

A STRONG FAITH MADE STRONGER

Mark 5:21-24, 35-43

Matthew 9:18, 19, 23-26; Luke 41, 42, 49-56

Intro: While our Lord was here on earth, we are told in the Gospels of only three whom He raised from the dead. Jairus' daughter, the widow's son (recorded only in Luke 7:11-16), and the raising of Lazarus in John 11. It is very likely that others were raised, but the Spirit of God has only recorded these three. And the one we are considering tonight was the first of the three: the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead.

We have seen, especially in Mark and Luke, that the Lord was coming to the end of a very busy day. He had taught in Capernaum. Then He went over the Sea of Galilee, only to be caught in a storm which even terrified even the experienced fishermen among our Lord's disciples. In the country of the Gadarenes the Lord delivered the demoniac, and then was forced by the people to leave that area. He returned by boat to Capernaum, and it was there that the ruler of the synagogue came requesting help for his twelve year old daughter who was, as her father said, lying "at the point of death."

The Lord left immediately with Jairus (this was his name), but was delayed by the woman who had been sick as long as Jairus' little girl had been alive. After the woman was healed, someone brought the word to Jairus that his daughter was dead. And they told Jairus that there was no point in bothering the Lord any more. From that point on we learn how the Lord graciously raised the little girl from the dead.

I want to consider this passage with you under four headings:

- I. THE NEED (Mark 5:21-24).
- II. THE DELAY (Mark 5:25-34).
- III. THE BAD NEWS (Mark 5:35).
- IV. THE MIRACLE (Mark 5:37-43).

Now let me read the text in Mark 5:21-24, 35-43. (Read.)

Let us notice, first,

- I. THE NEED (Mark 5:21-24).

A father had a very sick little twelve year old daughter, so sick, in fact, that she was about dead. However, one detail in the story which makes it especially interesting is that this man was not just an ordinary citizen of Capernaum. He was "one of the rulers of the synagogue" (v. 22). In a society where everything revolved around the synagogue, this meant that he was one of the most important, and best known,

of all of the citizens of Capernaum. He held a position of great authority and power over the people. He was accustomed to having people come to him for help, but he was faced with a problem for which there was no sufficient human help. We are not told, like we were about the woman with the issue of blood, that she had sought doctor after doctor, and had paid out all of the money she had trying to find help, but we can be sure that this was the case with Jairus. He would have left no stone unturned in attempting to find help for his daughter. Every father and mother here tonight knows both the fear and the urgency which filled that father's heart when he came to the Lord.

Bishop Lightfoot, referred to by John Brown in the JFB commentary (V, p. 153), said that the rabbis considered a daughter, a "little" girl until she was twelve; after that she was called a young woman.

Jairus' actions as well as his words showed how desperate he was. He cast himself down before the Lord in great humility, and then Mark said that he "besought" the Lord "greatly." Another good translation for the word that Mark used here would be that he implored the Lord greatly. It does not mean that he used many words, but that every word conveyed to the Lord how critical the situation was. He obviously believed that, if the Lord would come and lay His hand upon her, his little girl would be healed!

Without delay the Lord left with him, followed by many people, to go where the sick girl was. There was no question but that it was important for the Lord to reach her as soon as possible.

It ought to encourage us to see how responsive the Lord was to Jairus' plea.

Everything seemed to be going well, but then suddenly there was a frustrating delay.

## II. THE DELAY (Mark 5:25-34).

I am not going to explain this again tonight. This is the passage we expounded last week. But I do want you to see it in the light of what Jairus wanted the Lord to do.

There is no question but that Jairus believed that the Lord could heal his daughter. Some commentators have pointed out that he did not have the faith of the centurion who believed that the Lord only needed to say the word, and his servant would be healed. Cf. Matt. 8:5-13. But he had faith! And the Lord wanted to strengthen his faith.

It is interesting to see how the synagogue ruler came in behalf of his daughter, but, in meeting the daughter's needs, the Lord intended to bring blessing to the father as well. We often lose sight of this as one of the ways of the Lord. We pray for the Lord to do something for us, or for someone for whom we are praying. But the Lord answers in such a way so as to meet needs which He sees that we have. Jairus had faith, but he needed his faith strengthened. And so just at the time when it seemed that the Lord would soon be at Jairus' house, the woman who had been sick for twelve years pressed through the crowd to touch the Lord's garment.

This all took time, precious time. A young girl was dying, and the Lord needed to get there as soon as He could. But then there was a delay. Note all of the talking that took place between the Lord and His disciples, and then between the Lord and the woman. Although there is no record that Jairus said anything, we can imagine how he was feeling. It all seemed so unnecessary and wrong. And, if the Lord were really the Lord, couldn't He have prevented this from taking place right at this particular time?

There is no doubt but that He could have. In fact, He really didn't need to stop to talk to the woman. She was healed. And so the Lord could have hurried off without stopping to talk to her. That is the way we think. But that is not the way the Lord works. The Lord never neglects His work with one person to do something for some other person. So all of this was according to the divine plan. The Lord was not only ministering to Jairus, but also to the woman, and to His disciples, and eventually to the girl who was so seriously ill. But here we see the Lord doing it all.

One lesson that the Lord is always teaching us (because we never learn it perfectly), is the lesson of patience. Paul told the church at Rome that "tribulation worketh patience" (Rom. 5:3). In Rom. 2:7 Paul described the Lord's people as those "who by **patient continuance in well doing** seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." And in Rom. 8:25 he wrote,

But if we hope for that we see not,  
then do we **with patience wait for it.**

And then in Rom. 12:12 we have Paul's exhortation to be "patient in tribulation."

Jairus' faith was not only tested by his daughter's illness, but it was tested even more when the Lord was temporarily delayed in getting to Jairus' house.

It is often the case that while we are waiting for the Lord to do something for us, He is concerned, first of all, about

what He is doing in us! And it is as we wait that God is doing a deeper work of grace in our hearts. It is good that none of the Gospel writers could say that Jairus impatiently tried to get the Lord to hurry.

The Bible gives us many illustrations to show how God uses delays in the lives of His people. Think of how Abraham waited for 25 years plus before Isaac was born. Think of how Joseph waited for 13 years before he became a ruler in Egypt. Think of how the Lord let Moses wait for 40 years in Midian before He brought him back to Egypt, and then he and the nation had to wait another 40 years before they got into the land of Canaan. Everybody has to learn to wait for the Lord. It is one of His major instruments in making us holy.

Remember those words of James regarding patience in Jas. 1:4:  
But let patience have her perfect work,  
that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

But the delay seemed even more defeating when someone came with:

### III. THE BAD NEWS (Mark 5:35).

Somebody came with the message that Jairus' daughter had died!

Matthew tells us that when Jairus made his initial request, he said, "My daughter is even now dead" (Matt. 9:18). This is no contradiction because Jairus evidently left home not knowing if he would ever see her alive again. And it appears that she did die before her father was able to ask the Lord to come. But to get the word that she was dead, was another devastating test to his faith.

Jairus had undoubtedly heard about, and possibly had seen, the Lord perform miracles. But as far as we know, the Lord had not yet raised anyone from the dead. In one way he was in a position like Abraham was when God called upon him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. Up to that point in Scripture we do not have one instance where a person was raised from the dead. And yet the writer of Hebrews said when he was referring to that event, that Abraham went ahead with his plan to sacrifice Isaac because he was "accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead."

It does not seem that Jairus' thoughts had gone that far, but he was to learn that God is the God of the impossible. But for the moment that which he had feared gripped his heart, and he must have been overcome with grief.

Whoever brought the message to Jairus felt that all hope was gone, and so he said, "Why troublest thou the Master any further?" Jairus got no encouragement from them, and we can understand why. But the Lord was not finished with His ministry to Jairus.

The last point in our text has to do with:

IV. THE MIRACLE (Mark 5:36-43).

This section is very instructive about the ways of the Lord.

Notice first:

A. The promise of the Lord (v. 36).

If Jairus had thought that the Lord might forget what He had started out to do when He was interrupted by the woman, his fears were soon put to rest. Notice the wording of verse 36: "As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken..."

We sometimes think that the Lord has forgotten us, that He may be too busy helping others to have time to meet our needs. The Psalmist prayed, "Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious?" (Psa. 77:9).

There are some times when the Lord moves rapidly. And He did here when there was a danger that the ruler's faith would falter, and perhaps fail. The Lord gave just the word so that Jairus' strong faith would become stronger!

How did He strengthen Jairus' faith? By His own word: "Be not afraid, only believe" (Mark 5:36). The Lord said in effect, "You have been trusting Me; don't stop now!" Delays never defeat God from fulfilling His purposes. And God always supports our faith by His Word.

Although what the Lord said was not stated in the form in which His promises are usually given, yet this was a promise. "Be not afraid, only believe." The Lord knew what He was doing, and He wanted Jairus to trust Him. A situation with little hope had suddenly become hopeless! And yet there was hope.

Next notice:

B. The Lord's plan (Mark 9:37-40).

He immediately left to go home with Jairus, but He took Peter and James and John with Him. This was an important part of our Lord's plan. He evidently told the others to remain be-

hind. We don't know all of the reasons that the Lord took these three with Him, but they were to be leaders among the twelve. They later went with our Lord also into the mount where He was transfigured before them. The Lord wanted them to be witnesses of what He was about to do, and they, in turn, would instruct the other apostles as to the Lord's power.

Another part of the Lord's plan had to do with the crowd. They already had the funeral preparations moving ahead. The Lord called it making an ado. They were making an uproar as though causing such a tumult would bring comfort to the family. What strange ideas people have even today about what will bring peace to sorrowing hearts.

When the Lord told them that she was not dead, but asleep, they laughed Him to scorn. How quickly the situation changed! The Lord did not deny that she was dead, but He was indicating that for Him, to raise a person from the dead was like anyone else would awaken a person who was asleep. And our Lord's words indicated here that He was going to raise her from the dead.

So the Lord only permitted five persons to see this little girl raised from the dead: Peter, James, John, Jairus, and Jairus' wife. He very simply took her by the hand, and without any fanfare, He said, "Maid, arise." The Lord spoke in Aramaic. It was like He would say to Lazarus, "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11:43). And in both of these instances we have a wonderful picture of salvation. Before the girl could arise, she had to receive life. So when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, when we come to Him, when we believe on Him, it is evident that He has given us life first!

It is surely true that this girl was weakened greatly by the disease which eventually took her life. And yet, when the Lord raised her back to life again, she got up, "and walked"! And she did this before, not after, they had given her any food.

Who was astonished? Undoubtedly everyone was! The parents, the apostles, and the people outside who had scorned the Lord so severely. None of them had ever seen anything like this. None of them even thought that such a thing was possible. No one helped the Lord; He did it by Himself.

And then the Lord did two more things:

- 1) He "charged them" that they should not talk about this.
- 2) He commanded them to give the girl something to eat.

Why the charge, and why the command?

The Lord did sensational things, but He never did them to cause a sensation. If such a thing were done today, you and I know how it would be publicized. But the Lord did not want people to think that He would raise everyone from the dead who had died. He didn't do that even in those days. His main purpose on earth was not to heal human bodies, but to heal their souls. And many people would rush to see a miracle who would not listen at all to the Gospel message. Those who were with the Lord when the girl was raised from the dead, were to learn what the Lord was teaching them--and to glorify the Lord for what He had done. But the mere spreading of what had happened would not really serve any useful purpose. If people will not believe through the Word, they are not going to believe even if they see, or hear of, a miracle.

Concl: We don't know how nor when Jairus first came to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. But it seems that the Lord was dealing with him as a believer. What we do know is that through this severe trial, the Lord made his strong faith even stronger. He believed that the Lord could save his child from death. He forgot what coming to the Lord might do to his reputation with the Jewish people. He publicly humbled himself before the Lord, and declared his faith that the Lord would heal his little girl. The Lord was delayed so that He did not heal her. But He did something even more miraculous: He raised her from the dead.

We don't see the Lord raising the dead today, but let us remember that His purpose in our trials is the same that it was in those days long ago. The Lord by our trials, and by His delay in helping us, is not to destroy the faith that we have. But it is to make our faith stronger and to make us realize that, although His ways are different from ours, His ways are infinitely better for us, and for everyone concerned! We trust Him. Let us continue to trust Him even when we do not understand.