

Mark 5. 21-43

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. Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. He 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." So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 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. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realised that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?' "

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

While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?"

Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

A man at his wits end, watching his daughter dying, its heartbreaking.

In desperation he finds Jesus and falls at his feet.

Jairus is a respected community leader, probably older, who would not bow to anyone easily - is felled by his emotion and his need.

The fact that we know his name, **Jairus** - (the enlightened one, or the one who shines a light) - means that he or his children must be known to Mark's church and

community - names are not in here by accident! So was it his daughter - the one healed - who told Mark this story, or one of his grandchildren. Clearly this miracle changed this families life forever. As it would, if you got a child back from the dead! But we're getting ahead of ourselves.

Through the busy market streets goes the synagogue leader, Jesus, and all the disciples, and all the crowd.

And if you've ever had to deal with labyrinths of bureaucracy, or waited for Visas or luggage reclaim in airports - and you finally think - yes, I've got through to the right person, all the waiting has been worth it. Jairus felt like that - we're on our way, Jesus is with me - its all going to be ok.

Oh and then. The interruption.

Another desperate person. A crippling illness, that she spent has spent all her money on - but she's got worse, not better! Imagine that. 12 years of struggle, of discomfort, and possibly of keeping this secret, hidden from the community and everyone else.

She doesn't want to bother Jesus, and she doesn't want people to know. Not throwing herself down in front of him, but pushing through the crowd, with the hope of the slender chance - his cloak, his cloak...

And she touches it, and feels the power of God, and she stops still, knowing she's healed. And the crowd sweep past her, and she's about to turn away, when she hears Jesus say - Who touched me. And the crowd stop, and there's a confused murmur - we're all close, touching - what does he mean?

At this point - imagine the reaction of Jairus - oh no - this is too much - what about me!! What about my daughter?!!

Imagine the disciples - come on, don't make a fuss Jesus, let it go, we don't want a scene, we don't want conflict. Although the disciples should have learnt by now, that Jesus was not afraid of a scene! Perhaps that's us - rather avoid the confrontation - lets just be English and reserved!

Jesus waits, this is important. This person, is important. This person has been cured, but not healed. It is not just the physical body that needs God's power, but her emotional and psychological need, and her need to be restored in the community.

So she comes forward. And kneels in humility, and tells Jesus what happened. And Jesus says - daughter - go in peace and be healed of your disease.

Now, the music gets more tense, the camera pans to messengers running from Jairus house - they whisper in his ear - and everyone can see from his face what the news is.

And Jesus - does not say - well this is a test of your faith Jairus! Or come on, believe harder! He is full of gentleness and kindness - this is our God - he says - don't be afraid, trust me.

And this is it.

Not Jairus's timing, not his way of sorting this out.
It looked bleak before, but now it looks impossible.

What a setback. No way back from here. Give up!

But someone told me - What you think of a set-back, is really a step back and see what God will do!

And all the time we make our plans, we expect or think about holidays or buying this or that. I've booked my car into the garage, I've booked an eye test, I've booked the supermarket delivery slot.

Our world is so planned and controlled - we like that, it gives us comfort and reassurance. Predictability, reliability. Yes, I've got bran flakes for breakfast again.

But we then get a surprise when plans change. When a train arrives late! Do you remember we used to be obsessed by that - the papers would publish percentages of trains that arrive on time. But its much bigger than that - all the other things we rely on, or on medicine and doctors - I'll just get a check up. And then the set back comes - I'm afraid the lump is not benign.

And because we trust in ourselves, in our modern world, in everything running according to plan - we are suddenly lost, at sea.

And then we remember God - our faith - God who loves us and I thought he was supposed to sort it all out! But I'll give him one more go!

And we find Jesus does not condemn us, for only coming to him when we're in need. Nor he does he condemn us for not even thinking about him for all those other times. He simply says - do not be afraid, trust in me.

And we try and work out the timing and the method that we think God should use. Don't we? I love it! We plan our little lives and we tell it the God who plans the whole universe! It would be great if you could answer this prayer, in this way, at this time!

And I'm not against telling God what we'd like. We should, we should, we should! But we should not be surprised when God does it His way. What? You're going to let the child die, and then bring her back to life? Really, is that the best way? Think of the stress? Ok - you're God, you know best.

So whatever you're facing today - things that have been troubling you for years, like the woman with the bleeding, things that you're just begging to get sorted - like Jairus at the start, or things that are beyond imagining they could be fixed - like when he's told his daughter is dead. I want to urge you to fix your eyes on Jesus - the author and perfecter of faith. On Jesus who will not condemn or judge, but who will say - hush, don't be afraid, its ok. Trust me.

Put your hand in his, and walk on - and see what God will do. It will amaze you!!