

Upside Down – Death Turned Upside Down

March 8, 2020 – Pastor Randy

Mark 5:22-36

Then a leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet, pleading fervently with him. "My little daughter is dying," he said. "Please come and lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live."

Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him. A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding. She had suffered a great deal from many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse. She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe. For she thought to herself, "If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed." Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition.

Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my robe?"

His disciples said to him, "Look at this crowd pressing around you. How can you ask, 'Who touched me?'" But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell to her knees in front of him and told him what she had done. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over."

While he was still speaking to her, messengers arrived from the home of Jairus, the leader of the synagogue. They told him, "Your daughter is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now." But Jesus overheard them and said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Just have faith."

The emphasis on Jesus' healing ministry is striking.

Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them. 1:30-31

That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons.... And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. 1:32,34

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A man with leprosy came and knelt in front of Jesus, begging to be healed. "If you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean," he said. Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed. 1:40-42

In Mark 2 we have the account of Jesus healing a paralyzed man.

In Mark 3 Jesus healed a man with a deformed hand. The news about his miracles had spread far and wide. As a result, vast numbers of sick people came to him and Mark tells us, "He had healed many people that day."

A. Why was healing such a prominent part of Jesus ministry on earth? There are two reasons. To show compassion and to show the Kingdom.

1. Jesus healed because he loved.

We just read that Jesus healed the man with leprosy because he was moved by compassion for the man. Matthew also emphasized compassion as motivating Jesus' healing ministry (Matt. 14:14).

2. Jesus healed to show that he was the Messiah, the King who had come to establish God's Kingdom.

In Mark 7 we read, "They were completely amazed and said again and again, "Everything he does is wonderful. He even makes the deaf to hear and gives speech to those who cannot speak."

These words are a clear echo of Isaiah 35:4-6 describing the effects of the Messiah's reign.

Say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, and do not fear, for your God is coming to destroy your enemies. He is coming to save you." And when he comes, he will open the eyes of the blind and unplug the ears of the deaf. The lame will leap like a deer, and those who cannot speak will sing for joy! Isaiah 35:4-6

Jesus said, "If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Luke 11:20). Jesus miracles were a signs pointing to the coming of the kingdom of God. They were a foreshadowing of what we have to look forward to in God's eternal kingdom. I share this back in Dec. but it is worth repeating:

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We usually think of miracles as God's intervention in the natural world, temporarily interrupting the laws of nature. In other words, miracles are supernatural. But, Jesus miracles were signs that he was going to restore creation to its original glory; free from sin, sickness, disaster, and death.

I love the way Tim Keller expressed it in *The Reason for God*:

"...Jesus meant them to be the restoration of the natural order. The Bible tells us that God did not originally make the world to have disease, hunger, and death in it. Jesus has come to redeem where it is wrong and heal the world where it is broken. His miracles are not just proofs that He has power but also wonderful foretastes of what He is going to do with that power. Jesus's miracles are not just a challenge to our minds, but a promise to our hearts, that the world we all want is coming." –Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God* (Riverhead, 2009), 99.

Jesus' healing ministry was a foreshadowing, or foretaste of the eventual redemption of our bodies. In Romans 8 Paul encouraged the Christians at Rome by assuring them that when Jesus returned "creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God." (Romans 8:21) and that "we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." (Romans 8:2).

Hebrews 6:4 speaks of Christians as having "tasted of the powers to come".

Healing on this side of Christ's return is privilege through the cross, but not a divine promise. On the other side of Christ's return eternal health is a divine promise!! The fact that faithful Christians become sick and die does not negate that fact that Jesus still heals.

C. What role does "faith" play in healing? Is Jesus' willingness or ability to heal us contingent upon our faith?

To the woman suffering from chronic bleeding Jesus said, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over."

It was not the physical grasp of Jesus clothes that brought her healing but her faith in the power of Jesus. She grabbed Jesus with her faith more than her hand.

When Jesus said, "Go in wholeness. You are healed", he was assuming for himself the authority to pronounce that healing. Jesus wanted this woman to

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know that her healing didn't come from touching his clothes as the source of healing power, but from trusting in him as the source of healing power. Jairus demonstrated faith by asking Jesus to come heal his daughter. Before he arrived he was met on the way and told *"Your daughter is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now."* But Jesus overheard them and said to Jairus, *"Don't be afraid. Just have faith."* .” Jairus faith motivated him to still bring Jesus to his house where Jesus called her back to life.

How should we understand the relationship between our faith and God's healing?

Two opposite pitfalls to avoid:

1. Faith is the all determining factor.

Faith is what heals and doubt prevents healing. Not everyone who Jesus healed expressed faith in Jesus power to heal. Many were passive recipients. Peter's mother-in-law. Lazarus. The man with the withered hand in Mark 3 didn't appear to know what Jesus was going to heal him until after he did it. Sometimes our belief is mixed with our doubt. *Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24)*

Placing one's faith in the power of "faith" rather than the power of God. This, in effect, turns us into our own healers. Healing is a gift of God's grace. It is not something you earn.

There has been an unfortunate tendency in churches like ours that believe Jesus still heals today to turn God into an impersonal force that we can tap into to get our miracle if we just follow the right steps. If we push the right buttons, we can activate his power on our behalf. So people say things like, "Just speak your healing". "Watch your words. Don't even say you don't feel well because that invites sickness." Sometimes you are told healing power is accessed through the purchase of a special oil or cloth. This approach takes God out of the picture and leaves our words, our thoughts, or some external object as the key determining factors as to whether or not we are healed. If my healing is contingent upon my thoughts and my words, then my focus will be on training myself to think and speak. If I am healed I will think I deserve the credit and if I am not healed I will think I deserve the blame.

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God is not a force to be manipulated in order to access his power and blessings. HE.IS.YOUR.FATHER! How did Jesus address the woman who touched him? He said, “Daughter”. He tenderly, lovingly addressed Jairus daughter as “Little girl”.

2. Faith is a non-issue.

It is just impossible to read the gospel accounts of Jesus’ healing miracles and not be struck by emphasis Jesus placed on faith and belief. Jesus frequently attributes someone’s faith to their healing. But if Jesus is the healer rather than our faith why does Jesus make a big deal about faith?

Faith is what brings us to our healer. It was faith that motivated the woman to press through the crowd and touch Jesus. Faith isn’t what healed her, but her faith is what brought her to her healer. Jairus’ faith is what brought him to Jesus to ask Jesus to come to his home. When the people said his daughter had died before Jesus had a chance to see her, Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid. Have faith. By faith, Jairus didn’t lose hope but continued to take Jesus to his home.

Faith was needed to still bring Jesus in to see her. In Mark 2, when four men brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus so Jesus would heal him, Mark emphasizes that “Jesus saw their faith”. Jesus subsequently forgave the man’s sins and healed him. The healing is attributed to faith because it was faith that brought them to Jesus.

How much faith do you need to be healed? To have any prayer answered? Enough to ask him! If you have enough faith to ask Jesus, then you have enough faith to be healed by Jesus.

