

From Fear to Faith

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[0 : 0 0] tonight's bible reading comes from mark chapter 5 verses 29 to the end of the chapter when jesus had again crossed over by boats to the other side of the lake a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake then one of the synagogue leaders named jairus came and when he saw jesus he fell at his feet he 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 so jesus went with him a large crowd followed and pressed around him and a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for 12 years she had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had yet instead of getting better she grew worse when she heard about jesus she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak because she thought if i just touch his clothes i will be healed immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering at once jesus realized that power had gone out from him he turned around in the crowd and asked who touched my clothes you see the people crowding around you his disciples answered and yet you can ask who touched me but jesus kept looking around to see who had done it then the woman knowing what had happened to her came and fell at his feet and trembling with fear told him the whole truth he said to her daughter your faith has healed you go in peace and be freed from your suffering while jesus was still speaking some people came from the house of jairus the synagogue leader your daughter is dead they said why bother the teacher anymore overhearing what they said jesus told him do not be afraid just believe he did not let anyone follow him except peter james and john the brother of james when they came to the home of the synagogue leader jesus saw a commotion with people crying and wailing loudly he went in and said to them while this commotion and wailing the child is not dead but asleep but they laughed at him and he put them all out he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who are with him and went into where the child was he took her by the hand and said to her to letha kum which means little girl i say to you get up immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around she was 12 years old at this they were completely astonished he gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this and told them to give her something to eat let's pray as we sit may the words of my lips and the meditations of all our hearts be now and always acceptable in your sight oh lord our strength and our redeemer amen well it's great to look at such a wonderful passage i feel very privileged to be given this passage to speak about i would call it a sandwich passage what i mean is is a story inside a story there's the story of the woman with the issue of blood which is inside the story of jairus's daughter the story of the woman is the meat in the sandwich and the story of jairus's daughter is the bread of the sandwich not of course that the meat's more important than the bread they're both of equal importance but i am going to start with the meat because i think it'll work better that way so if we turn to the we're on page 1007 and i'm at verse 25 we have a story about a desperate woman a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for 12 years she had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors

and had spent all she had yet instead of getting better she grew worse i guess that's become her story she's stuck her medical condition is beginning to dominate her life she's unclean because of her bleeding that's made her isolated doctors have proved useless sorry doctors what should she do well she heard about Jesus and she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak verse 28 because she thought if i just touch his cloak i'll be healed she exercised determined faith you might say it was superstitious faith the crucial thing was to touch she needed to get close she took a risk that night that day she came to Jesus in the crowd as i said she was ritually unclean so she was risking being spotted by anyone who knew she was unclean but her faith drove her on and so she pushes through the crowd she gets to Jesus she reaches out and she received the longing of her heart immediately verse 29 her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering and Jesus it says knew that something had happened once verse 30 Jesus realized that power had gone out from him he turned around in the crowd and asked who touched my clothes it's fun to picture the scene isn't it we've got the tight packed crowd we've got the woman who before has been trying to push forward and now she's trying to slink away and then we've got the incredulous rather rude disciples verse 31 you see the people crowding around you his disciples answered and yet you can ask who touched me i mean everyone's touching you you're in the middle of a crowd how can you ask who's touching you but Jesus knew that in all that jostling mass of people one person had reached out one person had touched and Jesus wanted the woman to move from from trusting in touch from trusting in a sort of magic to a relationship verse 32 Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it Jesus wasn't going to let her move away he wants to know who it is or rather he wants her to say that it is she he wants her to open up so verse 33 the woman knowing what had happened to her came and fell at his feet and trembling with fear told him the whole truth Jesus wants to speak with her Jesus wants a relationship not just a touch and go away but i think Jesus wants something very important as well he wants her to know that her situation really has changed she really is healed

if Jesus doesn't speak to her well she'll go back healed but guess what will happen when she sees her family that evening she'll say she'll say i had this wonderful experience and i'm better and they'd say well it's lovely that you feel better but don't you remember how Dr Obadiah gave you those pills and you felt better then but well it came back didn't it you're still back in the same situation and what could she have said well i've got a feeling that it really is okay this time but in fact the situation was completely transformed for Jesus said to her daughter your faith has healed you go in peace and be freed from your suffering the Greek is wonderfully alliterative he pistis su sasoken se i love that it could be translated your faith has saved you she can go in peace now she came to Jesus fearful she had a private faith she did believe that something would happen but she had to move out of her comfort zone into a public faith and she left in peace because she had received divine assurance of healing salvation in our desperate need of salvation we reach out to Jesus and receive not only forgiveness but divine assurance and peace moreover whereas the rest of the outside story is about Jesus daughter who is of course a literal daughter a physical daughter Jesus calls this woman daughter isn't that beautiful those who through faith and by grace become Christians are sons and daughters of God Dick Lucas points out that we may be hearing an early evangelistic sermon it's about desperate need determined faith and ends in divine assurance maybe Mark had preached this sermon himself maybe Peter had preached it there is good evidence in early tradition that Mark's gospel is based on Peter's words to him so that's the meat of the sandwich the outer bread is the story of Jesus his daughter there's already a big crowd at the beginning of the story in verse 21 a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake again verse 22 we have desperate need one of the synagogue leaders named Jesus came and when he saw Jesus he fell at his feet he pleaded earnestly with him my little daughter is dying perhaps that's the most desperate need that we can have and again Jesus is not only has this need but he has determined faith he gets to Jesus he comes he's a leader in his community but it doesn't stop him coming to Jesus he comes and he says please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live we can understand

that request the request for Jesus to come and lay hands on someone so Jesus went with him in verse 24 for Jesus knows where to come and he knows that Jesus can save and then disaster we have the agonizing delay which occupies the middle of the story that wonderful story we heard about the healing of the woman with the issue of blood can't have been so wonderful for Jesus he must have been desperate I'll think at the end about we'll think about that very important feature of the story I'm just going to carry on with Jesus story for now so we have this agonizing delay and then we have the terrible disappointment in verse 35 while Jesus was still speaking some people came from the house of Jesus your daughter is dead they said why bother the teacher anymore it's not very sympathetic I don't think the way they put it you know it's over is what they say it was a wonderful idea but it's too late but Jesus overhears that and Jesus tells him verse 36 don't be afraid just believe more literally I think it could be translated just keep on believing don't be afraid it's not all over and he takes a little group he didn't let anyone follow him except Peter James and John the brother of James and they get to Jairus's house in verse 38 when they came to the home of the synagogue leader Jesus saw a commotion with people crying and wailing loudly again we can picture the scene we can picture the noise we can picture the professional mourners we can imagine what it would have been like that terrible sense of overwhelming sadness at this terrible disaster Peter himself was there and if you look at the Greek there was I think we could call them rather informal present tenses at this point you know what I mean perhaps you know what I mean by the historic present when you tell the story not in the past they did such and such but they do such and such verse 38 is literally they come to the house of the ruler of the synagogue and he sees a commotion perhaps Peter actually said to Mark we come to the house of the ruler of the synagogue and he sees a commotion Peter doesn't specify Jesus at this point Mark doesn't either but we know it's Jesus and Jesus went in and said to them why all this commotion and wailing the child isn't dead but asleep well you can imagine how they laughed at Jesus people knew what a dead person knew what a dead child was like this wasn't they could presumably measure take people's pulse or you know the doctors may not have been great but they would have had skill to do that and they just laughed at him but Jesus puts all the noise and all the people outside and he takes the father and mother and the disciples who were with him and he went in where the child was he took her by the hand and said to her which means little girl get up he doesn't use magic words it's not abracadabra it's simple Aramaic as I said

mark's gospel is probably based on peter's story told by him to mark he never forgot those actual words that jesus used talitha kum little girl get up and immediately the girl got up and began to walk around she was 12 years old not surprisingly they were completely astonished he gave strict orders not let anyone know about this and told them to give her something to eat doesn't that that feels very like eyewitness account in one sense it's not very important but peter must have remembered how jesus said you know she's a 12 year old she's hungry give her something to eat because i guess we wouldn't have known what you did with someone who just who just come back from the dead but jesus said give us some food so they did so we've got a composite story tonight it's a story about jesus power not only over sickness for the woman with the issue of blood but over death itself mark mark is answering the question that the disciples asked in chapter 4 verse 41 who is this that's the question they asked about jesus they said that even the winds and waves obey him so that was two weeks ago when we saw that jesus is lord over nature last week we saw that he's lord over a legion of demons this week we see his lordship over sickness and death all through this first half of mark chapter section by section we see through jesus mighty works that he is the son of god but let's now much more briefly compare the two stories in some ways the stories are similar as i've said they're both about desperate need they're both about determined faith they're both about healing and divine assurance jairus' daughter is 12 years old the woman has had bleeding for 12 years the whole time that the girl has been living but in other ways the stories are different jairus' daughter is relatively grand her father has a name he is a synagogue ruler the woman's name is not given jairus comes openly she comes secretly but they both come different people both coming to jesus publicly or secretly but there's another huge difference perhaps it's the most important difference between the two stories the woman is healed at once she touches and she's better but for jairus and his daughter there's this long delay the whole story is told in such a way as to emphasize that the whole sandwich where we have a whole other story in the middle emphasizes that just when things are getting going for jairus the woman comes up and we have her story but there's another way in which mark emphasizes that

[19 : 58] I think in the passage in the outside stories I've said mark sometimes uses the present tense as I've already mentioned verse 22 goes literally then comes one of the rulers of the synagogue jairus by name and having seen him he falls at his feet and implores him or in 35 while jesus was still speaking some people come from the house of jairus there's that sense of things happening quickly I think mark loves things that happen at once things happen fast whereas the story of the woman contains the imperfect tense you know what I mean I was loving I was doing verse 30 goes literally and jesus was saying who touched my garments and his disciples were saying to him you see the crowd pressing around you and yet you say who touched me and above all he was looking around to see who had done it you know jairus was desperate he wanted to get on and jesus was looking around jesus is at work in the world today but there is a long wait for the resurrection of the dead but this passage assures us that the dead in christ will rise will live when jesus says the child is not dead but sleeping he means it in a real sense the christian does sleep in death paul wrote to the thessalonians brothers and sisters we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind do have no hope for the christian sleep is a good description sleep in death yes we grieve but not like the rest of mankind do have no hope the special word we use is we talk about a cemetery that's a greek word meaning a bedroom a sleeping place and thus used by christians for a graveyard now i don't know whether when you read the story you identify most with the woman with the issue of blood or with jairus or with the daughter that's one of those questions there's no right answer you can identify with who you like or maybe on different occasions you identify with different people the story says that whether you're the grand jairus or the unnamed woman god saves those who trust there's an old hymn that you perhaps know just as i am though tossed about with many a conflict many a doubt fightings and fears within without o lamb of god i come perhaps particularly applies to the woman it applies to both of them just as i am thou wilt receive wilt welcome pardon cleanse relieve because thy promise i believe o lamb of god i come so a final thought back to verse 36 jesus says don't be afraid just believe jesus is willing to respond to imperfect faith i think the story says the woman is superstitious about touching jesus cloak and jesus thinks that jesus has to go home to his daughter for her to be healed whereas the centurion says only say the word and my servant can be healed jesus takes people with faith but perhaps not perfect faith and he saves them and that's so encouraging on the other hand he pushes them the woman and jesus to have more faith he pushes them out of their comfort zone in that sense the woman had private faith but she has to tell her story in public the man had faith while his daughter was still alive but once she dies he thinks it's too late until jesus reassures or challenges him not to fear but keep on believing keep on believing alan mentioned advent this time of when the christians are above all waiting now for young for children it's all about waiting for christmas waiting for presents but we're not waiting just for christmas we're waiting for jesus returning glory we may see it in our lifetime we pray even so come lord jesus but we may die nevertheless even if we die if we're trusting jesus one day we will hear jesus voice talitha come little girl get up or the equivalent for boys if you've got any questions have a word with me afterwards or with the staff or with someone who's sitting next to you don't go home tonight without having made some more progress in thinking about faith and what jesus can do for you what jesus did for these two people let's pray thank you lord for this amazing and wonderful passage of scripture thank you for the way that you respond to faith even if it's not perfect thank you that you save and heal thank you for the hope of heaven thank you that we can look forward even if now we're in a time of waiting we long to hear your voice telleth a coom or the equivalent for boys amen please