

Reflection Guide: Mark 5:21-43

Big Idea: This passage looks at two very different people, a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, who had a daughter who was deathly ill, and an unnamed woman who had been ill for twelve years. Although both of these individuals were remarkably different, the circumstances of their lives had brought both of them to the point of desperation and ultimately it brought both of them to the feet of Jesus. How do the experiences of Jairus and this woman apply to us?

This whole passage pivots around Jesus' interaction with this woman who touched his clothes. And so, we will look at **five questions** that will help us to focus primarily on some things about her and her encounter with Jesus that have immediate implications for our own lives.

#1 How long does it take you before you go directly to Jesus for help?

Mark 5:25-26

25 And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, 26 and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse.

This woman suffered from a rare and serious medical condition. She had been bleeding for 12 years. But the Bible doesn't simply say that she had suffered from her medical *condition*. It also says that she had suffered from her medical *care*. She "had suffered under many physicians..." She was not only weak and fearful for her life, she was also broke. Collectively, her physicians had taken all of her money to provide her with treatments that didn't work. She actually got worse. Think about it...12 years of trying other remedies.

This woman had suffered for so long, but why did it take so long for her to go to Jesus for help? This doesn't mean that medicine and counseling are not effective means to healing. God often works through these things. The point for us is that sometimes, we turn to everyone but Christ when we find ourselves in trouble - even when he's the only one who can help us.

What situation in your life do you need to bring to Jesus? Who have you taken it to previously? Why don't you consult Jesus first? What about Him are you not believing?

#2 Are we talking about Jesus beyond these walls?

27 She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment.

Verse 27 says this woman "heard the reports about Jesus..." Where did she hear those reports? From whom did she hear them? She didn't hear those reports "at church"...from the experts in religion at the synagogue. She couldn't enter the synagogue or the Temple because her illness made her unclean (Leviticus 15:25).

She heard those reports about Jesus because people like you were speaking about Jesus and his greatness and his power--outside of church gatherings! Faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17), and this woman had faith enough to come to Jesus because she heard people like you talking about him at the office, the playground, at lunch, etc...

What is it that we simply cannot wait to tell people? When the answer to that question is "something about Jesus," our everyday conversations will be filled with the reports of his

goodness, and any report about how Jesus has transformed our lives can be used by God to begin the process of bringing others to Christ.

**What have your conversations about Jesus been like outside of the Sunday gathering?
What specifically do your co-workers, friends, neighbors, need to hear about Jesus?
Do you know anyone who feels as though they cannot come to church, yet they need to hear about Jesus?**

#3 Are you merely part of the crowd, pressing in around Jesus out of curiosity or are you reaching out to him with a sense of your need?

Mark 5:31

And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'"

Lots of people bumped into Jesus. Lots of people pressed around him out of curiosity. But only one person reached out and "touched" him in a way that made him stop. Preaching on this very same passage, all the way back in the 4th century, Augustine said, "*The flesh presses, but faith touches.*"

Do you come with a sense of your deep need for Jesus to transform your life, or are you simply trying to get close enough to be a spectator?

#4 Why did Jesus stop and wait for the woman to come forward?

Mark 5:32-34

32 And he looked around to see who had done it. 33 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. 34 And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

Jesus didn't just want to heal her physically. He wanted a relationship with her. He wanted to speak with her. He wanted to look her in the eyes and call her "daughter."

Our felt needs may be the reason that we come to Jesus, but He doesn't simply want to address our felt needs and send us away. He wants a real relationship with us. He wants to speak with us. And he wants to heal us from even deeper and more serious ailments than this woman's bleeding.

**In what ways have you been a spectator of Jesus recently?
Are you hesitant to reach out to Jesus with your need due to fear of exposure?**

#5 Why did this woman have to suffer for 12 long years?

First, God had determined that she should have the privilege of being healed directly by his Son Jesus. Since Jesus' public ministry had not yet begun at the onset of her medical condition, she would have to wait for the healing she so desperately wanted.

Second, God wanted Jairus to see this woman's healing. It was just as much for him as it was for her. He knew that Jairus was going to receive the worst news he had ever received on that day, and just before he heard the words, "Your daughter is dead" (v.35), God wanted to strengthen his faith in what Jesus could do for his daughter, even when it seemed that all reason for hope was gone.

Sometimes, God fully intends to heal us in response to our prayers, but he is waiting to do it according to his larger plan. Of course it is *also* true that, sometimes, God does *not* intend to heal us in the way that we have requested. At times, he tells us that his "grace is sufficient" for us as we continue to endure our trial (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). However, sometimes, he is simply waiting for his perfect timing.

Have you ever suffered or watched someone suffer for a lengthy period of time? How did you feel about God in the midst of the suffering? How can the gospel strengthen your faith during suffering?

The Gospel

Both Jairus and this woman are desperate for something to happen. They both need Jesus. We are all the same. When it comes to our deepest spiritual needs, we are all the same. Sin brings the greatest of us to the least of us to the same level. We are no better than anyone else (Rom 3:9) We are no better than anyone else, in the most important sense, because all of us are under sin, and therefore all of us have the same need for God's forgiveness, that can only come to us through faith in Jesus Christ and what he did for us on the Cross and in his resurrection. And we see a great picture of what Jesus did for us here in our passage, as he heals this bleeding woman and raises Jairus' daughter from the dead.

1) Jesus takes our place

In both of these miracles, Jesus was willing to be regarded as unclean in order to save others. In the eyes of others, Jesus would have been ceremonially unclean when the woman touched him, but he allowed himself to be so regarded in order to save her. When he touched the little girl's dead body, again, he would have been regarded as ceremonially unclean, but he did it anyway.

In the same way, Jesus, on the cross, takes the place of sinners. (2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13)

2) Jesus raises us from the dead

In the same way that Jesus raised Jairus's daughter from death, he raises spiritually dead people when we believed in Him. (Eph 2:1-5)

Where in your life do you need to be reminded that Jesus took your place?