

“Jesus, Interrupted” // Mark 5:22–42 // *The Whole Story* #31

Happy Labor Day! Mark 5, if you have your Bible this weekend. Over the next few weeks we’re hitting **several stories** from the life of Jesus. These are **great messages to bring a friend** to—especially someone who doesn’t know much about Christianity—because we’re looking at the basic elements of who Jesus was, and what he came to do. **101 course.**

These are also stories we are **reading together** throughout the week in our yearly Bible reading plan—we read this story on Tuesday. I’d love for you to **join us in reading through the New Testament** for the rest of the year!

Mark 5:22... One of the things you notice when you are overseas, like I was this summer, is that **not everyone in the world respects the concept of a line**. At **numerous points this summer I’d be standing** in line for something—like ordering food at a little kiosk or something—trying to leave a respectful distance between me and the person ahead of me, and someone would glide right past me and shove their money down in front of me.

¹ Scholars say implication in Greek is “precious.”

Works Consulted:

Steven Furtick, “Why Bother?”

Mark Driscoll, “Jesus Heals a Woman and a Girl”

John MacArthur, “Jesus’ Compassionate Power”

John Mark Comer, “Daughter”

Tim Keller, King’s Cross

Tim Keller, “The Timing of Jesus”

Sally Lloyd-Jones, “The Little Girl and the Poor Frail Lady”

- And what was weird is they **seemed to have no concept** that I’d even be offended. They’d turn and they’d **just smile** at me. From America, Mr.? And **I’ve got this indignant**, self-righteous look on my face and they’d be grinning at me like it’s their birthday. So one of our missionaries taught me to grab my daughters and do **this little circle up and box out routine** like we were a basketball team. “Kharis, somebody coming in at 3:00!” And she would hip-check them...

- **All for the cause.**

Today we’re going to see the story of someone who “cut the line,” so to speak, to get to Jesus. And she **does so because she is desperate**, and desperate people do desperate things.

And **while what she does may seem rude**, Jesus’ reaction to her is even stranger, and the whole encounter teaches us some important things about faith—even if it’s not a good model for how to order at a fast food restaurant—because it **shows us the kind of faith Jesus responds to**; **and what Jesus wants from us** when he doesn’t seem to be responding to us.

Mark 5:22–42

²²Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus (as the leader of the synagogue he would have been top ranking officials in the city), came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little¹ daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.”

- **What's striking** about this is his posture toward Jesus.
 - **Grown men** in those days didn't plead. **Particularly** men of that stature.
 - It was considered shameful for men of stature to show that kind of emotion.
 - And for a ruler to prostrate himself at another man's feet?
- But **when your little girl is dying**... you see things differently.
 - Luke's account tells us it was his *only* daughter. **Odd in those days**... Must have meant they couldn't have kids.
 - This little girl meant the world to him.

²⁴So Jesus went with him. ²⁴A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ²⁵And a woman was there (in that crowd) **who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years.**

- **That's a** polite way of saying "an **uncontrollable menstrual flow.**" This meant that not only **was she sick**, and **likely in pain**; she was **unable to have children**; and, even more, **ceremonially unclean**, which meant no one would touch her.
 - She wasn't allowed in public worship.
 - She really shouldn't be in crowds.
- She's been this way for **12 years**. *For 12 years no one has touched her. No one has hugged her for 12 years, or laid a hand on her to pray for her. She is outcast. Lonely.*

²⁶She 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.

She has **spent all her family's fortune** trying to get various doctors to cure her, but nothing's helped. In fact, the **attempted cures** have just made her *worse*. She's given up hope.

One other thing you should notice about this woman: **she is given no name**. This is in **contrast to Jairus**, you see, who's got a name everyone knows.

Her whole story is set in contrast to his:

- He's got a **daughter who is 12 years** old and sick; she's been sick for 12 years.
- He is the **ruler of the synagogue**; she's not allowed in the synagogue.
- He was **respected**; she was rejected.
- His is a **household name**; hers is a name nobody knows.

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

- You have to wonder—**what had she heard?** Maybe she had heard the prophecy given by Malachi (4:2) that when the Messiah came, he would rise "with healing in his wings."
 - We know that by the time of Jesus, a **legend** had grown up that the Messiah would be **so powerful** that even the "wings" of his garments would possess healing power.
- Maybe she knew that and she thought, "**Maybe—just maybe** this is my chance."

But here's her **dilemma**: She's **not even supposed to be in public, lest she touch** someone and make *them* unclean. But this is her only chance!

So she risks the public scorn and **fighters her way through the crowds**, trying to keep her face covered so nobody can see who she is.

- By the way, **I love it that the crowds didn't keep this woman** from Jesus. Because I see a lot of people who get kept from Jesus by what everybody else thinks.
 - "Oh, they'll tell jokes about me around the office."
 - "My parents are going to say I joined a cult."
- This woman says, "*Forget the crowds*. I've got to **know the truth** about this Man because he just might be able to change my whole life!"

So she fights her way to him and as he goes by, just “touches” the hem of his clothes.

- BTW, the word “**touched**” there, in verse 28, literally means clutched. She grabbed it, and pulled it and...

²⁹Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. It was like she grabbed the **rope of a bell** and as she did the power rung out of him.

³⁰At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him.

- Notice the **passive nature** of how this is stated.
 - It doesn't say, ‘Jesus sent out his power,’ but ‘power went out.’
 - It is presented as if he is not even in control of it!
- Which leads me to a **theological question**. Ready?
 - Is Jesus not in control of his miracles?
 - Is God not sovereign over the outpouring of his power?
- **Of course he is**. It's presented this way because **Mark is trying to teach us something about the faithfulness of Jesus**. He responds to faith so reliably that it might as well be a reflex.

And then... He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

Now, again, does he really not know? Surely, he's God—he could figure this out on his own.

- **Here's how I see it:** When my kids were younger, I'd come down and the lid is off of the cookie jar... and 3 of my kids are sitting there clean, watching TV, and the other has a guilty look and chocolate smeared all over his face, and I say, “Okay, who got into the cookie jar?” It's not that I don't know, it that's that I'm giving them one an opportunity to come clean.
- Jesus here is **inviting her to come forward** and publicly confess what she's done.

- There is an **important public dimension to all great acts of faith**. God wants you to own it.
 - It's **WHY baptism** is so important. You're not supposed to keep your love for Jesus private. You are supposed to declare it!
 - That's **as important for you** as it is for everybody else. God wants you to own it publicly.
 - We'll give you a chance in a few weeks to follow up on that.

Well, the disciples, who are not always the **spiciest Doritos** in the bag, think Jesus is genuinely asking them a question, so they say,

- Uhh, Jesus... ³¹“You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ”
- The disciples have this amazing ability to fill **silence with stupidity**.
 - It doesn't say it here, but I think Jesus was like, “**Really, guys?** Thank you, I had **no idea** that all these people were around me, touching me. What would I do without you and all your amazing insights?”
 - BTW, these are going to be the **choice leaders** of God's church in a few years.
 - You **get the impression** that God is going to build his church not because of the awesomeness of his leaders, but in spite of their lack thereof!

³²But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.

- Something sweet here, I think... this scorned, alienated woman coming forward in the sight of all, trembling with fear, wondering, “Will he reject me, too? Will he publicly shame me? He knows I'm not supposed to be here.”

What **happens next might be the most important teaching moment** in the life of Jesus, maybe in all of Scripture, because it is the **central question** of all religion: What is it like to be exposed in all of your defilement, guilt, and shame before a holy God?

³⁴He said to her, “**Daughter, your faith has healed you...**”

- The word “daughter” he uses here, scholars tells us, is a term of the most intimate endearment. You would never use it of someone you just met.
- BTW, *this is the only person Jesus ever refers to by that name*.
 - The **girl nobody wanted** has just been called “precious daughter” by the ultimate Father.
 - The **girl no one would touch** is embraced by the strongest and most tender arms in the Universe.
 - The **name nobody else knew** is precious to God.
- *Do you see the contrast? **Jairus is a dad** who is pleading the cause of his daughter before Jesus. But this **woman has no father**. So Jesus **becomes her father**.*
 - To **Jairus he will be the healer**; to this woman he will be both father and healer, because he becomes to us what we lack.
 - To the **lonely**, he will be a friend
 - To the **fatherless...**
 - To the poor, he is **riches...**

So he says... ³⁴...Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

- Now, there is something **here that you** and I, if we are Americans, usually miss, but **if you’re a Jew or Muslim** you immediately pick up on.
 - **I love telling this story to Muslims** because they immediately see something in it we don’t see, and they are jolted by it just as you tell the story.
- **Here is this woman, unclean** and defiled, touching someone everyone regards to be a holy man.

- What happens when an unclean thing touches a clean thing? The clean thing **gets defiled** by the unclean.
 - **Me with Irma** in Indo. *I would not suggest doing that unless you have a really close relationship with them.*
 - **We understand it with sickness.** What happens if a sick person comes in close contact with a healthy person?
 - **If I’m sick and you’re well**, your wellness doesn’t make me better.
 - We don’t say, “My kid is sick. I think I’ll drop them off in the nursery with all the well kids so that their wellness will rub off on him.”
 - **If you think that way**, please don’t come to our church.
- **If I’m sick and I sneeze on you and you get sick**, I say “I gave my cold to you.” That doesn’t mean that I don’t have my cold anymore, like I gave it to you. Unfortunately, because that would be awesome. It means that now we both have it. Because when the unclean touches the clean, the clean thing becomes unclean.
- **And here is what is so shocking.** In this story, when the unclean thing touches the clean thing; when the sick touches the one who is well, she becomes clean and healthy.
- So what happened to the uncleanness? **That’s the million-dollar question of the Gospels.** The answer is: Jesus silently takes it into himself.
 - He’s going to end his life on a cross where he literally becomes our sin and bears our shame.
 - **Isaiah had prophesied** that the Messiah would bear our griefs and carry our sorrows... he would be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.
 - **I keep repeating this:** The core of the gospel is *substitution*.
 - On the cross, **he took our defilement and condemnation** so that his healing and his fellowship with the Father could

be passed to us. That didn't just begin at the cross, but all throughout the life of Jesus, even here.

- **Our moment of salvation is being illustrated here:** We touch Jesus in faith, and the guilt and penalty of our sin passes into him, and his wholeness and purity pass into us. This woman goes home to her family and Jesus heads to the **cross**.

35 While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader.

- Had you **forgotten about Jairus?** (Mark reminds us again who he it's been so long since we talked about him!)
- You see, all of this is **just great** for this woman. But **poor Jairus!** This story had started with him pleading with Jesus to *rush* to his house because his little girl was on death's door.
 - And **now, here is Jesus**, stopping to take **extended time to deal with a woman's chronic ailment**—she's cutting in line, and her issue is something that could easily wait another hour—I mean, if she's had it for 12 years, surely she can wait another 30 minutes.
 - Meanwhile, his little girl is at **death's door**.
- If Jesus were a doctor, this decision wouldn't just be insensitive. It would be malpractice.

And then—the worst happens. **While** Jesus is talking with this woman—literally as he is in the midst of conversation—a message arrives from Jairus' house: **"Your daughter is dead,"** they said. **"Why bother the teacher anymore?"**

- And now comes Jairus' great test of faith. **Why bother?**
- **Will he think,** "The situation so hopeless that not even Jesus can help"?
 - Do you know **how many potential miracles have died** with the thought, "Why bother?"

- It is **never too late** with Jesus. It's **always a time to bother**.

36 Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe." 37 He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. 38 When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly.

39 He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? Some of the **worst moments of my life** are being with someone after their child died. This guy—**his 12-year-old little girl is dead!** And Jesus says, "Why are you crying?" *Is Jesus being insensitive?*

But then he says, **The child is not dead but asleep.** 40 But they **laughed at him**. This is **not a laugh** like they think he is confused. This is bitter scorn. It's like saying, **"You insensitive fool!"**

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. 41 He took her by the hand and said to her, **"Talitha koum!"** (which means **"Little girl, (Talitha—scholars say a very, very tender term that could almost be translated, 'Sweetheart.'**) *Coum—get up!*") (Not "be thou resurrected." Or "come forth," or anything regal or resurrection-sounding.)²

Just "sweetheart, get up." I get the image of sitting on the edge of the bed of my 8-year-old on a summer afternoon and saying, **"Hey, sweetheart, it's time to get up."**

² Here I follow the interpretation of Tim Keller in *King's Cross*:
<http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2011/02/08/keller-on-why-jesus-said-the-little-girl-was-sleeping-instead-of-dead/>

Jesus is facing the most feared, devastating enemy the human race has ever known—death—and he treats it like he is waking up a little girl from a nap.

42 And immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished.

The Meaning of these Stories for Us

1. How Jesus delivers us from death

- **Don't get this wrong.** A lot of people do—these stories are not primarily about how to get miracles from Jesus. They are **pictures of how we become Christians**; re-enactments of what it looks like to be converted by Jesus.
- **You see, we are like this woman.**
 - Our sin has left us diseased and unclean.
 - Guilty and cast out.
 - But unlike this woman, who was suffering through no direct act of her own, we are in this condition because of our sin.
 - **We are hopeless.** All the cures have failed.
 - Education **can't** fix it. Scientific **progress hasn't** fix it. **These things** have just made people shrewder and more sophisticated in how they pursue their selfishness.
 - **Dorothy Sayers was a British socialist** in the early 20th century who believed that education, equality and scientific progress would cure all the problems of mankind.
 - Then she lived through WW2.
 - She said in **her essay, "Creed or Chaos?"** We were given to believe that humankind consisted of essentially good human beings gradually evolving into higher, better beings; that we as a race were essentially teachable, and so "the appalling outbursts of bestial ferocity in the

totalitarian states, and the obstinate selfishness and stupid greed of unregulated capitalist societies were not merely alarming to us. They were the utter negation of everything in which (we) have believed."

- **Romance can't** fix... people look to that for completion. "Lonely, insecure single..."
- **Religious rules can't fix it**—It's like telling an alcoholic that they should stop loving beer. He might agree that he should, but he can't just make himself do that. **Religious rules** can tell us how we ought to be. But they can't make us like that. RR TRACKS.
- **Not only do these things not fix our problem**, like with this woman, these things tend to make it worse!
 - Really **religious proud, selfish people** are worse than regular proud, selfish people.
 - Really **educated**...
 - Really **rich**...
 - Problems like pride and selfishness are not cured by education, scientific progress, or gov't regulation.
- Like this woman, we have to **fight through the crowds**, and we have to reach out for Jesus intentionally!
 - You **don't get the power** of Jesus just by being around him!
 - **Lots of people in that crowd touched** Jesus and got no miracle. **Only the woman** who reached out for him intentionally got it.
 - The **miracle** comes by pulling on the cloak, not by participating in the crowd.
 - **We have lots of people are here this weekend** touching Jesus casually. You don't get his power by being in the room hearing worship songs or listening to sermons; you get him through a **bold act of faith!**
 - But when you do—**when you reach out for him, in faith**—believing he has the power and grace to save you—**which**

means to forgive you of your sin and put the power of new life in you—you will be immediately cleansed and healed!

- **((And, the little girl: like this little girl,** we need someone to save us from certain death.
 - Death is our ultimate enemy. Death brings an abrupt end to every relationship, every meaningful pursuit.
 - There is **nothing sadder** to me than hearing an atheist talk about death. They try to put a positive spin on it. “He did this; here’s the people he touched; his life had meaning.”
 - *But, **for that person, it’s all gone.** There is no more of them to even care.*
 - **Steve Jobs:** Interview with 60 Minutes just before he died with cancer, said that throughout his life he’d sometimes believed in God, sometimes he hadn’t, but as he grew closer to his coming death, he found himself really wanting to believe in an afterlife, and choosing to believe in it, because he hated the thought that when you died it all just disappeared—all the wisdom, all the relationships, just gone.³
 - Jesus **faced our supreme enemy**, death, so that if we go into it holding his hand, it is nothing but a little nap.
 - Paul says in 1 Cor 15 that **Christ has taken the “sting” out of death:** I heard about a dad driving in a car with his little girl when a yellow-jacket flew in through the window. (You parents know what that is like, opening the window and trying to shoo it out without dying in a fiery car wreck.) But he couldn’t get it out. And it began to hover around his little girl, who was terribly allergic to beestings. She called out, “Daddy, Daddy! It’s going to sting me!” So the dad pulled the car over to the side of the road and hopped into the back. Unable to get him out, and not wanting to anger

the bee into accidentally stinging his daughter, he cornered the bee against the windshield. Having the bee trapped, he closed his hand around the bee and braced himself for the inevitable sting. Feeling its sharp pain, he opened his hand outside the car and released the bee. The little girl began panicking again, “Daddy, it’s going to fly back in here again and sting me!” The father opened his hand, showing the embedded stinger in his hand, and said to the little girl, “No, sweetheart, don’t worry about that bee. It can’t hurt you anymore.”

- **Jesus took the “sting” of death into his hands** (see from *his wounds*) so that it can no longer hurt us. We **can look at his hands and see the nail scars**, and know now that death is nothing but a temporary, inconvenient nuisance. Its sting is gone.
- **Why Jesus is the only way...** *only one who overcame death! Mohammad taught some good things and then died... Buddha...*
 - **California woman who died saving granddaughter.** *“Those who would be the rescuer cannot have the same problem as those who need to be rescued.” All religious leaders faced death and died. Jesus alone went into the grave and came out alive.*
- Before I go on to #2, **make sure you see this: the primary healing we need is not physical, it spiritual.**
 - **People read these stories** and assume it is about their job or their health. And **Jesus will help** you with those things.
 - But the primary meaning of these stories is about how Jesus **heals** us from our ultimate problem, sin; and **saves** us from our ultimate enemy, death.

³ “Sometimes I believe in God, sometimes I don’t. I think it’s 50-50 maybe. But ever since I’ve had cancer, I’ve been thinking about it more. And if I find myself believing a bit more...maybe it’s because I want to believe in an afterlife. That when you die, it doesn’t just all disappear.

The wisdom you’ve accumulated, somehow it lives on. But sometimes I think it’s just like an on-off switch. Click and you’re gone.” Walter Isaacson, Steve Jobs (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 2011), 571.

- The one who dies peacefully in his sleep at 100 years old surrounded by friends and family without Jesus still loses everything.
- And the believer in Jesus who is snatched away in the prime of life has everything to look forward to.
- So **here's my question:** What are you *primarily* looking for Jesus to do for you this weekend?
 - Is it to **fix your marriage** or your **family** or help your **career**?
 - Those are **important** and **Jesus will help** you with those, as I'll show you next, but **the main thing you need** is to have the curse of death removed and to be restored to fellowship with the Father!

So, these stories (1) primarily illustrate for us how Jesus delivers us from death and restores us to the family of God, but #2 they also show us

(2) How Jesus works in our daily lives

These stories show us how to approach Jesus with our problems.

A. Faith engages a power from God—a power that is not available until you depend on it

- This **woman risked everything on the belief** Jesus would help her. And he did. He **never turned anyone away** who came to him in faith.
- I know **God is not a genie in a bottle**, where you rub him with faith and he gives you whatever your wishes are, but Scripture teaches that faith engages a power from God that is not there until you believe.
 - **Easiest illus. Walking on water.** There was a power holding him up while he believed that wasn't there...
 - My parenting; our church; my needs and provisions

- **On our staff: I've taught... God doesn't just answer prayer;** he responds to faith. **I end many prayers now saying,** "I trust you."
- **Again: Jesus never turned away anyone who came to him for help in the NT.** Not one single person!
 - **Psalm 9:10 "You, O LORD, have never forsaken those who trust in you."**
 - **(Now, he may not always do it the way I think he should do it. Part of our trust is saying, "Your way is better.")**
 - But the moment you lean on him you can be sure he is working in your situation **flawlessly for your good**, and that he is **holding you up above** the waves of destruction.
 - He promises! *You, Lord, have never forsaken...*
- Maybe you feel **like Jairus—hopeless** about your **situation—your family, your addiction, your future**, so that you say, **"Why bother?"**
 - **I'll tell you why bother.** Because you have a Savior who is passing by whose **tenderness is deeper** than the oceans and his **faithfulness reaches** to the skies!
 - **(This Savior you see here doesn't change! He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Come to him!)**
- **Has it been 12 years and no answer?** Keep knocking!
- It's like it says in Psalms, Don't stop believing! Or maybe that is the **2nd book of Journey**. I can't remember.

B. Nowhere is God more confusing than in how he does miracles.

- In this story, Jesus confuses everyone!
 - The **disciples can't figure** out why Jesus is stopping. Jairus can't figure it out. Jesus' reaction confuses and terrifies the woman.
 - But think about this: **Everyone in this story got more than they bargained for!**
 - The **woman expected a healing**; but she **also got acceptance as a precious daughter** by the heavenly Father.
 - Jairus wanted a **healing**; what he got was a **resurrection**.

- God has *so much more* in store for us than our pathetic and feeble plans. If only we knew!
- **God's plan is often different from ours, but for those who trust in him, it's always wonderful.**
- His timing often confuses and frustrates us, but he is weaving it all together perfectly.
 - It can't be mere coincidence that the little girl was 12 years old and the bleeding woman had been sick for 12 years.
 - **What Mark showing us is that for 12 years God had been writing a story** that he was weaving into one beautiful climax he brought together on this day.
 - 12 YEARS! *How long will you wait for God to move before you declare that he is **absent** and **doesn't care**?*
 - **What Jesus wants from you is persistence of faith!**
 - I **don't know exactly how to say this** in a way that won't sound weird coming from a pastor—but I really, really believe in prayer. I've seen God answer it. I **know he moves in response** to faith.
- What's **heaven going to be like** when we see this happen with of all our stories? When God—to use the words of **J.R.R. Tolkien** in *The Lord of the Rings*, makes **every sad thing come untrue**. He doesn't just wipe away our memory of it, but weaves it all into a beautiful story made even sweeter by the painful moments.
 - **In 1 Cor 15**, Paul says that one day, in the resurrection, not only will God remove the sting of death, death will be swallowed up by victory.
 - **Love the imagery: swallowed:** becomes part of you! Our experiences with pain and death make the end product sweeter and more beautiful.
- **Haven't you seen someone you love go through suffering and really grow from it?**
 - I have a **friend whose wife is suffering** and **it's hard, but he says**, "Even with all the pain she's gone through, seeing the way her faith and love for God have grown it seems worth it."

- What's it like when we get to heaven and see how God used every moment of those bitter twelve years to weave **beauty and glory** into our lives?
- UNBROKEN?
- **That's the story Jesus is promising** to write through our lives, if we trust him!

Conclusion

Could we **end realizing that this same Jesus is here today**, and **we can approach** him just like these people approached him?

BOW FOR PRAYER

- Many need **salvation!**
- Some need **miracles**
- Some just **need to tell him** they trust him and leave it in that

