

Why Bother?

Turn in your Bible to Mark 5. Two Sundays ago I shared a story from this passage about the twelve year quarantine and the woman with the issue of blood. If you recall when we read her story and her encounter with Jesus, she had actually interrupted him on his way to the house of a man named Jairus because his daughter was sick and at the point of death. He had asked Jesus to come and heal her. Mark's gospel tells us...

“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 rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet 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.’ 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...” We know her story from two weeks ago so for the sake of time let's skip ahead to verse 35. **“While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. ‘Your daughter is dead,’ they said. ‘Why bother the teacher any more?’ Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, ‘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 ruler, 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 kum!*’ (which means, ‘Little girl, I say to you, get up!’) Immediately the girl stood up and walked 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.”** Mark 5:21-43

Mark, who writes with brevity and urgency, gives quite a bit of detail. Jairus is identified as a loving Father, a leader or ruler in the synagogue so he was a man of prominence in the community. He had servants so he was a man of means, yet we find him falling at the feet of Jesus, pleading with him to come to his home in behalf of his daughter whom he says is not just sick, but is dying. He gives no thought to his place in the community but humbles himself before Jesus, falling at his feet. Pride takes a back seat to desperation when your child is dying.

Mark doesn't say if there was a prior relationship between Jesus and Jairus, but since Jesus was a traveling rabbi and Jairus was the synagogue ruler I have to believe they knew each other. Perhaps Jesus had even been in their home and knew the little girl. Regardless, Jairus knew when trouble came to turn to Jesus and Jesus, without hesitation, went with him.

Verse 24 says "So Jesus went with him." You have to imagine Jairus was encouraged. Apparently Jesus wasn't in town when the girl became sick. "If only Jesus were in town." Now he arrives from the other side of the lake and Jairus is thinking, "Finally he's here, just in time. If I can get to him and if he will say yes, everything will be all right. Jesus will come to the house and touch her and she'll be okay!"

Jesus agrees to go, everything is good. They have to fight their way through the crowd but they are making good time and then, the woman with the issue of blood steps in and Jesus stops to deal with her and when he does, time must have stood still for Jairus. "Jesus, what are you doing? My daughter is dying! This lady has been sick for 12 years, another hour isn't going to hurt her but my daughter doesn't have another hour. Lord, why are you letting this happen to me? To my family? I'm a good person. Why Lord?"

Have you felt that way? Things were going along well, everything falling into place, the timing seemed perfect and then...covid19, the layoffs, the company shut down. Life was on track. "We're going to make it" and then, surprise: pregnancy, divorce, unexpected illness, a terminal diagnosis. Your life and your plans get interrupted by...life. None of us saw this coming. We don't like it, we aren't happy about it, as someone said, "ain't none of us got time for this." But look who is unfazed by all of this! Jesus. He calmly stops to deal with the suffering woman and when they get the bad news from Jairus' servants, Jesus simply says, "Don't be afraid, just believe. Keep the faith, it's going to be all right." You've heard me say it multiple times through the years, but Jesus' response to Jairus, like his response to the mourners when he asked "why all the wailing?", like his response to so many adverse circumstances in the Gospels when he seems almost puzzled by fear or grief or worry, it reminds us of something we need to keep in mind today, Jesus knows something we don't know! In every situation, Jesus knows something we don't know. He sees another outcome. That's why we keep trusting.

Somehow the things we view as delays and interruptions from this side of eternity, the things we consider as trouble or disaster, apparently from heaven's side of things are viewed as opportunities for God's glory to be seen, opportunity for us to learn more about trusting him,

opportunity for heaven's purposes to be fulfilled in heaven's perfect timing! "Stupid covid. It's interrupted all of my plans." And yet heaven says, "watch the opportunities for God to be glorified and his kingdom advanced in this season. Heaven knows something you don't know. Heaven sees a different outcome. Stop grumbling and keep trusting."

We understand that from a philosophical, theological point of view. That's the position I take, that's the counsel I would give someone. "God is at work in ways we don't see so just trust him and his timing." And that's easy to say, but when it's my daughter, my family, my job, my life, that's another thing entirely. I don't know how Jairus responded when Jesus told him to not be afraid, to keep believing. "I'm doing the best I can lord." **"While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. 'Your daughter is dead' they said. Why bother the teacher anymore?" Mark 5:35**

There are no sadder or more final sounding words than these. Some of you have heard those words and you know exactly what I mean. A phone call in the middle of the night, a knock at the door and someone standing there with the notice no one wants to hear. Your daughter, your son, your loved one is dead. Everything changes in a single moment. Death has come and nothing can change the situation. It's final. It's hopeless. And so the question, "why bother the teacher anymore?" There's no reason to bother Jesus. There is nothing anyone can do.

Why bother? That question, and the answer that I heard, is what I felt the Holy Spirit wanted me to say to you today. Why bother when things are already over, final, done? Why bother when death has come, when hope has been abandoned? Why bother praying when the job is already lost, when the answer hasn't come for the past 12 years, why bother trusting God when nothing seems to change? Why bother when the racial and societal and political and financial problems in this nation are beyond fixing? It's too broken. Why bother when the dye has already been cast? The little girl is dead so why bother?

The answer is found in who Jairus turned to. The men said "Why bother the teacher?" Good point. No point in bothering a teacher because as amazing and gifted as teachers are, they can't do anything about death. If Jesus is just a teacher, just a rabbi with a weird following, then you're right, why bother him. It doesn't matter if he comes to your house or not. Other than grieve with you, there is nothing else he can do, nothing else he can offer.

But if he is more than a teacher, if he is indeed the Son of God and the Son of Man as the bible says, if he is the one who can heal the sick and raise the dead because all power and

authority has been given to him, if he is indeed the one by whom and for whom all things were created, the one who is before all things and in him all things hold together, the one in whom all the fullness of God dwells, the one who is reconciling all things to himself, who is the radiance of God's glory, who was dead and is alive and lives forever and who holds the keys of death and the grave in his hands, if that's who he is, then by all means, bother him, ask him, call on him, trust him, have faith in him, serve him, live for him, even when everything is hopeless, because he is not just a teacher, not just a rabbi, not just a friend, he is the eternal Son of the Living God and with him and for him all things are possible. Not even death can stop him!

Why bother praying about the circumstances in your life? Because you are talking to the one who is above all and who still hears and answers prayer. Why bother praying about the crisis in our nation? Because he is the Lord, the God of the universe and he still answers prayer. Why bother praying when it seems so hopeless? Because it's about more than you see at the moment. It's about more than you think. Heaven sees a different outcome because we pray! Jairus thought it was just about that moment and when they said his daughter was dead, that was it. Game over. Opportunity lost. But Jesus knew it was about more than that moment. More than one opportunity. It's always about more with Jesus because eternity is always somewhere in view. Don't overlook it. Don't be afraid, just believe. Heaven is seeing a different outcome!

"Why bother the teacher anymore?" they asked. You need to understand, **It's not a bother, it's obedience!** The Lord said "Call on me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things which you know not." Jesus said, "Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." Jesus said, "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you'll find, knock and the door will be opened to you." It's not a bother to ask Jesus, it's obedience. It's what he told us to do. **It's not a bother, it's opportunity.** Don't give up in the midst of that hopeless situation. It's an opportunity for God's glory to be seen, for God's glory to be revealed to you like you've never seen before. It's an opportunity for you to grow in grace, in trust, in faith. I'll guarantee you Jairus and his wife and his daughter were never the same after this. Why bother? Because Jesus is here and everything is possible. Where Jesus is there is hope, regardless of how bleak the circumstances. Jesus is here and there is an opportunity for his glory to be revealed, for his purposes to be accomplished, his kingdom to be advanced.

Jesus told Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe." Believe in Jesus and don't stop. Keep believing, keep trusting, when the timing isn't right, when the report isn't what you expected,

when the finances aren't enough. Keep believing. It's about constantly looking to Jesus. Hebrews 11 is that great chapter of faith. Following in the next chapter the writer says, **"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith..." Hebrews 12:2.** Keep your eyes on Jesus. Don't take your eyes off of him regardless of the circumstances. That's faith. Looking to Jesus. Fix your eyes on him and don't let fear infect you. David Garland in his commentary on Mark wrote, **"Faith can be imperfect, it can be bold, it can be halting, it can be brave, it can be laced with fear and trepidation. What counts for it to be effective is for it to be directed rightly to Jesus..." Mark Garland** My faith gets a little wonky someday but I just keep looking to Jesus.

That's what Jairus was doing. He came to Jesus, pleaded with him for help and never stopped looking to Jesus! When they had to stop because of the woman touching Jesus, Jairus just kept looking to Jesus. When the men came to say his daughter was dead, Jairus kept looking to Jesus. Where are you looking today? Are you thinking, "things are so bad, why bother?" Keep looking to Jesus!

Jesus got to Jairus' house and found the mourners already there. Burial would happen immediately in their culture. Instead, Jesus puts the crowd out, just mom and dad and the three disciples he brought with him. He takes the girl by the hand and in Aramaic says, "Little girl, get up" and she stands and begins to walk, alive and well. In typical Jesus fashion he says, "do you have anything to eat? She'll feel better after she eats something!"

Jesus, the restorer of life has come and brought hope into a hopeless situation. We know not every ending is a happy ending in this life. Not every little girl gets healed here. But Jesus brings this girl back to life to show us there is still hope because he is Lord over all. Jesus shows us that every time we think "why bother" we can remember that with Jesus there is no such thing as a hopeless situation. Nothing and no one is beyond his reach, his love, his mercy, his help. Why bother? Because all things are possible to him. Don't be afraid, just believe and keep looking to Jesus, keep trusting Jesus, stay close to Jesus. Why bother? Because Jesus has a plan, a time, a purpose, for you, in everything. Even his delays, even the interruptions are for a reason and he will work it for good. He has pictured a different outcome for you. Don't be afraid, just believe!