

JUST BELIEVE

Mark 5:21-43

Key Verse: 5:36

"Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler,
'Don't be afraid; just believe.'"

Mark 5:21-43 is a story about Jesus who helped two women get well. Through this story Jesus teaches us that he wants us to have faith in God. The faith Jesus wants us to have requires a basic attitude which is humble and simple. Especially the faith Jesus wants us to have is faith to wait on God.

I. Jairus' faith (21-24a)

First, Jairus came to Jesus by faith (21-24a). Jesus wanted to have a retreat, but he and his disciples met a storm and had enough hard time (4:35-41). After the storm they landed on the shore in the region of the Gerasenes. They met a demon-possessed man. Jesus immediately wanted to heal him from his demon possession. After healing him by sacrificing 2,000 pigs, Jesus was forced to leave by the townspeople. So Jesus had to cross back over to the other side of the lake. Jesus and his disciples were very tired because they couldn't sleep the previous night because of the storm of the sea and the storm of a demon-possessed man. When Jesus and his disciples arrived at the shore where he started for a retreat, the crowd of people was waiting for Jesus from early morning. When Jesus saw them Jesus was willing to serve them, even though he could not rest for a long time, except for a catnap, pillowing his head on the stern of the boat. This scene draws a picture of a good shepherd and his flock. They followed Jesus as sheep follow their shepherd. John 10:14 says, "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me..." Jesus was ready to help them all one by one. However, one person drew Jesus' full attention. He was a synagogue ruler named Jairus, who came there, for his daughter was dying (22,23). At that time, the ruler of a synagogue was a man of standing in his community. He must have looked austere and dignified. Obviously he had been happy with his family. His daughter was only 12 years old (42). Undoubtedly, she had been a source

of joy in her family, especially to her father. Whenever she called him, "Daddy!" he would answer, "Oh, my cutie-pie!" feeling deeply in himself that life was indeed worth living. But one day, all the elements of tragedy knocked at his door. His daughter fell ill all of a sudden; she was getting worse and worse, and she was dying. Jairus faced the reality of death. But he had faith in Jesus. He believed simply and humbly that Jesus can heal his daughter. So he went to Jesus by faith to ask his mercy on a dying daughter to be saved.

Second, Jairus was a man of humble faith (22-23). Look at verses 22,23. "...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.'" Historically, the Israelites were known as men and women of pride and prejudice. Jairus was a man of standing in his community. So he was willing to help others, but not to be helped by others. But he abrogated his dignity as a synagogue ruler. He didn't mind humbling himself, if only his daughter could be healed. As a classic Jew it was hard for Jairus to ignore the fact that he was a member of the Jewish community and come to Jesus, who was known as the son of a carpenter and the leader of a newly arising sect of the Nazarene. Of course, Jairus knew that the Pharisees were trying hard to eliminate Jesus. Jairus may have expected that he would be excommunicated by the Jews. But all these things did not matter to him. Jairus brought his dying daughter problem and fell at Jesus' feet and pleaded earnestly with him for the sake of healing his daughter.

Third, Jairus was a good father (22-24a). What does it mean to be a father or mother? We cannot describe all the noble meanings of parenthood. But mainly, parents are meant to sacrifice themselves for their children's sake. We human beings are noble because we are different from a mother pig, who abandons her piglets in order to feed herself a little more. Jairus was a good father. He had to think of his social standing. But he did not. He thought only of his daughter.

How did Jesus respond to Jairus? Look at verse 24a. "So Jesus went with him." Jesus had to take care of a large crowd of people pressing around him. But Jesus heard Jairus' humble cry and went with him. Jesus was willing to heal the little girl because of Jairus' humble faith and sacrifi-

cial father's love. Jesus wants us to be like Jairus.

II. A helpless woman's faith (24b-34)

First, "If I just touch his clothes" (24-28). Look at verse 24b. "A large crowd followed and pressed around him." A crowd of people followed him with many kinds of demands. Look at verse 25. "And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years." Twelve years were a long time! In ten years, the world changes. In ten years people change too. This woman had been sick for ten years plus two. To a woman, a sense of beauty is very important. But because of her bleeding, this woman lost her beauty. She also lost her hope of marriage and, instead, lived in shame. Her body became filthy and smelly. Mark says that she had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and that all her money was gone, yet instead of getting better she only grew worse (26). She had done her best to be healed of her bleeding, but it was of no use. She was completely helpless. At the time of helplessness, she heard about Jesus, who preached the good news of the kingdom of God and healed the sick and drove the demons out. It was the time for her to decide whether to resign herself to her fate, or make a leap of faith to go to Jesus. What did she do? She overcame her habit of self-pity by faith. She quietly came up to Jesus in the crowd and touched his cloak secretly (27).

Second, Jesus helped her make a confession of faith (29-33). What was the result? Look at verse 29. "Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering." As soon as she touched the fringe of his clothes from behind, the power of Jesus came upon her and she was healed. Now, her chronic disease was gone. Her suffering was gone. The torment of Satan was also gone.

Look at verse 30a. "At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him." Numerous people were touching Jesus, but they could not experience his healing power. Only this woman felt the healing power of Jesus. But she was so shy that she could not confess she touched him.

Jesus turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" The disciples retorted, "You see the people crowding against you, and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" (30,31) Look at verse 32. "But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it." The woman was

so shy that she could not even stand before Jesus. She was conscious of her smelly body. She had come up behind him just to touch his clothes for healing and leave quietly; she didn't want to bother Jesus. So she touched his clothes and she was healed (28,29). But when she saw that Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it, she couldn't hide herself any longer. "She came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth." (33)

Why was Jesus so persistent that she come out? He wanted to heal not only her body, but also her soul. After having been healed physically, if she had gone away without a confession of faith, she could have forgotten God's grace upon her life. She could have remained a spiritually sick woman forever. So Jesus helped her confess her faith so that she could be healed spiritually. It is important for us to have a clear confession of faith or a clear testimony about God's grace. Otherwise, we go back to the state of fallen men. Romans 10:9,10 says, "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

Third, "Daughter, your faith has healed you" (34). When she made a confession of faith, Jesus said, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering" (34). She had faith in Jesus: "If I just touch his clothes, my bleeding will be healed." Jesus does not usually admire anybody. But Jesus admired her greatly, saying, "Your faith has healed you." There are many people who are helpless like the woman who was suffering from bleeding. But they do not come to Jesus with faith. So they remain as sick people. The President said, "The USA is a superpower nation. America looks strong outwardly. But violence weakens the inside of this nation." But Bible-believing people like the woman believe that Jesus would heal godlessness and immorality, which seem to be the general atmosphere of this nation. They have faith in Jesus that God would establish America as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Surely Jesus would hear our prayers and heal this nation and establish this country as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. If we have faith in Jesus like this woman, Jesus would surely admire us.

III. "Just believe" (35-43)

First, Jairus' "waiting on" faith (35). On the way to Jairus' house, Jesus stopped and spoke on and on about the woman's faith. As a result, his going to Jairus' house to see Jairus' dying daughter was delayed a great deal. While Jesus was healing this woman, Jairus' daughter wailed and breathed her last and died. Some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher any more?" (35) What they said was reality. Humanly speaking, they were right. But in the spiritual world, what they said poisoned Jairus and planted doubt in his heart. Jairus' simple faith, "If only Jesus came and laid his hands on her, she would be healed," began to wobble, and then crumble. Their news almost made Jairus give up hope in Jesus and go home to make funeral arrangements, weeping. Now the devil poisoned his heart, saying, "See, Jesus doesn't care for you. She was a chronic patient and your daughter was an emergency case. Why did Jesus linger so long until your daughter died?" The devil hit Jairus hard until he was knocked down. But Jairus just waited on Jesus patiently. He had tremendous patience to wait on Jesus' mercy. The faith to wait on God seems to be trivial. But without waiting on God we cannot learn true faith in God. King David's secret of success was that he did not do anything by his own ability. King David waited on God until he was instructed by God what to do, as a victorious general waits on the king. 2 Samuel 5:19 says, "...so David inquired of the Lord, 'Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?' The Lord answered him, 'Go, for I will surely hand the Philistines over to you.'"

Second, just believe (36-43). Jesus knew that the devil was attacking Jairus to make him give up his faith. Look at verse 36. "Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, 'Don't be afraid; just believe.'" Jesus said, "Don't be afraid; just believe." Why did he say, "Don't be afraid; just believe," to Jairus? It is because Jairus was afraid of his daughter's death. When the fear of death came into his heart, the power of death began to cripple him until he was paralyzed by fear. When Jairus reached home, everyone was crying and wailing because she was dead. He was completely overpowered by the fear of death. He was no more a synagogue ruler, but a slave of Satan.

Jesus said, "just believe." "Just believe" sounds easy. But it is not at

all easy for anyone to just believe when the situation is going in reverse. "Just believing" faith requires absolute faith in God's love. In March of 1981, Dr. Coddington's eldest daughter, Julie, was killed in a car accident in Asheville, N.C., before the memory of his youngest son Philip's drowning was erased. At that time Dr. Coddington was serving in Bangladesh as a medical missionary. Dr. Coddington just believed that God is good (Ro 8:28). Jesus was very much pleased by Jairus' "just believing" faith.

When Jesus and his company arrived, Jesus saw and heard a great commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly over the death of Jairus' daughter. Those wailing and crying were village people and professional funeral mourners. What did Jesus say to them? Look at verse 39. Jesus went in and said, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep."

Jesus said this because in him there is no death. Then they laughed at him, thinking that she was dead. Jesus put them all out because they made an atmosphere of unbelief (40b). He took the child's mother and father and the top three 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!") (41). Immediately the girl stood up and walked around. Mark, the author, emphasizes again that she was just 12 years old. She could have died at the age of 12, before her life had fully blossomed. Jesus gave this young daughter a new life because of her father Jairus' "just believing" faith. Jesus gave this young daughter a new life so that she could grow up to be a beautiful woman.

Let's pray that because of our "just believing" faith, God may heal many young college students and teenagers from their sufferings caused by the devil. May God help us to have "just believing" faith.