

'One of the Rulers of the Synagogue, Jairus; . . . and a woman.'- Mar 5:22-25

by G. Campbell Morgan

The sermon explores the intertwined stories of Jairus and a suffering woman, highlighting Jesus' compassionate response to human sorrow and the power of faith in healing and restoration.

Scripture: Mark 5:21

Topics: "The Compassion of Christ", "Faith in Times of Sorrow"

Description

G. Campbell Morgan shares the poignant story of Jairus and the woman with the issue of blood, illustrating how both individuals, in their deep sorrow, found solace in Jesus. While Jairus sought healing for his dying daughter, the woman, ostracized and suffering for twelve years, approached Jesus in desperation. The sermon emphasizes Jesus' sensitivity to human pain and His readiness to respond, showcasing His understanding and compassion. Morgan highlights the significance of faith in both stories, as Jesus reassures Jairus to 'fear not, only believe' amidst despair. Ultimately, the narrative reveals the profound love and care of Jesus, who not only heals but also restores dignity and peace to those in need.

Transcript

Mar 5:21-43.

AMONG all the stories of the ministry of our Lord, none, in certain regards, is more beautiful than this of two sorrowful souls who found their way to Him, and were comforted.

It is one story. Matthew, Mark, and Luke each record it in the same way, telling how, while Jesus was on His way to the house of Jairus, the woman came to Him; and, from the viewpoint of Jairus, hindered Him; but from the standpoint of Jesus, enabled Him to help Jairus.

Taken thus, as one story, it is supremely a revelation of the sensitiveness of the Servant of God to human sorrow; and of His ready, almost eager response thereto.

In language, most simple and most natural, the suffering ones are presented to us. To read this story naturally, is inevitably to be brought into very close sympathy with these two suffering people. In proportion as we have trodden the sorrowful way, and ourselves have known anything of pain, we read these stories intelligently, and are carried immediately over the two intervening millenniums, to Jairus and to the

woman; for their successors are with us yet.

Such emotional sympathy prepares us for the apprehension of the tenderness and strength of the attitude and activity of Jesus, as the result of which peace and joy took the place of turmoil and sorrow in the experience of these two people.

In the country of the Gerasenes the Lord had manifested His power over demons most remarkably then, by the strange and inexplicable mystery of human nature, requested by the inhabitants, He had departed from their borders, crossing back with His disciples over the sea which He had so recently hushed into rest. On the other side great multitudes gathered about Him, and He continued His work. The word that Mark employs here is a very suggestive one; the multitudes "thronged Him," the exact thought being that of actually pressing upon Him. It was impossible for Him to move easily, they crowded Him so. When presently He started with Jairus, they still thronged Him, jostled Him, not with intentional rudeness, but with a great anxiety to be near Him. These multitudes were curious, interested, and crudely sympathetic; and yet entirely ignorant of all the tenderness and compassion of His heart, or of the capacity of that heart for love.

The disciples were with Him also, the twelve who were appointed to be with Him; and this as every other incident had its bearing upon their training and preparation for the work that lay before them. They were loyal-hearted and yet very ignorant, so that presently when He asked that strange question, "Who touched Me?" they did not at all understand Him; and when later He lifted to life the little damsel, they were amazed.

This is a great scene. I like to dwell upon it. If I were an artist, I would try to paint the picture of this crowd, some of them with happiness on their faces, others with sorrow; mothers perhaps lifting their bairns up that they might see Him as He passed; eager men jostling Him, getting a little ahead of the rest of the crowd to look back into His face. It is a great human picture.

Let us leave them all, the crowds and the disciples, and fasten our attention upon the central figures in the picture; Jairus, the woman, and Jesus. We will attempt carefully to look at Jairus, and understand his sorrow; to look at the woman, and come into sympathy; with her desolation; in order that with reverence we may watch the Lord in the presence of such sorrowful folk, our predecessors in the experiences of pain and loneliness.

We will try first to imagine Jairus and the mother of the maid. The mother did not travel with Jairus, to persuade Jesus to come. She stayed where mothers do, by the side of the child in her illness. She is only mentioned in the story once, and would not have been mentioned then perchance, except for the understandingness of Jesus; for when presently He came to the house, He took into that inner chamber Jairus and the mother. Thus then they are first presented to us; Jairus in the presence of Jesus, the mother at home by the side of the damsel.

How many can really see these people? How many know the parental love that is here revealed? It is strange, mystic, different from all other loves, having qualities that are all its own, so fine, so subtle, so delicate, that any words by which we try to describe it seem coarse, hard, and inadequate!

Jairus employed a phrase which had at its very heart, a sense of proprietorship: my little daughter! Ah! we may love all children, all the bairns may seem to us the special messengers of God to mortals; but there is a difference. Parental love has within itself an almost terrifying, and yet most exquisitely tender sense of

responsibility. If a man shall say to me, It is your duty to do thus or so, I shall challenge him for his reason; and if he shall reply, For your own sake; I may answer, Stand out of my sunlight, and do not interfere with me! But if he shall say, For the sake of that boy in your home; he has conquered me, he has mastered me! Oh! that strange agony in the love of parent for child, that makes the parent ever tremble! "My little daughter." That is a picture in itself. Luke records the fact that she was an only daughter, and that she was twelve years of age. Twelve years of sunshine, twelve years of music in the home! She had come to that wonderful age which to-day we are describing as the period of adolescence, when will is becoming supreme, and choices and elections are being made alone, when all life seems to be breaking from bud into larger blossom with the potentiality of fruitage. Twelve years of age!

Then the sorrow is revealed in the one graphic sentence: "My little daughter lieth at the point of death." The cloud is over the home! Silence is within the home! Nothing need be added! Jairus stands forevermore as a type.

Then we turn to look at the woman, for deep as is the sorrow of Jairus, there are deeper depths here. Home, society, and religion, are the great things in the real life of all true womanhood. Of these home is first. From the connection I do not propose to omit the word society. I am using it in the sanctuary, and therefore using it correctly, not with reference to that most veneered and rotten thing that we call society, but in its true sense, the social circle of life. The inner sanctuary of religion is always open to true womanhood, and into its mysteries she again and again finds her way with light and experience such as others do not know.

Now look at this woman. She was suffering from an ailment which had weakened her, and was in itself destructive. That, however, does not tell the story of the depth of her sorrow. We must look at this woman in relation to her own age, and to those very things to which I have already made reference, as the things of her full and beautiful life. All women suffering from hemorrhage in that age were suspect. Consequently, by the very law of her people, she was divorced from her husband, and could not live in her home; she was ostracized from all society, and must not come into contact with her old friends; she was excommunicated from the services of the synagogue, and thus shut out from the women's courts in the temple. Hers is indeed a pathetic figure! Twelve years in which the passionate desire, not so much-unless I misunderstand this story and misunderstand women,-for her healing, as for restoration to all those places of life which were her joy, home, society, and religion. Twelve years of agony, physical, mental, spiritual, in which she had poured out her wealth in the attempt to regain her health, with no success. As Mark, with bluntness puts it, she "was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse."

In the case of Jairus, twelve years of sunshine suddenly devastated, with the death of the bairn. In the case of this woman, twelve years of suffering, gradually issuing in weary desolation.

Now let us observe the Lord. We have been following Him through these holy fields. We have, with the multitudes, been amazed by the wisdom of His teaching; we have been watchful in the presence of His power. We have seen Him dealing with the vast underworld of evil, casting out demons. Now let us look at Him in the presence of these people of sorrow.

Both these people came to Him. Jairus came to Him with public request; the woman came to Him in a private approach. The man came to Him in the midst of the crowds asking Him definitely and openly that all might hear, that He would come and help him. The woman came; and how she did so, I can never quite understand. How difficult some of us, in full vigour and health, find it to get through the crowds of London.

Think of this jostling crowd of eager people thronging Him, and then of this woman, weak and wan and worn and emaciated, with twelve years of suffering. Yet she reached Him! She came, and she came quietly. She touched Him. The word "touched" really does not convey the true thought. It was not a delicate touch; it was the clutch of the hand of despair. The woman in this thronging pressing crowd said, If I may but snatch at it, if I may but clutch it, I shall be healed! So she came.

Mark, with that bluntness which is often so full of the poetry of revelation, simply tells us that when Jairus had made his request, "He went with him." Notice the immediate response. That cry from the heart of Jairus had touched the soul of Jesus. "My little daughter is at the point of death.

On the way He delayed. That is the second thing to notice. He went; but ...He tarried. The woman had touched Him. Power had gone out to her healing, and He tarried. Why not pass on? Why did He not go on? Not merely in order that He might talk to the woman. That assuredly; but this also; He knew that at the house of Jairus the child lay dead, and He knew perfectly well that those messengers were already starting to tell Jairus the sad news. He paused to lead Jairus into an atmosphere in which it would be possible for him to believe; when the news came that it was too late. He paused for Jairus's sake. Yet if I were painting the picture I should try to represent Jairus as impatient! Why does He tarry so long? My child is dying!

In a few moments there came the last blow on the father's heart, "Thy daughter is dead! Why troublest thou the Teacher any further?" It was necessary that Mark should write this, "But Jesus, not heeding the word spoken, saith unto the ruler of the synagogue." Let us, however, dare to be dramatic, and leaving out the explanation, see what happened. Christ had just said to this woman, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." Then the messengers came; "Thy daughter is dead. Why troublest thou the Teacher any further?" Then said Jesus, "Fear not, only believe." Thus the voice of the uttermost desolation was immediately followed by the voice of the uttermost consolation. Yes, but how could Jairus believe the thing that was said? There was the woman; something strange had happened to her. She declared she had been made whole by a touch, and He had said, "Go into peace." There was a method and a purpose in the halting of Jesus. There is always a meaning in His delay. Out of the delay will come help, out of the darkness will come light. It is always so with this Christ of ours.

Then He came to the house, and no words of ours are needed to describe the scene. It is so full of exquisite beauty. Listen to His first words: "Why make ye a tumult, and weep? the child is not dead, but sleepeth." That is God's outlook on death. He said the same thing when Lazarus died, and then because they could not understand Him, He had to say plainly, "Lazarus is dead," accommodating Himself to the ignorance of the human outlook upon death. So He said to these people in the house, The child is not dead; she is asleep.

Then there flashes out in the story a touch of dignity and authority. When they laughed Him to scorn, He put them all out, and taking with Him only Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother, He came in and took her by the hand; and dropping into Aramaic (for I believe He spoke in Greek, and the very reason why the Aramaic is retained for us here is to show that He adopted the language of the inner home circle, those diminutives which are the very essence of love); He said, "Talitha cumi." Damsel arise, is a harsh translation. The real meaning of the word is, "Little lamb, arise." He took her by the hand, and He said, "Little lamb, arise."

Then He gave her back to father and mother. Poor little lamb! He gave her back to tears, He gave her back to pain, He gave her back to sorrow. Not out of compassion for her did He bring her back, but out of compassion for them. So after all, my little lamb, that He took, was better off than she was, though I have been left lonely through many years. It was the father's heart that appealed to Him. He gave him back his child. It was the mother's heart that moved Him, and He gave her back the little one. Oh! it was all right with the little one also, undoubtedly so, in the long issues, but He brought her back to sorrow.

Now let us watch Him with the woman. One or two things are brought together here so closely that we hardly notice that they are together. "She felt in her body that she was healed. . . . Jesus perceiving in Himself that the power proceeding from Him had gone forth." That is the whole story. She touched. They said, How sayest Thou, Who touched Me? The multitudes throng Thee, and press Thee. Ah! yes, my brethren! Augustine long ago said of this story, "Flesh presses, faith touches." Crowds jostle Him, but agony and need touch Him; and He can always distinguish between the jostle of a curious mob, and the agonized touch of a needy soul.

He is still making that distinction. . He is always asking the same question, "Who touched Me?" So many people jostle Him, crowd Him, press on Him. We are really interested. We love to hear about Him. We enjoy-terrible word-the service! But, thank God, there is always some soul who touches Him, and reaches Him. Whenever a soul does that in desperation, as the last possible thing-He answers. He knows the touch of need, and responds to it.

Then the woman who had touched Him, must come and tell. She must confess, not for her own sake, nor for His sake only; but principally for the sake of Jairus. So as the result of His question, she came and told Him all the truth. Then, looking into her eyes, He said, "Daughter." This is the only occasion on record when He used this particular kind of endearing epithet, to a woman. "Daughter ... go into peace"; not "in peace," but "into." All the land behind for twelve years had been wilderness, a land of darkness and desolation. Now He said: Daughter, go into peace. Thou hast been divorced from home. Come into My home. Thou hast been ostracized from society. Come into closer kinship with Me. Thou hast been excommunicated from the rites of religion. Come into fellowship with the One Who brings thee to God. "Daughter, go into peace."

She is moving away. Where is she going? Perhaps back home, perhaps back to friends, perhaps back to the synagogue next Sabbath. I do not know. This I know, she is going into peace! What does it matter if she is never readmitted into the synagogue? She is in peace. She is His child.

What are the permanent values of these stories? In this particular unveiling of Jesus we have a revelation of His extreme sensitiveness. Oh, the ugliness of human words when we try to talk about Christ! I want some new language. Sensitiveness is indeed a beautiful word, and yet it is not rich enough to express the thought. In Him sensitiveness was responsiveness, quick, immediate, full, generous, magnificent. Then again we have here a wonderful revelation of the understanding of Jesus. I think that is one of the most wonderful qualities in human love and friendship. Understandingness! That is why He tarried to talk to the woman and help her. That is the meaning of the very word upon which we have already dwelt. Daughter! So much was not said; and consequently so much more was said! Perhaps the most beautiful sacramental symbol of His Understandingness in all the narrative is its last touch. The dead child was lifted by His hand. She arose to life at the music of His voice. Then He commanded that they should give her something to eat. If we had been inventing this story we dare not have added that. Even now we are a little afraid to believe it. But He is God; He knew that the little child wakening back after the long

unconscious slumber, with the little body thrilling with new life, was hungry. Give her something to eat. With a touch gentle enough for a little maiden's dimpled hand, and with a voice musical enough to bring the sweet spirit back from the far-off place, He did not forget that she wanted something to eat. Oh, the understandingness of Jesus!

Yes, but, you say, my child died, and I lost her! Yes, but, you say, I am not cured. I am still suffering! How shall I reply to that kind of statement? Reverently I say in answer; even though our children went, and He did not let us have them; even though we were not cured, and long, long suffering runs on, there is something to be sure of. Seeing that we have had that unveiling of Him; we know His heart and therefore are sure of His sympathy.

There is another thing to remember. Many children are raised up even yet. Do not put these stories back two millenniums. That one lassie that God took out of my home I did so want to keep; but she went. But I have other bairns in the home who have seemed to be as near the end as she. I asked for them, and they are with me yet. He still touches the little hands, and raises up the children. He still heals, and He has cured many a soul of bodily infirmity.

Therefore we know that those who are not raised up or cured, are still in His love. Therefore that which happens to them is best for them, and must be best for us. He did not let me have my lassie. He took her. Then that was best. I do not quite see how, for me, and yet I am sure it was so. If He Who can, does not, then it is better so!

He can raise up that child you have left at home sick. But perhaps over against the ability of actual power there is the disability of some larger meaning of His grace for you and for that child.

So we thank God for these pictures. This Jesus is here now;

"The healing of His seamless dress

Is by our beds of pain.

We touch Him in life's throng and press

And we are whole again."

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