

How Faith Conquers Fear

Mark 5:21- 43 “A sick woman ... and a powerful man”

This passage contains two distinct “encounters” with Jesus. They are best understood, however, by reading them as one and not just separately.

I. Faith opens the door to the **power of God**.

“Your faith has healed you.” (Mark 5:34)

“Don’t be afraid; just believe.” (Mark 5:36)

- What saved the father’s daughter and this woman was that their faith was directed to **Jesus**.

II. Faith shows persistence in **overcoming any obstacles**.

“When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak” (Mark 5:27)

- The woman was broken, unclean, marginalized by society and blocked from getting to Jesus.
- Jairus was wealthy, respected and “worthy” in human terms but was a Jewish leader who would be criticized for receiving Jesus. More than that, in the long delay in reaching his home, the news arrives that his daughter has died. (Mark 5:35)

III. Faith is **embodied in action**.

- Both Jairus (the rich ruler) and the poor woman (un-named) were **desperate** in their desire to have Jesus touch them and believed that his power would change their problem.
- They both humbled themselves physically as well as spiritually. (Mark 5:22-23,33)
- They both initiated an encounter with Jesus and not the other way around.

*“The personal encounter is vital, however, for anything really significant to happen – for faith to become real.”
- David Garland.*

IV. Faith is driven by **desperation** in that Jesus is **sufficient** to meet whatever need one has.

- What prevents many of us from seeing the power of God at work in our lives is that we choose other options to address our problems rather than fully trusting only in the power of Jesus to provide for us.
- Note that when things seemed to be at their very darkest, Jesus exhorts Jairus “don’t be afraid; just believe”. Here, as in many other encounters, **faith conquers fear!**

Small Group Questions

1. What does this passage teach us about Jesus’ concern for social status when it comes to answered prayer? (The ruler of the synagogue versus an impoverished woman.)
2. Why do we find it so difficult to be **desperate** when it comes to matters of faith?
3. Why do you think Jesus required the woman to reveal herself as the one who touched him? (vs. 30)
4. Once again, Jesus juxtaposes “fear” and “faith”. Can you think of one illustration where you have found yourself caught between these two powerful dynamics in your life? What helps you to believe and not just be afraid?
5. Why do you think Jesus “put out” those who were mocking him about the child’s condition? What does that tell us about the need for being with people of faith?