin... for people still lust and rage and defraud and wage war against one another daily

- e. We have not conquered death... for the death rate still stands at 100%--every single person born will eventually die

It is in the face of this overwhelming weakness that Jesus came to save us

“We are weak, BUT HE IS STRONG!”

C. The Awesome Power of Jesus in His Miracles

1. The miracles of Jesus put on plain display his awesome power in ways that absolutely boggle the mind
2. We have seen his power over the wind and the waves, simply saying to a raging storm on the Sea of Galilee, “Peace, be still!” and instantly the wind stopped and the sea became as calm as a mirror-like mill pond
3. Then we saw him deal with a wretched maniac who was locked deep in the prison of his tormented soul by a Legion of demons, maybe as many as six thousand
4. Despite their overwhelming supernatural power, they knew they were no match for Jesus and were actually in terror of him; they caused the man to fall on his knees before Jesus and declared him to be the Son of the Most High God
5. He effortlessly commanded them to “Go!” and they left the man and entered the pigs who drowned in the Sea
6. Jesus’ power was complete... he was absolute master over all demons, every disease, and even over nature itself.
7. But what about DEATH? Death, the final enemy!
8. In this account, we will see Jesus effortlessly raise a little girl from the dead
9. We are all weak before the power of death... but Jesus rules over death

Revelation 1:18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

D. The Tender Mercies of Christ

1. Along with that, we are going to see how tender Jesus is toward the weak
2. The basic promise of the gospel:

Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

In other words, "Blessed are the spiritual beggars, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven!"

To enter the Kingdom of Heaven, you have to see yourself as a beggar – weak, powerless, destitute, repulsive

To come to Christ, you have to see him as powerful, capable of saving you

BUT you also have to see Jesus as tender and compassionate... willing to receive you.

This account shows two spiritual beggars who have absolutely nothing to offer to Jesus, who are both desperate, and they know it

First, a father whose little twelve year-old daughter is dying; and his heart is torn to shreds... he will cast all dignity aside and fall down before Jesus to beg his help for her

Second, a woman whose bleeding problem has lasted as long as that little girl has been alive... physically defiled and spiritually outcast, no better than a leper, desperate, having done everything she could to be healed and who has nowhere else to turn

Two spiritual beggars who know that they are weak... and who believe Jesus is strong

But they will also find out how tender Jesus is in his affections, his mercies toward such weak spiritual beggars

E. Context in Mark

1. The central message of Mark's Gospel

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

2. That Jesus IS the Son of God IS the good news!
3. Jesus' attributes put on display so that we may read these accounts and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing we may have life and forgiveness of sins in his name
4. We have just read the most astonishing day of Jesus' life in terms of spectacular displays of his power—the stilling of the storm on the Sea of Galilee and the driving out of the Legion of demons
5. This wretched man has now been saved from the demons and desires to spend the rest of his life with Jesus; Jesus does not let him, but tells him to go home to his family and tell them how much God has done for him
6. Tragically, however, the people in the region of the Gadarenes are more afraid of Jesus than they were of the demons and basically drive him away
7. Jesus will never force himself on unwilling people; the Spirit must first make us willing... and they were unwilling to come to him that they might have life
8. So he crosses back again to the other side of the Sea of Galilee

F. A Double Account

1. To some degree, this account is like one of those nested wooden Russian dolls... like a miracle story within a miracle story
2. As he is on his way to do one miracle, another pops out
3. Too much to handle in one sermon... God willing, today Part 1, next time Part 2

II. The First Beggar: A Desperate Father

Mark 5:21-24 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. ²² Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet ²³ 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." ²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

A. The Constant Crush of the Crowd

1. This has been a regular feature of Jesus' ministry
2. Every day of Jesus' life at this point, there are literally thousands of people who want to be around Jesus
3. The reason is plain: his reputation as a healer... there was no disease or sickness Jesus could not heal; so thousands come
4. Beyond this was Jesus' reputation as a teacher

Mark 1:22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

John 7:46 "No one ever spoke the way this man does"

5. Remember that Jesus had to sit out in a boat to do his teaching because of the crush of the crowd

B. Jairus

1. In the midst of this crowd is a powerful man, Jairus, called the "synagogue ruler"
2. The synagogue was the center of Jewish life in every community; where the Jews gathered to hear the scriptures every Sabbath
3. To be a synagogue ruler meant to be the leading man of the community; a man of power and piety... and certainly he would have been a Pharisee, for they controlled the religious life of Israel
4. The Pharisees had already blacklisted Jesus for his healings on the Sabbath and for his denigration of their piety and their views
5. Around that time, the Jewish leaders would decree that anyone who believed that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue... effectively evicted from Jewish life in all respects
6. But Jairus is not thinking about any of that; he is a desperate man because his little girl, his only daughter, is dying, and despite all his power and his piety, there is nothing he can do to save her

7. Her life is like a flickering candle about to be snuffed out; time is of the essence... he knows Jesus' reputation and is convinced that he can heal his daughter, if he can only come in time

C. Jairus's Desperate Request

Mark 5:22-23 he fell at his feet ²³ 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."

1. He throws himself on the ground, prostrate before the feet of Jesus
2. In doing this, he is throwing his own reputation out the window; severing ties with the Pharisees who hate Jesus
3. He is treating Jesus like a king, perhaps even as the Son of God
4. The Greek verb speaks of his desperate entreaties... he beseeches him GREATLY... "I am **begging** you, Jesus!!"
 - a. He says she is at the point of death, right at the edge; she has been getting worse and worse
 - b. While Jesus was on the other side of the Sea dealing with the demoniac of the Gadarenes, this little girl was literally dying
 - c. Jairus knows only Jesus can save her life; and he was desperately waiting on the shore for him to come back
 - d. If the people of the Gadarenes had asked Jesus to stay longer with them and he did, this little girl would certainly have died
5. Jairus knows he cannot demand anything from Jesus; he is a beggar with nothing to offer; his power and position and wealth and piety mean nothing; if Jesus doesn't come save her, she will die... and there is nothing Jairus can do to force Jesus to come

Stop! Do you understand that this is the same position we all find ourselves in as sinners before a holy God? We deserve to die and be condemned for our sins... we cannot demand salvation, still less that Jesus would DIE IN OUR PLACE to pay the death penalty we deserve for our sins. We are truly beggars!

As the great reformer Martin Luther was dying, his final recorded words were these: “We are all beggars. This is true!”

D. Jairus’s Limited Faith

1. Faith is not all of one kind... it can grow and develop
2. There is little doubt that that at the beginning of their encounter, Jairus believes Jesus can heal his daughter if he can only get there in time to place his hand on her
3. He does not imagine Jesus can heal her remotely, without touching her; and at this point, he is not thinking he can raise her from the dead
4. Jesus will work on this man’s faith during their time together; by the end of the entire encounter, his faith will be far beyond what it is at the beginning

E. Jesus’ Availability and Humility

1. Jairus comes and begs; Jesus gets up and goes
2. Jesus came to be “servant of all” (Mark 9:35)

Other people’s needs were more important to him than his own... He never refused, or said “Can’t you see I’m busy here?” or thought himself too important for others, or sighed and said “What, more healings?? I’ve already done enough for one day!”

We are so selfish, passing every demand on our time through the filter of our own likes and dislikes... Jesus was totally accessible, available, never refusing a beggar who came with a need

F. The Crowd Came Along Too

Mark 5:24 So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him.

1. The crowd is literally crushing him

In Japan, I once took a local train from Kobe to Osaka during rush hour. I have never been more crowded in my life! At every stop on the train line, more commuters pressed in, and some train officials have as

their job the task of pushing passengers onto the train, to maximize the number of people who can fit. I could not expand my rib cage to take a full breath!

I don't know if Jesus was this crushed... but it says in

Luke 8:42 As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him.

Greek = literally "choked him" ... depriving him of air

III. The Second Beggar: A Desperate Woman

Mark 5:25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years.

A. Her Condition

1. This bleeding problem was probably a gynecological issue
2. It tells us she had been suffering from this condition for an incredible TWELVE YEARS!!
3. Clearly the bleeding was not **life-threatening**... she was not "bleeding out"
4. But her condition was **life-altering**, in that Jewish context

B. Her Spiritual Defilement

1. In the Law of Moses, such a condition rendered her spiritual unclean, unable to participate in Jewish life

Leviticus 15:25 When a woman has a discharge of blood for many days at a time other than her monthly period or has a discharge that continues beyond her period, she will be unclean as long as she has the discharge

2. She could not go to the synagogue; anyone who touched her would be unclean as well... that's what made her like a leper
3. These laws were meant not just for the hygiene of the Jewish nation, but to give a picture of the defilement of sin for all people

Isaiah 64:6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags

4. The Hebrew in that famous verse is related to the rags used to stanch menstrual flow
5. All our most righteous acts are defiled in the sight of a holy God; that's what makes us spiritual beggars, with nothing to offer

C. Desperate Measures for Years and Years

Mark 5:26 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.

1. I can't imagine what this woman has been through
2. The text said she suffered a great deal under the therapies offered by the primitive doctors available at that time; their cures were bizarre and invasive and disgusting and costly and ineffective
3. What a contrast to the words I've already given for Jesus' healings: effortless, effective, instantaneous, and FREE
4. This woman had SPENT ALL THE MONEY SHE HAD on these ineffective cures
5. And all that happened was she got worse and worse

D. Hearing of Jesus Gave Her Faith

Mark 5:27-28 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed."

1. The reports had reached her ears of Jesus' amazing healings; and she had heard of his tenderness toward women in particular
2. Many of Jesus' most tender encounters were with women; he treated them with dignity and respect and perfect purity
3. Her faith rose and she made her way to where Jesus was; the text tells us of her faith in his healing power
4. Her plan was just to touch the fringe of his garment (Mt. 9:20)
 - a. Jewish men were required to wear tassels on the edge of their cloaks as constant reminders to obey the Laws of God

- b. This woman felt that all she had to do was to touch those tassels and she would be healed
 - c. She would avoid the embarrassment of an interaction, which she obviously didn't want
5. She came physically low
- a. The fringe of Jesus' robe would have been down near the ground
 - b. I picture this woman forcing her way through the throng and then down on the ground near his feet... risking getting crushed, stampeded by this crushing throng

E. The Healing

Mark 5:29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

1. Jesus' healing was instantaneous as all of them were
2. The pain was gone instantly... she knew right away she was done with that problem
3. The Greek word translated "suffering" is very strong... *mastigos*, the same word that would later be used of the scourge would shred Jesus' back in Luke 18:32
4. This woman had been flogged by this affliction for twelve years... her suffering had been incalculable; now Jesus had healed her of it
5. Effectively he would take it onto himself

1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

F. Jesus' Inquiry and Infinite Mystery

1. The rest of this account has the power to trip the circuit breakers of our minds

Mark 5:30-34 At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹ "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and

yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" ³² But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

2. Jesus did not know who touched him
3. This probes the limits of our capability to understand the incarnation
4. The central message is that Jesus is the Son of God... the incarnate God... God in the flesh;
 - a. As God in the flesh, he has God-like nature powers, such as controlling the winds and the waves
 - b. As God in the flesh, he has God-like healing powers, such as driving out demons and healing every disease and sickness
 - c. As God in the flesh, he has God-like knowledge... the ability to read people's minds and know what has happened far away or what is about to happen or what will happen in the distant future
 - d. As God in the flesh, he has God-like authority... to ability to interpret the Law of God as he does, and to forgive sins
5. But as a man, he is limited physically; he can only be in one place at one time
6. And as a man, he is limited mentally... though God the Father cannot learn anything, Jesus can

Luke 2:52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men

7. And Jesus himself said he didn't know the day or hour of his second coming, nor the angels but only the Father knows
8. So, Jesus really didn't know who touched him.

G. Power Went Through Jesus to this Woman

1. Jesus' disciples must have thought he was mentally off when he asked "Who touched me?"
2. A huge crowd was pressing in on him, crushing, him, depriving him of air
3. But by the end of their lives, all of his apostles must have learned NEVER QUESTION JESUS... ever! Never doubt him! Never think low thoughts of him!!
4. There was a kind of touch that Jesus experienced unlike all the jostling crushing touching he was experiencing from the crowd
5. He said "Power went through me"... as if Jesus was an electrical cable, a conduit
6. Now I have been saying that all of Jesus' works were done by the will and command of the Father... but also that all of Jesus's works were also done by the power of the Holy Spirit:

Acts 10:38 God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

7. So God the Father healed this woman by the power of the Spirit through Jesus WITHOUT JESUS BEING AWARE OF IT

H. The Inquiry and the Encounter

1. So why does Jesus stop and ask "WHO TOUCHED ME???"
2. It is clear... he wants a relationship with this woman...

Jesus wanted personal interaction... He wanted to look her in the eyes, touch her life personally

He wanted to touch her and be touched by her

3. He did not come merely to dispense healings in a mechanical way; the healings were meant to bring sinners into a reconciled, personal, intimate relationship with Almighty God

Mark 5:32-34 Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

4. The woman did not want this at all... but I would say that when she lived the rest of her life, she would look back on this brief encounter with the loving, tender-hearted Jesus as the greatest moment of her life, greater even than her physical healing
5. Actually, Jesus said "Your faith has SAVED you"... Jesus healed many people who had no faith; but some were saved by faith
6. Furthermore, he called her DAUGHTER

John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

IV. Healed for a Personal Relationship with Jesus

- A. Sin Had Estranged Us from God; Jesus Came to Bring Reconciliation... a Right Relationship with God... That Means an Intimate, Personal Relationship With a Loving Tender God... and with Christ, Who Died for Us Individually

Galatians 2:20 the Son of God ... loved me and gave himself for me.

- B. At One Time, We Were Enemies... Now Beloved Children of God
- C. And He Knows Us Intimately

Isaiah 43:1 Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

John 10:3 He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

Do you know this intimate love of Christ?
Do you know that your sins are forgiven by him?

Next week, God willing: the next miracle, the raising of that little girl from the dead!