

Power Over Impurity

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[0 : 00] The Gospel of Mark, chapter 5, verses 21-43. I want to ask you all to stand with me as we read the Scriptures. And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about Him, and He was beside the sea.

Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing Him, He fell at His feet, and implored Him earnestly, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death.

Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live. And He went with Him. And a great crowd followed Him and thronged about Him. And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better, but rather grew worse.

She had heard the reports about Jesus, and came up behind Him in the crowd, and touched His garment, for she said, If I touch even His garments, I will be made well. And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

And Jesus, perceiving in Himself that power had gone out from Him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, Who touched my garments? And His disciples said to Him, You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, Who touched me?

[1 : 24] And He looked around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, and fell down before Him, and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well.

Go in peace, and be healed of your disease. While He was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house, some who said, Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further? But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not fear, only believe. And He allowed no one to follow Him, except Peter and James and John, the brother of James. They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. And when He had entered, He said to them, Why are you making commotion and weeping?

The child is not dead, but sleeping. And they laughed at Him. But He put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with Him, and went in where the child was.

[2 : 28] Taking her by the hand, He said to her, Talitha kum, which means, Little girl, I say to you, arise. And immediately the little girl got up and began walking, for she was twelve years of age.

And they were immediately overcome with amazement. And He strictly charged them that no one should know this. And He told them to give her something to eat. Father, take Your Word right now. Help us not only to understand it, but help us to be challenged by it and encouraged by it. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. For the last two weeks, we have been walking through Mark and seeing Mark paint a picture of the sovereignty and power and authority of Jesus.

In fact, I told you, both last Sunday and the Sunday before, that the three passages that we're looking at, two weeks ago, last week, and this week, all three of those passages are held together and are meant to be read together and understood together in our minds because all of them teach us about this doctrine of the sovereignty of God revealed in and through Jesus.

That Jesus has all power and all authority. And so, two weeks ago, we saw that Jesus has authority over the natural world. The storm comes up.

[3 : 57] He's in the boat with His disciples. He's sleeping calmly. His disciples are deathly afraid. They're afraid that they are themselves going to die. And they come to Jesus and wake Him up. And Jesus simply tells the wind to be quiet.

He tells the waves to be quiet and be silent and go away. And immediately, the wind stops. The waves go away. Everything is calm because Jesus has authority over the natural world.

And we even saw that the Old Testament teaches us that it's really God alone who has the power to command the world, the natural world, and it must obey.

God alone has the power to command the rain to come or to command the wind to blow or to tell it to stop. God is in control of all of those things. He is sovereign over all of those things.

And so we see the divinity of Christ revealed and His sovereignty over the world around Him. And that's encouraging for us. It means that when a hurricane rolls through and a tree falls on your house, it means that things have not gone out of control and gone haywire.

[5 : 04] It means that that tree falling on your house is a part of God's plan because He's in control of the wind and where it blows. And when Paul says that God works all things for good to those that love Him, it means that that tree that the wind blew down and fell through your house, He's going to work for good and He has a plan for it.

Or when floodwaters arise and they ruin everything that you own and they ruin hundreds of homes, and we see that happen every year, it means that those floodwaters are not an accident.

It means that the destruction that has happened is not an accident. It's a part of God's plan. We like to sometimes think that we in the modern world have isolated ourselves from the dangers of the world around us.

And it is true that we're not as dependent as people were, say, a thousand years ago or two thousand or three thousand years ago. We're not as dependent upon the tides and the flood stages of rivers and storm seasons and all those sorts of things.

We have, to some degree, protected ourselves from those things. But at the end of the day, we still are powerless when bad weather comes to a certain degree.

[6 : 15] If a tornado comes through your town, there is no technology that exists that's going to help us to avoid that. It's just going to come and if it comes and hits your house, it hits your house.

And the truth that Jesus is in control of all of those weather patterns is good news for us because it means in all those things, He works them for our good. And then we moved on into chapter 5, which we looked at last week, and we saw that Jesus is not only in control of the natural world, He's also in control of the supernatural world.

So that you have a man who is possessed by thousands of demons, and those demons come and fall at Jesus' feet and beg Him to leave them alone, and they obey His command when He tells them to leave the man because they have no other choice.

They have to obey His commands. Satan is probably the most angry, most unwilling servant of God in the universe.

But make no mistake, he serves God whether he wants to or not because there is nothing that he can do outside of God's permission. Jesus is in control of even the supernatural world around us.

[7 : 28] That's good news because the devil does prowl around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour, but he doesn't devour anyone that Jesus does not let him devour.

And there's nothing that comes into your life. There's no hardship or there's no difficulty that Satan or the demonic hosts might bring into your life. There's no temptation that they might push into your life that God isn't sovereign over and He cannot help you through and that He doesn't have a purpose for.

He has a reason for it. He has a purpose for it. He has a plan for it. All of that is good news. Which brings us to the passage that we're looking at today.

Where I think what we're seeing in these two incidents where Jesus displays His power over disease and over death, I think that in these two things, He's showing us that His authority extends to the ways in which natural disasters and supernatural evil powers, the ways in which they attack us most personally.

How does the natural world, how does it inflict the most pain upon us in the most personal of ways? Through sickness.

[8 : 45] Through disease. And how does Satan, what is Satan's ultimate weapon against humanity? It's death. The writer of the book of Hebrews says that Christ came to destroy him who has the power of death.

That is the devil. That's exactly what the writer of Hebrews says. Death is the number one, final, ultimate tool that Satan has been given to afflict humanity with. And here we see that Jesus is sovereign over that.

So in the most personal ways in which nature would come against us, in the most personal ways in which Satan would come against us, Mark is teaching us that even in those things, Jesus is powerful.

And He is authoritative over them. So I want us to dive in and I want to show you that because what we're shown here is a picture of two people who are in a state of desperation.

They are in despair. So let's summarize the story in broad strokes and then I want to look at those two individuals and see what happens.

[9 : 53] So here's the broad strokes. Verse 21 tells us, When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd had gathered about Him and He was beside the sea.

So Jesus began on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, got into a boat and He sailed across. That's when they ran into the storm to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

And that's where He ran into the man with the thousands of demons in Him, Legion, and He cast out the Legion of Demons. Now He's come back over to where He started, back to the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, right near the city of Capernaum, which is sort of Jesus' home base for His ministry in the region of Galilee.

Back to Capernaum. He's there along the shores near that city. And we are told that a ruler of the synagogue whose name was Jairus came to Jesus. Jesus is, we assume, just recently landed on the shore and there's already a crowd that has heard that Jesus is returning.

And so they've already come to meet Jesus there as He lands and He begins teaching the people. He's right back where He started before He went across the lake. He's teaching crowds of people and in the midst of that, a ruler of the synagogue comes to Him for help.

[11 : 13] Now, the synagogue was kind of like the local church back in those days. You had the temple that was in Jerusalem and there's only one temple. But the synagogue was the place and there was typically a synagogue in every town and every village.

And the synagogue was the place where your average Jew would go on a weekly basis on Sabbath to hear the Scriptures read, to hear the Scriptures taught, to spend time in prayer, to do the kinds of things that we do when we gather together on Sundays.

And that's what the synagogue was for. And every synagogue in every town had a number of rulers, of elders who were in charge of the synagogue to make sure everything went smoothly, to make sure that things ran and things were kept up.

And these people who held that permission, that position, were considered people of honor. They were usually people of wealth within the town. That would vary from town to town. You might have in a large city you'd have really wealthy people.

In a small city you'd have moderately wealthy. But in every city the rulers of the synagogue, they were somebody. They mattered. They were important people. And that's the kind of person who's come to Jesus now.

[12 : 18] Probably this guy Jairus, he was probably there in the synagogue the day when Jesus healed a man and cast out a demon right there in the synagogue. He was probably there.

He has probably seen the power of Jesus at work so he knows that Jesus has the power to do something to help him and he needs help. He's desperate.

His daughter is sick. So he comes and he asks Jesus for help. Jesus agrees to help the man and he leaves. He's going to go to this guy's house and as the story unfolds while Jesus is on his way the crowds are following him and pressing in on him and in the middle of it all Jesus stops in order to find out who has touched him.

Somebody in the middle of a big, thick, dense crowd Jesus says somebody touched my robe and I want to know who did it. And we're told that his disciples in verse 31 it says his disciples said to him you can see the crowd pressing around you and yet you say who touched me.

In other words Jesus how are we supposed to know who touched you? Everybody's touching you. Why are you asking that question? We don't know the answer the answer is everybody I guess.

This guy, this guy, this guy, this guy, this lady, this person over here everybody that's near you has touched you probably.

[13 : 36] But that's not what Jesus means. He doesn't mean who physically simply touched my robe. He means who touched me with faith. Because Mark tells us that when this lady touched him she was immediately healed of her disease and Jesus knew that power had gone out from him.

All that's happening while this ruler Jairus is trying to rush Jesus off to his house to heal his daughter who's near the point of death and then Jairus gets a message in the middle of it don't bother the teacher she didn't make it she's died and all hope is lost for him.

Except that Jesus says oh don't be afraid just believe just keep believing don't be afraid. And the story moves on and Jesus goes to the man's house he enters the room with just three of his disciples and the mother and the father and he raises this little girl who has died he raises her back to life.

Verse 41 tells us taking her by the hand he said to her Talitha cum so he's speaking in Aramaic which was the language of the people in Palestine he says Talitha cum which means little girl I say to you arise and immediately the girl got up and began walking for she was 12 years old and they were immediately overcome with amazement.

So in this short span of time just from the time that Jesus walks off the shore in through town and gets to Jairus' house in this short little span of time Jesus demonstrates his power over disease and over death and he does it in the lives of two people who are in a state of desperation.

[15:25] So let's take a look I want to look at these two people because I think I think that their circumstances a lot of times mirror our own circumstances or at least the ways that their circumstances impact them personally mirrors the ways that our circumstances impact us.

So let's take a look at this woman I think that this woman I think that her desperation is fueled primarily by two things. One is isolation and the other is a sense of hopelessness.

Isolation and hopelessness. Let's take a look at the woman first. It says in verse 25 that there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for 12 years and who had suffered much under many physicians and had spent all that she had and was no better but rather grew worse.

This is a this is a bad situation. Now we don't immediately recognize how bad the situation was because we don't live in Palestine 2,000 years ago. This this woman for 12 years had been suffering from from this sickness which means that for 12 years she has been suffering from extreme isolation.

Let me show you what I mean. I want you to turn over to the book of Leviticus. I want you to turn over to Leviticus chapter 15. When we're in Leviticus we're in the middle of the Old Testament law.

[17:05] The Old Testament law the law of Moses governed life for the Jewish people at this time when this story is taking place. This is what they were supposed to live by.

These were the rules that they were supposed to follow. And one of the main concerns of the law is purity and cleanliness.

Now not just simply physical cleanliness even though that's sort of tied to it. But there is chapter after chapter paragraph after page I mean page after page of laws in the Old Testament that are all about ritual purity and ritual cleanliness.

It is a big big deal in their world. And if you become ritually unclean then until you're declared clean by a priest you are ostracized from society.

Because if someone else who's clean touches an unclean person they become unclean. So nobody wants to touch you. Nobody wants to get too close to you.

[18:16] You're isolated. Now specifically dealing with this woman. Leviticus chapter 15 I want you to take a look in verse 19.

It says when a woman has a discharge and the discharge in her body is blood she shall be in her menstrual impurity for seven days and whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening. And everything on which she lies during her menstrual impurity shall be unclean. Everything also on which she sits shall be unclean. And whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening.

And whoever touches anything on which she sits shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. Whether it's the bed or anything on which she sits bed on which he lies will be unclean. And then verse 25 addresses this woman's situation specifically.

If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her impurity, all the days of the discharge she shall continue in uncleanness. As in the days of her impurity she shall be unclean. And then on and on.

[19:29] Everything she touched, her clothes, her bed, the chair she sits on, the mat she sits on, everything for the entire time that she is suffering from this disease. Everything that this woman touches is considered unclean. Which means that nobody would want to be around her. Nobody would want to risk becoming unclean. Because if they're unclean they have to go through a whole

long process of being declared clean and pure again. Imagine living life like that for 12 years. years. Imagine living life where no one wanted to touch you at all. In fact, one of the things you read when you read other ancient documents written by Jews is you find out that some Jewish men went so far as to never touch a woman that they did not personally know really well. At all. Because they don't know. They don't know what time it is for her and they don't want to risk it. That's how crazy it got. Okay? That's not in the Bible. Okay? But that's legalism stacked up on top of the law. That's what they did. Here's a woman who lives in that kind of a culture. No one wants to touch her. No one wants to touch anything she touches. No one would come to her home. Why would they? That's a dangerous thing. Which meant that she was probably never married and if she had gotten married the man would have divorced her by now because a Jewish man could divorce a woman for a thing like this very easily in those days. If she had been married she's divorced. She probably had never been married though given the length of her illness and given normal lifespans and all those sorts of things. She probably had never been married. Probably had never had any children. She is absolutely totally isolated and that fuels your sense of desperation and despair. I think that's true for us as well. I mean we don't experience it maybe to that degree but we there are times in our lives where we feel cut off and isolated from everyone else. The truth of the matter is we usually do that to ourselves.

[21 : 38] We usually isolate ourselves from people. We usually distance ourselves from other people. But at some point isolation is just isolation. Distance is just distance and it's a painful thing and it leads to the kind of despair that this woman to the kind of despair that this woman felt. But her despair is fueled by more than that. Her despair is also fueled I think by a sense of hopelessness because it says that she had gone to every doctor that she could and spent every bit of money that she had on doctors.

Doctors were not cheap in those days. There's no health insurance. All right. I mean there's no health care program at all. Okay. It's doctors cost a lot of money and only the really wealthy, only the well-off can afford to see a doctor. Otherwise you just ride out the illness. You get the flu and you don't have enough money to pay a doctor, you ride it out. You have an accident and you don't have any money, you just deal with it. Wait for your body to heal itself or whatever happens.

This woman apparently had some money. She had some kind of means and she spent all of it on every doctor that she could find and none of them were able to cure her. So there's no more hope for her.

This is what happens if you have cancer and you've been to MD Anderson, you've been to John Hopkins, you've been to the Mayo Clinic, you've been to every major cancer hospital in the country and all of them look you in the eye and say we can't do anything else.

[23 : 14] And not only that, but at the end of all their treatments you're worse off than you were at the beginning because that's what it says. She's worse now that she's gone to all these doctors and they've experimented on her. She's worse off now than she was at the beginning.

She's hopeless. Where else is she? Where do you, when you're sick and you've been to the best doctors that there are, where else do you go? What do you do?

She has a kind of despair that's fueled by isolation and hopelessness. And then you have Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, who's also in a state of despair and his despair I think is primarily fueled by a sense of unmet expectations for his daughter and then he eventually experiences the same kind of hopelessness that I think this woman is experiencing.

Take a look at what it says about him. It says in verse 22, Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him he fell at his feet and implored him earnestly saying, My little daughter is at the point of death.

Come and lay your hands on her so that she may be what made well and live. He says, My little daughter, my child is ill.

[24 : 34] Of course, when you move down to verse 42, we find out in verse 42 that she's 12 years old. So, in this world, in an ancient Jewish world, she is one birthday away from adulthood.

She's one birthday away from being betrothed. She's one birthday away from potential marriage and being set for life and having a husband and the hope of children and all of those sorts of things.

She's one birthday away from all of that, from her entire future and her life. And now she's laying there and she's about to die. And here's a father who looks at his daughter who was on the brink of moving on with the rest of her life and experiencing all the joys of life.

And he sees her and she's not going to experience any of that. She's going to die. I think the closest equivalent that I was able to think of is if you had a child who, in our culture, they're about to graduate from high school.

They've been accepted into the best school for the profession they want. They've got a full scholarship. Everything's out in front of them. You know that they're going to be set for their career when they go to college.

[25 : 52] They're probably going to meet the person that they're going to marry when they go off to college. All those things that kind of happen in our culture, when you make that big step and you make that leap, I think that's a similar situation to what this father's looking at with his daughter.

She's on the cusp of making this move into adulthood and it's about to be cut short. And all of his expectations, all of his hopes, and all of his dreams for his daughter are just about to be flushed down the tubes.

All of it gone. That will bring a parent to the point of absolute despair. He's an influential man. He's a wealthy man.

And there's nothing that he can do to help his daughter. And then he moves from that. He moves further into hopelessness when he receives word.

Verse 35, While Jesus was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further? Now it's hopeless.

[26 : 56] Now she's gone. And there's nothing he can do about it. We experience these kinds of moments in our lives. We experience times where we feel like things are, they are out of our control and there's not a lot we can do about it.

There are things happening around us. There are people who are doing things. There are changes that are happening and we can't do anything about it. And every time we try to do something about it, the thing only gets worse.

The woman goes to doctors and she's worse. The man goes to get Jesus. And while he's getting Jesus, his daughter dies. Every time we try to fix it, every time we try to do something, it just gets worse. Worse.

Except for one thing. Except that both of these people trusted in Jesus. Look at the faith of the woman.

It says in verse 27, that she had heard the reports about Jesus. And she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garments.

[28 : 04] For she said, If I touch even his garments, I will be made well. She believed. And immediately it says, The flow of blood dried up and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

And then Jesus, later on when he speaks to her in verse 34, he tells her why she's been healed. He says, Daughter, your faith has made you well. She wasn't made well because she found the right technique.

She wasn't made well because she just happened to do the right thing. She was made well. Her problem was solved because she trusted in Christ. Simple.

Straightforward. We see the exact same thing with Jairus. Jairus first came to Jesus because he has seen Jesus at work and he believes that Jesus can do something.

He says in verse 23, Come and lay your hands on her that she may be made well and live. He believes that Jesus can do this. He knows Jesus can heal people. He just needs to get them to his house and get them to lay his hands on her and everything will be fixed.

[29 : 13] So he has some measure of faith that Jesus is able to fix the situation. But the situation grows worse. And when the situation grows worse, Jesus' advice to Jairus is, Do not fear, only believe.

In other words, Jesus is saying, I know now that you feel hopeless. I know that you believed that I could heal her and now she's dead and she's beyond healing.

But what I'm saying to you is, Don't be afraid of that. Keep on believing in me. Keep trusting in me because my power is not limited to healing her disease.

There are no limits to his power. And he says in the midst of all of our circumstances and all of our desperate situations, he says, Don't be afraid.

Believe in me. And then in both instances, the faith results, one in healing and the other in the raising of this little girl from the dead.

[30 : 23] In one instance, power just goes out of Jesus as she touches his garments. In the other instance, Jesus merely speaks to this little girl and touches her hand and she comes back from the dead.

Think about that. She's not on the brink of death. She has died. It's confirmed. The mourners are already present.

Look at what it says in verse 38. It says, They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. See, in the ancient world, when someone died, they didn't have their funeral three or four days later.

There's no embalming, right, in Israel. I mean, in Egypt they embalmed. But they don't just embalm someone and then have their funeral a few days later. They do things immediately. Once it's absolutely confirmed that the person really has died, they move on.

And the first step in having a funeral in this world is you have mourners. Okay? People who are really good at crying loudly. I mean, that's real.

[31 : 26] Sometimes they were paid. Okay? And they would come. This was all part of the tradition. They would come immediately to the house and they would begin to weep and wail and cry and scream out in sorrow and anguish.

And they would do that in the entire funeral possession. And as the person was laid to rest, they were mourners. And they're already there, which means she's really dead. There's no mistake here. It's confirmed.

She's dead. Funeral arrangements are already at work. The mourners are there. And Jesus says, she's not dead.

She's asleep. Well, they know she's dead. So, they laugh at him. They think that Jesus just doesn't know what he's talking about. They think that Jesus doesn't know how to tell if a person is alive, dead, really sick, or whatever.

They think he just doesn't know what he's doing. So, they laugh at Jesus. But what Jesus means to them is that when I'm present, death is not death. When I'm present, death is not final.

[32 : 28] It's no different than taking a nap. And if I want to wake you up from it, I wake you up from it. And that's exactly what he does. Just by speaking.

Get up, little girl. Get up. And she gets up and she starts walking around. You see, he's not, he's not a doctor who administers medicine and makes you feel a little bit better so that you gradually recover from your disease.

That's not what he does. He's not a doctor. He gives life. And when he gives life, he gives it fully and she gets up and she walks.

People who wake up from comas or people who have been near death don't get up and walk around. But when Jesus comes and intervenes, life invades the place of death and healing invades the place of sickness.

That's just what he does. And he says, go get her something to eat. She's probably hungry. She's ready to move on with life. She's ready to do all the things that a little 12-year-old girl should be doing.

[33 : 36] She's walking. Get her some food. She's hungry. She hasn't eaten in a while. Jesus has absolute authority over everything that would come into our life and cause us to despair.

absolute authority. That does not mean that he's always going to heal us the way that he does this woman. It does not mean that when our children or our parents or our best friends die that Jesus is going to show up and raise them from the dead.

It doesn't mean that. It means, though, that ultimately for those who have trusted in Christ, sickness will come to an end. Death will come to an end for all of us who have trusted in Jesus.

The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15, he says, Death, where is your victory? In other words, death doesn't win anymore. I told you earlier, the writer of Hebrews says that Jesus came to destroy the one who has the power of death.

Jesus came to do away with death, and yet we still die. Because the final realization of that work will not happen until he returns.

[34 : 51] But on the day that he returns, he will raise us from the dead, and he will wipe away all sickness, and all pain, and all heartache, and all sin, and all the effects of sin in this world, he will wipe away.

It's guaranteed. He has the power to do all those things if you believe in him. None of those things can be yours without faith in Christ.

None of those promises belong to you unless you trust in him, and turn away from your sin and walk with him. None of them are yours, but they're all yours if you believe in him. Every one of them. Let's pray.