

Finding Faith

Eureka: On Finding, Pt. 3

After a brief interruption, we are again taking up our *Eureka!* series – *eureka* being the Greek word for “I have found it”. We’re looking, in an age of spiritual searching, at what Jesus Christ says about how to *find* spiritual reality. And today we see what Jesus teaches about faith, because faith is the *way* you find spiritual reality. It’s the way you connect. We spent a couple of months in the fall looking at faith very specially in the book of Hebrews. So this may be some refresher, but I don’t think we can address the issue of faith enough in the church.

And besides, the two stories I have for us today are Jesus teaching on faith – which as great as whoever wrote Hebrews is, they would happily sit down for Jesus. Jesus is the consummate teacher here when it comes to faith. And as we’re going to see, faith, believing, is clearly the key. It’s something he brings up in each situation. This is a sandwich of two stories, two narratives, of Jesus healing people. Fitting, because we talked about healing in depth last week. But I say “sandwich” because the second story is in the middle of the first one; it’s sandwiched between it.

I’m going to read you a rather long passage this morning, but I think you will find it worthwhile. **Mark 5:21–43:** *When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. 22 Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet 23 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.” 24 So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him.*

25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26 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. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” 29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.”

30 At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” 31 “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’” 32 But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. 33 Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. 34 He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

35 While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher any more?” 36 Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.” 37 He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James.

38 When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. 39 He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." 40 But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was.

41 He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). 42 Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. 43 He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Ok, there's the story, but I want us to notice first of all, how *carefully* Jesus arranges things so each healing has a particular audience. Notice how he goes out of his way to absolutely set things up so that what happens to the woman with the flow of blood is done in the most public way. He wants *everybody* to see this. He wants everybody to remember this. He gets her out there so everybody gets to see that one.

And yet with Jairus' daughter, he is *very*, *very* particular about keeping the number of people who see it very small indeed. He won't even let all of his disciples go. He only lets Peter, James, and John go. He will not let the rest of the family - all of the friends and neighbors - only the parents of the child go in. And then once the miracle occurs he says, "Don't tell anybody. I don't want anybody to know."

Why? It's very interesting. It's because Jesus is giving us wonderful lessons. He is the consummate teacher, and he is giving us *basic* lessons with the healing of the woman on how to have the kind of basic faith you need just to connect with Jesus. But with the little girl's healing, these are *advanced* lessons to his disciples, to the ruler of a synagogue, on how to grow into mature faith.

You see, he says, "Here are the basic lessons on how to have a basic faith that just connects you to Jesus. Here are advanced lessons on how to have a mature faith that grows you into the likeness of Jesus." And that's why, when we look at this, you really have a manual on faith. Now let's just look at what we're taught in three ways. First of all, the *need* for the lessons on faith, then the *basic* lessons, and finally the *advanced* lessons.

First of all, The need for the lessons. This is pretty brief, but you know, you miss this unless you stand back and look. Why do we even need lessons on faith? Why is that so important? Here's the comic part. This woman comes up and touches him. And everybody is crowding around him. We're told twice they were crowding around him, and even that they were "pressed" around him. This is Mark's way of trying to say people were pushing up against him. They were hugging him. They were kissing him. They were grabbing him. You see, he was being thronged.

And Jesus turns around at one point and said, “Somebody touched me.” And Mark retains the disciples’ rudeness, disdain, and clear confusion when they say, “Everybody is crowding around you, and you say somebody touched you?” In other words, it’s like this.

Jesus says, “Somebody touched me!” And the disciples say, “Duh! *Everybody* is touching you! What do you mean somebody is touching you? They’re hugging you. They’re kissing you. They’re throwing themselves at your feet. Somebody touched you?” But here’s the scary thing. These people were all around Jesus. They were thronging Jesus. They were literally in proximity, and only *one* person had the faith that actually connected to Jesus.

You can be around Jesus all your life. You can be crowding him. You can be talking about him. You can be admiring him. You can be inspired. You can go to church. You can go to Bible studies. It’s the same thing. It is possible to be very much up against Jesus and **not really touch him**.

Now that’s pretty frightening actually. Because there are an awful lot of us who have crowded Jesus for a long time, and yet we’ve never touched him. Have you not experienced this? A lot of us have felt inspired when we were part of that little church back

home we grew up in, but when we moved away from it, God wasn’t very real. Or we were kind of inspired and helped by the religious practices of our family or this group of friends, and then we moved away from that crowd. Jesus wasn’t real.

What does that mean? It means we experienced the experience of those who were experiencing Jesus, but we never *experienced* Jesus. We never touched him. You can throng and crowd him, but you need *faith* if you’re going to have any connection at all to him. That’s the need for the lessons.

Now, secondly, let’s look at The basic lessons.

There are four words I’ll give you as a way of trying to keep these four lessons in your memory. Okay? Extremely helpful. Almost for sure the reason this story was preserved was because Peter and people who saw it probably used it in their preaching. They didn’t preach propositional sermons when they went out preaching, “What does it mean to be a Christian?”

They gave examples like this and said, “Here’s how you connect to Jesus.” And he remembered this story. This is the reason it’s preserved. It’s a whole manual of how to have basic faith and connect with Jesus. Four things we’re taught here, okay? Desperation. Information. Direction. Substitution.

First of all, **Desperation**. Mark is very careful to say not only the suffering she experienced of her *condition*, but the suffering she experienced through her *cures*. See, for example, first of all, we know something about her condition. She had a flow of blood for 12 years. There was something wrong with her reproductive system. And as a result, she was passing blood *constantly*. Constantly!

And of course, even though we don't know exactly the reason why - there are a number of possible reasons for that - that would have been something that certainly would have been very weakening to her, *but* Mark goes out of his way to say that wasn't the *only* thing she was sick with. That wasn't the only thing she was sick of. She wasn't just sick *of* her suffering. She was sick of all *the cures* of her suffering. She had been going to doctors for a long time.

Now it said what was happening? First of all, she had suffered at the hands of the doctors, and she lost all of her money. We know the cures were terrible back then. In fact, we happen to know what the cures were. There's a whole chapter in the Mishnah on this. Mishnah is a collection of ancient Jewish oral tradition. One of them I read says if a woman has this flow of blood, one of the cures was to take a goblet of wine and to fill it with a powder of pulverized rubber,

alum, and garden crocuses – little flowers. Pulverize it, mix it in, drink up! You can just imagine.

All the other cures were just awful things. They were terrible things. And not only had she gone through that, but she had lost all of her money. And so Mark makes the point that she was not just desperate *because* of her suffering. She had also decided, “The world cannot help me. I can't help myself. No human being can help me. *Nothing* can help me.”

Now this is extremely important. Let me give you an example. If you find yourself doing some spiritual searching, maybe you're here, and you're surprised that you're here. Somebody invited you to church, and you felt like coming. Maybe you've been reading the Bible. Maybe you've been doing some spiritual searching. Why? Usually it's because there's some trouble. Usually it's because there's something gone wrong.

The Bible says that deep inside all of us, we have an empty, bleeding center of our soul. We have a feeling of inadequacy. We have a feeling of existential emptiness. We feel a need to prove ourselves, and we're going to “doctors” – metaphorically speaking. We look for cures. We have to do something about it.

So we work on our career, or we look for love, let's say. And maybe you're searching spiritually because recently somebody you thought would love you has pulled away from you, or maybe because recently you found you thought your career was going to do better - maybe you've come to Austin to make it in some field, and you're starting to realize it's not happening. Or maybe it *is* happening but you don't feel any better. The cures aren't working.

Now it's one thing to come to Jesus and say, "If I come to you, will you help me in my career? Will you help me find true love?" See, it's one thing to come to Jesus because you're bleeding and suffering and you're hoping he is going to *give* you help to get to the doctor. But it's another thing to say, "Wait a minute. I am coming to Jesus Christ not as a *means* to get to these things but as an *alternative* to these things."

"I not only want to come because I'm suffering, but I'm also ready to give up all my old doctors, all my old cures. I'm not coming and saying, 'Lord, if I come to you, will you help me find true love?' I'm coming to you *as* my true love. I'm not coming to you and saying, 'Lord, can you help me feel significance through my career?' I'm coming to you to *find* my significance."

In other words, she was desperate *finally*, and she realized there was *nothing* on earth that could cure her. Until I see the world cannot help me, I'm never going to find Jesus. *That's* the reason why she was different. Everybody wanted a miracle. Don't you think they were all coming after him? Why were they crowding him? They *all* wanted a miracle. They *all* said, "I'm suffering."

But she had also come to the end of her rope spiritually. She'd come to the place where she wasn't looking to *use* Jesus to *get* her salvation. She was beginning to look to Jesus *as* her salvation. All of her alternative salvations had failed. And that's the first step. The first step is a negative one. Do you see that? If you're going to find faith with Jesus, the first thing is actually a negative one. You have to start doing that. You have to be desperate.

In other words, the main first reason people don't find Jesus is not because they have *too little faith* but because they have *too much pride*. See, this is a wonderfully comforting story. This is not saying, "Faith is something you have to conjure up." Faith is simply admitting, "I am helpless. I am weak." If today you say, "I haven't connected to Jesus," the main reason you haven't connected to Jesus is not because you haven't conjured up some kind of faith. The main reason is because you still have too much pride to admit, "Without you, I am nothing." That's the first thing, desperation.

Second step, **Information**. Now I'm going to be very brief, but notice the pre-cursor to her coming to Jesus. It says, in v. 27, "When she **heard** about Jesus..." She had *heard* of him. One thing you must keep in mind is the Bible talks about faith not as *opposed* to thinking, but faith is something that goes in line with and beyond thinking. I mean, she came to him, and it was very, very scary to do what she did, as we're going to see here in a second.

But she did it because she'd heard. She had gotten information about Jesus. She had *learned* something about him. The common view today is to think of faith as opposed to thinking. We think of faith as going *against* what we know. Absolutely not. It takes tremendous faith to act in line with what we know, because faith is not opposed to your thinking. Faith is opposed to your fears. Faith is opposed to self-protection.

See, for example, let's just say you and five friends come to this huge gorge in the middle of the jungle, and there's this terribly rickety old bridge. And the first four go across it. Let's say they're all heavier than you. And it comes your turn. You have a lot of empirical information – you've seen them cross with your own eyes. So does that mean it's not going to take faith to step out on that bridge? Oh yes! It's still going to take a *lot* of faith.

But you see, it's not faith *against* the information. It's faith *in line with* the information and going beyond the information. And if you want to find faith in Jesus Christ, you have to learn about him. You don't just close your eyes and say, "I'm going to believe in what gods there be." Come on! You need to learn about Jesus. You need to study. You need to find out about him. Now that's something that's maybe a no-brainer, but we have to say it. And she heard. So first there was desperation, then there was some information.

And then thirdly, **Direction**. This is very important. It's the direction not the dimension of your faith that will save you. Listen, she has *terrible* faith. She says, "If I just touch his cloak..." She has a quasi-magical understanding. She is superstitious. She has no idea who he really is. The reason he has to pull her out and make her see it was her faith that saved her is she has no idea who he is. She has no idea what he brings.

She has no idea that she needs more than just magically to be cured, but she needs actually a spiritual cure and she needs to become one of his disciples and a person who is willing to confess him publicly. I mean, the reason Jesus pulls her out and does all that is because her faith is such a mess. It's such a wreck. It's *incredibly* theologically flawed. It's *incredibly* weak. It's *incredibly* superstitious...*but* he heals her.

And he doesn't say, "Now will you have faith?" He says, "I healed you *because* of your faith." Now what does that mean? It is not the *strength* of your faith that saves you but the *object* of your faith. It is not the dimension of your faith. It's the direction. What do you have faith *in*? See, this is the 180-degree opposite to what the common view of the person on the street is today. What do you hear over and over and over again?

I hear it on social media. I hear it on talk shows. I hear it in books. I hear it everywhere. They say, "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe it sincerely." And Jesus Christ is saying here, "It doesn't matter how sincerely you believe it as long as you're believing in the right thing." It's *exactly* the opposite. Total opposite.

The common view is not common sense. Imagine three people, and they're being chased by a bear. They're running through the snow-covered forest. And they get to a ledge, and they realize the only way they're going to escape is if they jump down onto the frozen pond. And the first guy jumps, and he says, "I'm going to die! I'm going to die! I'm going to go right through and I'm going to drown!"

But he hits the ice, and it's six inches thick, and he is saved. The second guy says, "I've got a 50-50 chance. I might drown. But this might work." And he hits the six inches of ice, and he is fine. He is saved. The third guy says, "This will probably work. Obviously it's been frozen for a pretty long time. I've got pretty good odds." And he hits the six inches, and he is saved. Which one is *more* saved? Well, the one with the most faith? Absolutely not.

It has nothing to do with the amount of faith. The guy who said, "I'm going to die! I'm going to die! I'm going to die!", he's saved. Why? He jumped? Why was this woman healed? She just came to Jesus. How much faith do you have to have in the ice for it to save you? Just enough to jump. How much faith do you have to have in Jesus? Just enough to come to him.

Listen, I'll tell you how it goes. This is a comfort, and this is a challenge. Here's where the comfort is. The comfort is don't you dare look at your faith. Don't say, "Oh my goodness! Doesn't the Bible say you're saved by faith, not by your good deeds?" You look at your faith, and you say, "Oh, it's just filled with doubts. It's filled with fears. It's so imperfect."

But you see, when the Bible says you're saved *by* faith, it doesn't mean...Unfortunately, this is an English translation problem. It doesn't say you're saved *because* of your faith. If you start to look at your faith like that and think, "Well, God won't hear my prayers because I'm so filled with doubts and I'm so filled with fears," it doesn't say that. It says you're saved *through* faith. You see?

The guys jumped, and they were saved through the fact that they were willing to jump. It wasn't because of their faith. The faith just connected to the ice. That's all. And when one had a very tiny bit and one had a whole lot, it didn't make a bit of difference. It's the object of your faith. And see, what Jesus is saying is it doesn't matter that you believe it with all your heart. Give me a break. He says, "All that matters is you come to me."

The Billy Graham crusades made a hymn famous; they would sing it at the end of every one of his sermons. And one verse goes like this...

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, I come.

Now you see, that's what connects you to Jesus. If today you say, "I really don't know what Anthony is talking about, but I want to come." If you say, "I have all those Christian friends who bug me to death. They're so this and they're so that and they're so goopy and all that, but I'm going to come." Or, "I was turned off by the hypocrisy of the church I was raised in, but I'm going to come." Direction, not dimension...Do you see?

And by the way, it's not just a comfort, it's a challenge. Because you *cannot* do what people do all the time, and that is you can't say, "I wish I had your faith. My wife believes...My mother believes..." or something like that. "I wish I had your faith, but I just don't have your faith." Look at this. What is Jesus saying? How much faith did she have? How great was this?

She is scared. She is superstitious. She is in a quasi-magical state. She just came. What connects you to Jesus Christ is to get rid of your pride and to come in spite of your fears and say, "I really don't get it. I don't understand, but I know no other doctor is going to cure me." That's all it takes. But then there's a fourth. Desperation, Information, Direction...

Lastly, **Substitution**. There's something that happens here that we should spend a little bit of time on. Something happens here, and if you look carefully, you'll see it even surprised Jesus. When she touched him, *he* felt weak. This is something that probably had never happened before in his life. That's the only way to explain why it seems to kind of get him.

And it also is unprecedented anywhere else, and here's the reason why. When you read books and stories of magicians and shamans and sorcerers and all that, it takes exertion on their part in order to use magic. I mean this is entry level Dungeons and Dragons, a mage can't keep casting spells indefinitely. You have to rest. You have to power up.

And the one thing you find whenever you see Jesus demonstrating divine power all through the Gospels is it is utterly unlike anything you see in any other legends, any other myths. He *never*, ever exerts himself. When he is in the storm...Do you remember this story? This is a little earlier in Mark, at the end of the pervious chapter. Jesus is in a boat with his disciples and a great storm arrives. Some of you are from Houston or the coast – imagine the power of a hurricane.

The disciples are sacred to death. And what does Jesus do? They're about to sink. What does Jesus do? Does he roll up his sleeves? Does he say, "By the beard of Zeus..."? No. I mean, this is the reason this is never going to get turned into a screenplay. What does he do? He was napping. He gets up and says, "Shut up." It stops.

Or right here in this text...*death!* *The* power of the universe. And what does Jesus do? Death! Does he say, "Stand back. In the name of..."? Does he? No. What does he do? He sits down, and he says, "Little girl, get up." He never breaks a sweat, because the claim is that this is not a magician or a conjuror. This is the Creator who has come down in human form. This is divine power. This is not derivative power. This is authority.

They keep saying, "Who is this? Who has this kind of *authority*, such authority that he can still the storm?" Authority means "from the *author*", the one who *built* these things, the one who built the body, the one who built storms, the one who built nature. But for the first time, when this woman touches him, he loses power. No wonder he stops! "What is this?" For her to get strong, he has to get weak.

And here's the reason why. She is unclean. Because of her blood flow she hasn't been able to go into public worship for a long time. The Hebrew ceremonial laws said if you were diseased, if you had running sores, if you touched somebody who was dead, if you touched somebody who had touched somebody who was dead...If you had any blemish, anything wrong, including this, you couldn't go into public worship. You were ceremonially unclean. You were unfit, unacceptable for the presence of God.

Now even though sometimes when we look at these ceremonial laws and we can very often get confused about some of the particular ones, but we shouldn't be confused about the *purpose* of them. This was God's way of showing people we are sinners, that we're not acceptable in the presence of God, and no matter how hard we try, we're *never* going to make ourselves clean. It's impossible.

And that's the reason why there's this very cryptic and strange place in the Old Testament. You can go look it up if you want to. It's in Exodus chapter 28. And it describes the garments of the great high priest who goes before God with the sacrifice of the people – including a little gold plate on his forehead. And there's this strange verse that says when Aaron - who was the first high priest - goes into the Holy of Holies with the offerings of the people, it says any guilt *in*

the offerings of the people would be upon his head so the people “will not incur guilt and die” – that they may be found acceptable to the Lord.

It's a completely cryptic, utterly inexplicable point that we have no idea what it means, certainly if you just read in the Old Testament. It says even the very best sacrifices the people would possibly want to bring in order to go in before the Lord, in His presence, will be unacceptable. And therefore, the only way they can get in is if the priest bears the guilt of their uncleanness. And probably the reason even Jesus had never experienced this was because God was giving them a foretaste, and God was giving us a foreshadow, of what was going to happen on the cross.

The reason this woman became clean wasn't that her uncleanness went into the thin air. It wasn't that her weakness went into thin air. Jesus *took* her uncleanness. She got strong because he got weak. This is the substitution of the cross. You see, it says God made him who knew no sin to become sin for us so that *in him* we might become the righteousness of God. The only way she could become clean, the only way *you* can become clean, the only way *I* can become clean is at Jesus' expense.

He had to be cut off. He had to be thrown out. He had to be killed *outside* the camp, outside the gate. He had to be forsaken so we can be taken in. And therefore, the thing that connects you to Jesus Christ spiritually, the thing that will get you past where most of us are - that is just being kind of generally inspired by his example - is you have to look not just at Jesus in general but at the cross in particular and of him crying out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"...for you.

She touches him, and she is not struck dead. My goodness! Why isn't she? I mean when God came down at Mount Sinai, He said, "Don't anybody touch the mountain because I am holy, and you will die." And here's this woman coming up to touch the Lord of glory, not just the mountain on which God happened to rest His feet but the one in whom God dwells bodily. She touches him. Either *she* has to die...or *he* does. Either she has to break, or he has to break. And that's it. Desperation, information, direction, and look at the substitution, and you will connect to him.

Now then, there's the advanced lessons. And I'm only going to briefly look at them, but they're very important. And they build. Here is Jairus, and here are the disciples. They're very excited. Why? Because Jesus Christ is on his way to save this little

girl. So they're kind of like in the EMS truck, and the sirens are going, and they're very excited. And Jesus Christ stops the truck and talks with this woman. And everybody is going crazy...nobody more than Jairus and certainly even the disciples. Why in the *world* is Jesus doing this?

And the answer is Jesus is not only stopping here and delaying *now*, but he is also delaying to set something up so Jairus and the disciples see something they wouldn't have seen otherwise to *build* their faith. He is not here just to give them the basic faith that *connects* you to Jesus, he's here to give them the advance faith that really makes them *like* Jesus. And he wants us to see it as well. Three quick things.

By the way, if they're advanced lessons, why am I taking so much less time on them? Why rush this at the end? Here's what's great about this. This is a book for everybody, whether you're a seeker or whether you have been at Christianity for years and years and years. Those of you who have been at Christianity for years and years and years should know the basics. You don't need as much instruction. This is here for your *reminding*, not so much for your *instruction*. So three advanced lessons.

First, The delay shows his love. Jesus shows his priorities. He stops for a socially marginalized unclean woman and puts her before a male religious leader. Over and over and over and over and over again in the Bible whenever Jesus has before him what society judges to be different classes of people – men/women, insiders/ outsiders, moral people/immoral people...

Whether it's a bunch of nice respectable people verses Zacchaeus, who was a political outcast, or Simon and the fallen woman in Luke 7 who was a sexual outcast, or the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4, who was a racial outcast, Jesus *always* finds the connection *first* with the outsider, the marginal person, the person without power. What does that mean? Jesus is showing them, he is showing us - and this is an advanced lesson, because a lot of people connect with Jesus Christ and don't learn this for years - he is a God of grace.

He foregoes the world's standards of power, and of beauty, and of status, and of achievement. He says, "My power is made perfect in the ones who *admit* their weakness. That's the reason why these people usually get to me first." It's not your achievement. All you need is need. All you need is nothing. But most people don't have that, and that's the reason why they don't have Jesus. All you need is need. All you need is nothing.

And when - and only when - you finally come to understand He is a God of grace. And usually God's delays are to *teach* you He is a God of grace. They would never have learned that if Jesus had just prioritized this important Jairus, this synagogue guy, and ignore all these marginal people. Why? That would have been the smart move. You know, focusing on the people of means is good for the organizational bottom line. But that would have never taught us, or them, that He is a God of grace.

When you finally find that out, when you see his priorities, when you see who he spends time with first, you will finally relax, and you'll finally start to become like him. And you will not worry so much about being on the inside crowd, and you won't care so much about being with the right people. You'll get a servant's heart. So the first advanced lesson is look at Jesus' priorities. His delays always show us his priorities as a God of grace. Grace, grace, grace. We don't understand it. I don't understand it. You don't understand it. *That* is an advanced lesson. But not only do his delays show us his love and his grace, but...

Secondly, The delay shows his wisdom. Look at these two people. The woman comes to Jesus and says, “I need help.” *Immediately* she gets help beyond what she expected. Jairus comes to Jesus Christ, and the immediate thing that happens after he comes to Jesus Christ...is a little girl dies. Now this is very, very much like what just happened a few verses earlier. The disciples are in the boat, and there’s a storm coming up. They wake Jesus up, and they say, “Don’t you care that we perish?”

And do you know what they’re saying? They’re saying, “If you loved us, we wouldn’t be going through storms. Tragedies wouldn’t be happening to us.” And Jesus says, “Peace. Be still.” He says, “Where is your faith?” And here what’s going on is Jesus is saying, “Do you understand my loving, caring power in your life is compatible with tragedy and trouble, but here’s *why* it is.” When he walks in, he says, “She is just sleeping.” And they laugh at him.

Now she’s dead. There’s no doubt about it. I mean, there’s no reason in the world why he would have sent everybody out and said, “Tell nobody about this,” except this was a resurrection. Why does he say she is sleeping then? He says, “She is sleeping because I’m here.” What he is saying to the disciples, what he is saying to this family, what he is saying to us is, “The only *real* storm that can really sink you I am

taking on. So all other storms are fairly small by comparison. And I’ll be with you in them, and they’ll just refine your faith.”

He walks in and says, “The only real death that can kill you - eternal death, separation from the Father - I’m taking. And compared to that all other deaths are just sleep. If you understand what I have done for you, if you understand *that*, then you are not going to get so bent out of shape by the troubles that come into your life because they’re not real troubles. I have taken the real troubles.” Therefore, this second advanced lesson allows us to make a distinction between believing in God and believing in our agenda for God.

A lot of people think, “We have faith in God, but He has let me down.” Well, you didn’t have faith in Jesus. You had faith in your agenda for what you wanted Jesus to do, and he hasn’t done it. So you never had faith in Jesus. You had faith in your wisdom instead of his wisdom. But he says, “Trust me. Look what I’ve taken. I’ve taken the *real* death. I’ve taken the *real* trouble. I’ve taken the only disease that can ever *really* get you down. I’ve taken the only death that can ever *really* take you out. I’ve calmed the only storm that can ever *really* sink you.” See?

When we think about the cross, then we're able to say, like John Newton says in that sweet little hymn:

His love in time past forbids me to think

He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink.

So the first advanced lesson is grace or love, the second advanced lesson is wisdom...

Thirdly, the delay show his intimacy. He doesn't just want followers; he wants intimacy. He wants touch. When Jesus sits down and speaks to her, Mark says he said, "*Talitha koum!*" That's Aramaic. And because Mark is writing in Greek and he is writing for Romans, he has to translate it. Why would he put that in there? Well there are probably a couple of reasons.

But one reason Mark would record this here is because it happened. There is no reason to suddenly stick an Aramaic phrase - if you were making this up and you're writing for Greek-speaking Roman people, you would never stick in the Aramaic - it wouldn't occur to you. Not only that, Mark ends this incredible story with the most anti-climactic thing. He says, "Jesus said, 'Give her something to eat. She is probably hungry.'"

Now who in the world thinking up a legend would put *that* in there? Why would you end it like that? This is Mark's way of almost pushing it in our face and saying, "I am not a playwright. I am telling you what

happened. I put that here because Peter remembered it." So that's one reason, but not the only reason.

For many years when I read, "*Talitha koum!*" and I saw the translation, "Little girl, get up." *Talitha* means "little girl". And I always thought of it the way we in English would use the phrase "little girl." I mean, if I saw a lost female child and I said, "Where's your mommy?" I'd say, "Little girl..." It's the sort of thing a stranger would say. That's *not* the way the word was used. This was an affectionate word. This was the word *her mother* would have used with her, and Jesus is saying to her at this moment exactly what her mother would say every morning.

He sits where her mother would sit. He says what her mother would say. Basically he is saying, "Honey, it's time to get up." He gives her the hand her mother would have given her. And what he is saying is, "Your real parent is here. Your real family is here." Jesus Christ wants touch. Jesus Christ does not simply want people to know about him. He doesn't want people just to follow him. He doesn't even want people just to obey him. He wants people in his family. He wants people to touch him. He speaks so tenderly here. It's incredible.

What does that mean? He is saying to everybody in this room, “Friends, wake up. This is what I want for you.” If you finally take a look at what Jesus did here, he refused to hurry. Never try to hurry Jesus. He is the man who won’t be hurried. And guess what? When you realize why he won’t hurry, when you realize why he doesn’t have to hurry...He doesn’t have to hurry because the *real* death has been dealt with. It will be dealt with on the cross.

The *real* storms have been dealt with. When you realize what he did so he didn’t have to hurry, you’ll stop hurrying yourself. And you will find in that empty place in your soul, you’ll be filled up. And you’ll begin to live like him - with his priorities, and his grace - and you won’t be hurried either. Friends, it’s time to wake up.

Let’s pray...