

**Reading:** Matthew 9:18-26

**Theme:** Comparing and contrasting two miracles.

This morning we are going to consider the 2 miracles found in v18-26. As we do so, we will see a number of things to compare and contrast in each miracle. This is not merely a way of looking at these verses, but are important things for us to note concerning our own view of Jesus Christ, our own expectations in Christian things, perhaps even a challenge to us all to examine our attitudes, even question whether or not we are Christians. These events are given us in much more detail in Mark 5 and Luke 8 and I will cross-reference these chapters to 'fill in' details from these other accounts to combine with Matthew's to give us the fuller picture. Let's note 4 things:

### **1. Acceptable and Unacceptable.**

We see a contrast in the standing of the 2 main people focused on. The first person we encounter is Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue and was a respected man, a man of influence, a man of learning and even wealth. He was one of the ruling elders in the local synagogue there Capernaum and would have been an acceptable middle-class man. You may feel religion, churchgoing is fine for such ones, but is not really your scene. You may think Jesus had time for Jairus and for acceptable ones, but Jesus wouldn't have time for you - not with your background, your problems. Perhaps it will surprise you to find out that He has time for you...

Actually, that question and your doubt of acceptance would have been left dangling and unanswered, but for the fact that Jesus encountered someone else on His way to Jairus' house. We are told in v20 of this woman who suffered from bleeding for 12 years. We don't know if this was a constant, ongoing problem or if it occurred every so often, would heal up, stop and then restart or

was some gynaecological problem, linked to her natural body cycle. Dr Luke gives us far more detail and says “*no one could heal her*” (8:43); while Mark tells us that she had gone to many doctors, suffered much and spent all she had and had not got better, but worse (5:25-26).

This woman had started out with money, influence and over the years her health and wealth had been slowly draining from her as she suffered from this “incurable” medical condition. To have a constant illness like that was bad enough, but in Middle East at that time it probably would have reduced and removed her chances of marriage or remaining married, as no one then wanted a sickly woman. Her money was important for life and she had spent that on medical treatments which had failed and her money was now gone. There was also an added problem to do with the issue, the haemorrhage of blood, as she was constantly ceremonially unclean and isolated from Jewish religious life. She had to be clean of blood for a set time, had to go through a cleansing ritual, but for 12 years had not been ceremonially ‘clean’. Due to her blood haemorrhage she not could enter into Jewish religious life. Added to that, anyone or anything she came in contact with would be considered unclean for a time, so she was an unacceptable person – ill, poor, unclean and probably an outcast from the Jewish religion and society in which she lived.

There is this immense contrast between these two and yet they both saw in Jesus their only hope. Jairus had seemingly much to commend him, this woman had seemingly nothing to commend her. Whoever you are this morning, whatever you’ve done, said or thought, you need to realise that you need to go to the Lord Jesus as your only hope. You’re not to let your acceptable or unacceptable background stop you. You have a need that is pictured in the Bible in various ways, 2 of which are **illustrated**

in these verses - one is a disease (sin) that is making you worse and not better no matter what you try and do; and the other is being spiritually dead towards God. We cannot deal with either of these, but there is one who can. Jairus and this woman recognised their needs and went to Jesus. What about you?

## **2. Bold and Timid.**

Both these people saw their need and went to Jesus, but there is a contrast in their approaches. Jairus goes openly to Jesus, falls at His feet, worships Him and begs Him to go and heal his daughter. Matthew shows us the end situation that she was dead, but Mark and Luke tell us she was dying, still had a bit of life as Jairus left his house and that on the way back to Jairus's home, she died and no one had any hope of her recovering. Note that Jairus went to Jesus openly and boldly, he asked for Him to come to heal her, but never thought Jesus could give her life when she was dead!

I can imagine everyone seeing him kneel down, make his request to Jesus and all realise that he had an open and bold trust in Jesus. All he had heard and seen made him bold and the need was urgent. We need to notice that Jairus does not say "*I deserve this, I have earned this...*" Not at all he went and pleaded with Jesus for Him to do this for his helpless and dying daughter.

On the other hand, the woman was timid. There were no open displays. Her approach to Jesus was in secret, quiet, unnoticed by anyone as they would avoid her. The crowd was around Jesus and jostling, so she quickly went, moved through the crowd. Mark tells us she had heard of Jesus and now there He was, but she couldn't ask this great teacher to take time with her, if she went near and told her situation, she feared He, like other religious teachers, would avoid her and not want her near Him as He did not want to be unclean.

She went to Him and she believed if she could only touch even the edge of His cloak, the hem of His garment, she would be healed and then she could go away happy and whole. Probably the edge of His garment, cloak indicates one of the 4 tassels that Jewish men wore on the 4 corners of their outer robe to remind them of God's law - see Numbers 15:37-40 and Deuteronomy 22:12. Timidly she wanted to touch, in an unnoticed way, this free-swinging part of Jesus' clothes. No one, not even Jesus would ever notice if she did so.

Here's a question for us all - which one had the greatest faith? Both went to Jesus, both believed, but which one had the greatest faith? The one was bold, the other timid, but are these evidences of a greater or weaker faith? Jairus needed Jesus to go to his house and touch his daughter; this woman believed she had only to touch the hem of His garment...! Personally, I'm not going answer the question as you have to chew it over the same as I do! Both had faith, both were granted this faith from God as they had heard of Jesus. The question you really need to answer is "*Do you have faith in the Lord Jesus?*" Do you have faith that has gone to Him to ask Jesus to meet your need to trust Him to save you? Possibly you may have secretly done this, it may be openly, but whatever, there is the need for you to go in faith to Jesus to be your Saviour. If you do not have faith, then ask God for such - to help you believe; as faith is a gift from God through His grace and then we have the responsibility to believe. Moving on we see:

### **3. Sorrow and Joy.**

Mark and Luke tell us that Jairus was naturally upset and here they were delayed by Jesus asking who touched Him and He takes time to deal with this woman. Jairus must've been thinking "*Come on, come on, time is running out!*" Then, as they were moving off, the

worst news he could possibly hear came - don't bother Jesus any more as your daughter is dead. What sorrow and grief must've smashed into him and perhaps, in his mind, he is saying "*Oh, if only...*" but Jesus said "*Don't be afraid, just believe.*" When they reached the house Jesus went in, He then proceeded to evict all the professional wailers and flute players (*a common practice in those days - almost like professional mourners*). Jesus is laughed at when He says that the girl is not dead but sleeping, as they knew she was dead. I suspect Jesus knew she was dead, but knew He would wake her from the "sleep" of death.

Then Jesus proceeded to raise her from the dead! Mark tells us the very Aramaic words Jesus used "*Talitha koum!*" (5:41) and we are told that it means "*Little girl, I say to you, get up!*" A lovely country literalism is "*Lambkin wake up!*" or "*Honey, wake up!*" Jesus spoke so tenderly as He woke her up from her sleep of death.

Note that this is the first recorded occurrence in NT of Jesus raising someone from the dead - she was recently dead; the next is the widow of Nain's son - who had died either the day before, or much earlier that day and was being taken out to be buried; then we have the resurrection of Lazarus who had been 4 days dead and even starting to rot in the Middle Eastern heat! The Lord Jesus is shown to be the Lord over death. On the day of resurrection, all from all ages throughout history, will be raised from the dead at His command - to either eternal life or to eternal damnation. What of you on that day?

Jairus' sorrow was turned to joy; his deep dark sorrow was turned to delirious ecstatic joy. So too is the woman's sorrow. She touched Jesus' hem and she felt her sickness end, health and strength fill her body, surging into her. She felt whole and knew she had been healed. Yes, she could have cried out with joy, but

she was going to slip away unnoticed even as she possessed her new joyful health. Jesus' power healed her, but she was quietly and timidly going to move away, assuming no one would be any the wiser, yet Jesus knew. He knew as God that she would be there, that she would touch Him for healing. It was not by chance she was healed, or as if His clothes had magic powers; she had come to Him in faith and yes, she may have had a timid faith, but it was a real faith. I urge us all not to have faith in faith, or in a church, or in religion and certainly not in me, not even in the Bible as a special magic book, but go to the Lord Jesus for your need of spiritual healing and of eternal life met and have faith in Him and Him alone.

You may have many sorrows and even meet discouragement as you seek for Jesus to help you, to save you, but do not give up, but trust, believe, ask Him, as one did in Jesus' time when he said "*I do believe, help Thou my unbelief*". Tell Jesus of your doubts and questions and you will be surprised to find out He will encourage and help you in and through them so that your sorrow can become great joy as you see and realise what He will do for your soul. Finally:

#### **4. Public and Secret.**

This is a strange contrast. Notice that the woman's faith was concealed, but then it was revealed! She is brought to own publicly what Jesus had done for her - all around heard, all knew of her former condition and all knew Jesus had healed her by His power going from Him to her. Jesus doesn't criticise or condemn her, but owns her as His "child", "daughter", so showing her faith in Him had been active and was used to bring her healing. Jesus sent her away in peace - not merely peace and ease from suffering, but also peace with God, for she believed in Jesus and had peace with God. She could go on her way, owning her joy and healing and all

would know of it! This was a public confession and owning of this miracle. At this point I feel Jairus must've been greatly encouraged by this, but time **was** running out, so could they go a bit quicker! Then the news came of his daughter's death and all hope went!

Jesus was not put off, dismayed, but continued on to Jairus' home. There He only took the parents and 3 disciples (*says Mark*) into the dead girl's room. By now He's thrown out the wailing band and He raises the girl from the dead. Luke and Mark tell us that Jesus told the girl's parents 2 things - **firstly**, to give her something to eat and then **secondly**, He gave orders for this raising of their daughter from the dead to be kept quiet - not to let anyone know!

The one miracle was made public, the other miracle was to be kept quiet! I cannot explain this! I do know that the news of this raising of the dead of Jairus' daughter spread far and wide – as Matthew tells us so! It couldn't be kept secret - the wailers would tell the crowd outside that the girl was dead and probably publicly scoffed and laughed at Jesus' words. Yet that would change as Jairus, his wife **and his daughter** appeared, would be seen out and about, even be seen eating food together a few moments later and of course news of this would spread like wildfire.

Jairus and his family were to show by their lives the reality of Jesus meeting with them. They were not to publicly announce, making big open displays of emotion. No, the reality of Jesus' work was to be shown in their lives.

In our days both public and secret testimony of God's grace and mercy to us are right. We are to say what God has done for us. There is a place and time to say to family and friends of what our God has done. Perhaps, we as young Christians, need to consider

the public testimony of baptism, joining with other believers at the Lord's Table and to come into church membership.

Let all of us who are Christians be ready to give a reason for the hope that is within us - to speak of our faith as a witness and reason for the way we live. For some of us it will be easier than others with the gifts, abilities and backgrounds we have, but for us all, there must be the silent public witness of a changed life, showing all around that the Lord Jesus has affected our lives and made a difference. Our lives are to be lived in such a way that others will want to have what we have!

These 2 miracles teach us much. I've touched upon some things concerning the Lord's work with these two-contrasting people. May we all consider the Lord's word here and learn more of Him so that we may come to faith in Him and then, having done that, we will go on to live for Him every day in every part of our life to show and tell others of what He has done for us.