

# Coming to Christ

by Neil Richards

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*Faith is born of need, a conviction that Jesus can meet our need, and trust in Jesus.*

**Duration:** 1:06:06

**Scripture:** Mark 5:42-43, Luke 24:32, John 3:8, Acts 9:3-6, Romans 1:16, 2 Corinthians 4:7

**Topics:** "Faith In Christ", "The Gospel"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on his previous experience of preaching at the same conference 25 years ago. He recalls feeling uncomfortable with the length of his sermon and mentions how people used to bring their own tape recorders to such meetings. The preacher emphasizes the importance of faith in Jesus Christ and the power of the gospel to save sinners. He highlights the tender and individualized way in which Jesus interacts with people, using the example of Jesus healing a little girl and touching her despite the defilement it would bring under Jewish law. The preacher concludes by drawing a parallel between Jesus' identification with us in our sin and need, and how the gospel and the cross work to bring life and salvation.

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## Transcript

We read together from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 5. We read from verse 21. Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to him, and he was by the sea. And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name.

And when he saw him, he fell at his feet, and begged him earnestly, saying, My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come, and lay your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live. So Jesus went with him.

And a great multitude followed him, and thronged him. Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had, and was no better, but rather grew worse.

When she heard about Jesus, she came behind him in the crowd, and touched his garment. For, she said, if only I may touch his clothes, I shall be made well. Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction.

And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that power had gone out of him, turned around in the crowd, and said, Who touched my clothes? But his disciples said to him, You see the multitude thronging you, and you say, Who touched me? And he looked around to see her, who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came, and fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. And he said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well.

Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction. While he was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, who said, Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he said to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not be afraid, only believe.

And he permitted no one to follow him, except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. Then he came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult, and those who wept and wailed loudly. When he came in, he said to them, Why make this commotion, and weep? This child is not dead, but sleeping.

And they ridiculed him, but when he had put them all outside, he took the father and mother of the child, and those who were with him, and entered where the child was lying. Then he took the child by the hand, and said to her, Talitha, Kumai, which is translated, Little girl, I say to you, Arise. Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age.

And they were overcome with great amazement, but he commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat. May God bless the reading of his word to our hearts. I was reflecting that this is in fact not the first time that I've preached at this particular conference.

I preached here something over 25 years ago, with a smaller congregation on that occasion. I remember the occasion with some discomfort. I was inordinately long.

And I had a reminder of that in a way that you don't have, and preachers here don't have these days. In those times, it was quite common for Christians to bring along to a meeting like this, their own personal tape recorder. After I'd been going for about three quarters of an hour.

Click, click, click, click, all over the hall. And I had lots still to say. So, I remember that occasion with some discomfort.

How very different people are. No two are just the same. God has no clones.

I think that we've seen that in the preachers we've had during this past week. Same word coming to us. Same gracious God at work.

But through very different people, through very different personalities. I listened to Achille last night and then realized that I was to preach this evening. In many respects we're so different.

But in a sense that doesn't matter. The Lord has put his treasure into earthen vessels with all of us. That the excellency of the power may be of God.

And no two people are alike. Even when you have identical twins, they're different. When I was at school, just at one stage, there were identical twins in my year.

And it caused all sorts of problems for the teachers. I was very friendly with one of them. I hardly knew the other.

They were very different. We may look the same sometimes outwardly, but we're always different. And that's a part of the wonder of God's creation.

He created us all differently. Look at these two people then in this passage before us this evening in Mark 5. From verse 21 to the end of the chapter. There's Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, the local synagogue.

A very public position he was used to being out front. And so his approach to the Lord Jesus Christ was a very public one. He fell at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ to implore him and plead with him.

And then the woman here, so very different. We're not even told her name here, but she's a poor, sad figure in many respects. She had some kind of a hemorrhaging that had gone on for some 12 years.

12 years of weakness and pain. 12 years of failed medical help. See how she comes to the Lord Jesus Christ, hidden in the crowd.

Hers was a secret, anonymous approach, as it were, to the Lord Jesus Christ. People are different. And people are different even in this great and important, greatest of all matters, of our faith and our coming to the Lord Jesus Christ.

You ever think that no two conversions are the same? No two here of all that are gathered here and all who love the Lord Jesus Christ and who believe in him. Yet no two have just the same story to tell of the way in which he dealt with them, brought them at last to faith. Of course, it's the same Savior.

It's the same atoning blood that washes us and cleanses us from our sins. It's the same Holy Spirit that works within with all his regenerating power. But the details, the story, as it were, is different in every case.

Some Christians can tell you the very day and the very hour when they first believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. And when they first passed from darkness to light, Paul was like that. He was able to go back in his mind to the Damascus Road, remember the very day and the very hour when the Lord in his mercy broke into his life.

John Wesley was like that. 24th of May, 1738. At one time, every good Methodist would have known that date.

Meeting in Aldersgate in London. He was there, troubled and anxious about his own soul, having no real peace, no knowledge of sins forgiven. And someone was reading in that meeting.

Luther's preface to the epistle to the Romans. And as that great preface was read, with all its gospel truth, light dawned in Wesley's heart. You remember the words perhaps.

He said, And I felt my heart strangely warmed. And Wesley knew there in that meeting that his faith was in Jesus Christ and that his sins that had long burdened him were all washed away. Thomas Charles was like that.

He was taken as a young lad, just in his early teens, up to Llangoytho to listen to the elderly then Daniel Rowland preach from the letter to the Hebrews. And he was converted on that day through that text and

that preaching. And every year in the life of Thomas Charles afterwards, always in his journal, he remembered on that day, never to be forgotten day, when the Lord had broken into his life and he'd come to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And yet you know, and yet there are others, truly converted, truly believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. But they can't tell you just the hour, just the day when that great change took place. They know it has taken place, but they don't know just when.

Sometimes that's the case, isn't it, with children who are brought up in Christian homes and who come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And sometimes they don't know just when that change took place. They know that there was a time perhaps when they didn't believe.

And they know that they've come to a knowledge of Christ. But just when it took place, they don't know. And you see, in the end, that isn't the vital thing.

The vital thing is to know now that we have passed from death to life and to know now that the grace of faith and of repentance are at work in our hearts and that we belong to the Lord. C. H. Spurgeon once said, It doesn't matter if you don't know what time the sun rose, as long as you know it's shining. I want to begin then by focusing on the second of these two people and to spend most of our time on that and then just to look a little as we close at Jairus.

Both of these stories are stories of faith. We ask sometimes, don't we, what is faith? What does it really mean to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? How can I recognize faith? And the Bible answers that question so very often by showing us situations and saying to us, as the Lord Jesus Christ surely does here, Look at this woman. See how she behaves.

Watch her responses. That's faith. Look at that man.

See him in that situation. See what he does. See how he acts.

That's the result of faith in the heart. Well, that's what we have here. We have two lovely examples of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want to look then first at the woman. The first thing we see here is that faith is born of need. Twelve years of weakness, pain and distress.

All her money spent on doctors and remedies and all had failed. Her plight was desperate and hopeless. And out of a deep sense of need, she came to the Lord Jesus Christ.

She could have said with the psalmist, Out of the depths have I cried unto thee. Now the Lord Jesus Christ says to us, That's always true. In some measure, always true of faith.

We must know our need. We must know our condition. Faith arises out of a heart burdened with its need.

Burdened with sin. Do you know the first work of the Spirit in our hearts? Is this work of showing us our need. Showing us ourselves.

Bringing us to an end of ourselves. Showing us our sins and our iniquities. Turning our eyes from looking at other people and making comparisons with other people.

And showing us, giving a glimpse to us of ourselves in the presence of God. And in all the brightness and purity of His holiness. And it's out of that need born of the Spirit's work in our hearts.

In some measure, measure will vary from person to person. But in some measure, that consciousness of a need of God. Of a need of sins forgiven.

Of a need of life that Christ alone can give. I wonder sometimes in these days. Whether we've lost something of our sense of the seriousness and the gravity of sin.

We live in a shameless society. And we can be so influenced by the world around us. And with that loss of a sense of the seriousness of sin.

Comes a loss of the fear of God. And a loss of the consciousness and awful reality of judgment that is to come. And the need of atonement for our sins.

Remember that word of the Philippian jailer to the Apostle Paul and to Silas there in the prison. What must I do to be saved? To be saved from what? To be saved from the inner ravages of sin, yes. And all its disintegrating effect on our human personality.

Yes, certainly that. But it doesn't end there, does it? You need to be saved. The scripture says from the wrath to come.

It's not only that we have present needs. But we have needs that stretch into an eternal world. Sin has dark consequences in this world and in the world to come.

It's only against that background. A dark background of God's righteous judgment against sin. It's only against that background that we begin to see the glory of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And all that he accomplished for sinners on Calvary. Someone once criticized Anselm's doctrine of the atonement to Anselm himself. And he replied, you have not considered the gravity of sin.

It's only as we begin to face up to the gravity of sin. That we begin to see our need of a savior. Of the cross.

Of sacrifice. Of atonement. I wonder this evening.

I wonder if you've been making light of sin. Laughing at it. Isn't that the danger in these days? When sin is just regarded and sins as something to be laughed at.

Trivializing it. Excusing it. Rationalizing it.

Stifling the voice of conscience. If that's your condition. Then oh may God in his mercy.

Give you a sense this evening. Of the gravity of sin. And of your own need before God.

And before his son Jesus Christ. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is always born of need. It was with this woman.

It always is. And then the second thing to notice here. Is that faith is a conviction.

That Christ alone can meet that need. You notice what is said in verse 27. When she heard about Jesus.

She came. She heard of his power. Of his compassion.  
Of his mercy. And of his grace to save. And she came to him.  
And the scripture says. Faith cometh by hearing. And hearing by the word of God.  
The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Is God's great magnet. For drawing sinners.  
To the Lord Jesus Christ. We've been reminded on more than one occasion. That faith isn't a leap in the dark.  
Someone said it's the reverse. Isn't it? It's a leap into the light. But faith is trust.  
In a Savior who is made known to us. In his person. In his love.  
In his saving power. In the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And faith is a response to that Savior.  
Made known to us. In the gospel. And in the word of God.  
The purpose of preaching. And the purpose of Christian testimony. And Christian witness.  
Is to introduce. Men and women. Sinners.  
To the Lord Jesus Christ. Can I add this here. I'm repeating really.  
What has already been said here. But it is by the gospel. By this message of love.  
And of mercy. And of grace. That God works out.  
Those eternal counsels. And purposes. That he has.  
In the Lord Jesus Christ. To save a people. And the gospel when it comes to us.  
Comes to us with all it's wide invitations. And gracious calls. Come unto me.  
All you who are weary and burdened. And I will give you rest. If any man thirst.  
Let him come. Unto me. And those words.  
Are addressed to sinners. They're addressed to sinners. No one can ever know.  
His election. Before his conversion. All we need to know.  
And all we can know. Is that we are poor. Lost.  
Sinners. And that Jesus Christ. Came from glory.  
To save sinners. All that you need to know. Is made known to you.  
In the gospel of our Lord. Jesus Christ. Someone has put it.  
And I'm sure you've heard it before. That it's like coming to a door. And on the door.  
Is written. Whoever will come. Is invited.

The free. Gracious invitation. There on the door.  
Taking us in. When so many things. Would disqualify us.  
Our own sense of sin. And unworthiness. Would shut us out.  
But that lovely invitation there. Takes us in. In all it's love and compassion.  
Then when we enter. We read as it were. On the other side of the door.  
Chosen. In Christ. Before the foundation.  
Of the world. But you can only know that. As you enter.  
And as you respond. To those gracious. Invitations.  
In the gospel. That's how faith works. Faith is born of need.  
Faith is a conviction. That Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ alone.  
Can meet the deepest needs. Of my heart. And then faith.  
Is trust. In him. This woman not only had a conviction.  
That Jesus Christ could help her. And save her. But she came to him.  
She stretched out her hand. And true faith. Has the element.  
Of trust. And of commitment. To the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Jesus I will trust thee. Trust thee with my soul. Guilty.  
Lost. And helpless. Thou.  
Canst make me whole. And then notice here too. With this woman.  
Notice the secrecy. Of her approach. To the Lord Jesus Christ.  
That too is helpful to us. She didn't come to him. Very openly.  
But secretly. And she devised a way. She thought it out.  
A way whereby. She could come. Without anyone knowing.  
Almost perhaps without him knowing. And she came in the crowd. You remember.  
And got herself near to him. Near enough. To stretch out her hand.  
And touch. His clothes. And in that moment.  
She was healed. The hemorrhage ceased. And she knew.  
Inwardly. That what she had long sought. Had come to her.

The Lord Jesus Christ. Had healed her. And it had all happened.

In secret. No one knew. But all her plans went wrong.

The Lord Jesus Christ. Stopped. The crowd was moving.

And he was walking. And he stopped. And he said.

Who touched me? Disciples thought that was a very strange thing to say. The crowd were jostling. Around him.

And pressing in him. On every side. It was not like.

And the Queen goes on a walkabout. And there are those there. Properly.

To see that she doesn't get crushed. That people don't get too close. But it wasn't like that with the Saviour.

Men and women. Pressed. Close to him.

Brushed against his clothes. And the disciples said. What do you mean? Who touched me? Here you are in this crowd.

But the Lord Jesus Christ. Stopped. And looked into the faces.

Of the crowd. And waited. And out of the crowd.

Came this woman. She fell at his feet. And the Scripture says.

She acknowledged. All things. Her secret was out.

What she had sought. To keep hidden. Suddenly.

Suddenly. Everyone knew. And we may ask the question.

Why did the Lord Jesus Christ. Do this? Well. Because he had something to teach this woman.

As he has something here. To teach us. First he wanted her.

And us. To be clear. About the power of faith.

It was important. For her to know. How and why.

She had been healed. It was not simply. That she had touched his clothes.

There were people all around him. Who brushed against him. And touched his clothes.

And no special blessing. Came to them. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Said to her daughter. Your faith has healed you. Go in peace.

It was because. She had put her trust. In him.

That healing had come to her. He had healed her. His power.

His grace. Had brought healing to her. Not some magical property.  
In his clothes. But faith. In him.  
And the power of Christ. Flowing to her. Do you know.  
That is a vital lesson. For us this evening. We must never substitute.  
Outward things. For inward faith. There is always a danger of that.  
And it is a danger. That the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Has not always avoided.  
I was once in the. Great Orthodox Cathedral. In Bucharest.  
Some years ago. With a friend. Standing in that vast.  
Cavernous place. And there was a woman. Over the far side.  
Against the wall. And there was some kind of casket there. And she was standing.  
Holding her hands. Against it. And I said to my friend.  
Why is she doing that? And he said. What is happening? He said. The casket is said to contain.  
The bones of one of the saints. And it is believed. That if you can get there.  
And touch the bones. As it were. That healing power flows.  
Our Lord Jesus Christ. Here is. Clearing away.  
All of that kind of superstition. Do you remember the Turin Shroud? That caused so much excitement. A  
few years ago.  
Why? Well, people said. If this was the shroud. That was used.  
To cover. The body of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have that shroud.  
In our midst. And we can be near it. We can touch it.  
It is the same kind. Of superstition. And our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Puts it all aside. And He says to her. It is not touching things.  
Outwardly. It is faith. In Him.  
It is turning to Him. In our hearts. In the very depths of our being.  
And putting our trust. In Him. I wonder.  
I wonder have you grasped that. That it isn't. Outward things.  
But we can keep the imagery. It is reaching out. The hand of faith.  
That unseen hand. To the Lord Jesus Christ. That empty hand.

Stretched out. To the Saviour. Nothing.

In my hands I bring. Simply to Thy cross. I cling.

Come to the Lord Jesus Christ. By faith. And you will know.

You will know like this woman knew. You will know the difference. Between all the.

The false. Remedies of this world. And the gracious.

Saving power. Of the Lord. Jesus Christ.

So Christ wants you to be clear. About the power. Of faith.

In Him. And then secondly. He calls for a public.

Confession. Of faith. This woman wanted to keep her faith.

Secret. She wanted to come to the Lord Jesus Christ. To have healing from Him.

But to do it kind of anonymously. I think that points to. A weakness.

In her faith. Which the Lord Jesus Christ. Here purposes to.

Strengthen. Why? Why the secrecy? Why did she come in this way? Why did she not come openly? Well. I think we.

We have at least a hint. Of an answer. To that in Scripture.

It may have been. A sense of shame. That kept.

This poor woman from coming. Openly to her. To the Lord Jesus Christ.

You see. The disease that she suffered from. The hemorrhage.

The flow of the issue of blood. That was there. And that had been there.

For some 12 years. In Jewish society. Under Mosaic law.

Rendered her. Unclean. The law of Moses.

Excluded such a woman. With an issue of blood. From the services.

Of the temple. Now you can read that in the. In the Old Testament.

The aim of passages like that. And the aim of the symbolism there. Is to teach.

The inherent sinfulness. Of human nature. But there it is.

Under Jewish law. She was excluded. She was cut off.

From the fellowship. Of God's people. 12 long years.

She had not been able to go. With the people of God. Into the temple.

She had not been able to take part. In the worship of God. In that formal sense.  
She had been cut off. From those privileges. There was a sense of shame.  
About her. And I wonder whether that. Hindered her.  
Consciousness of our own. Shame. Not wanting to appear.  
In public. Maybe even uncertainties. As to whether.  
The Lord Jesus Christ. Would heal her. And yet she knew he was able.  
She knew he had power. And grace to heal. And so she comes.  
Secretly to him. You see there were. Depths of love.  
And of compassion. In the Lord Jesus Christ. That this woman.  
Had not yet grasped. It may be that there is. Someone here.  
Very much like that. You know in your heart. That the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Is the Son of God. You know that. He is the only Saviour.  
And you know that he is able to save. You have seen examples of that. You have seen examples.  
In your own family perhaps. In your children. In your parents.  
In a brother. In other friends. Or a neighbour.  
You have seen something of the gracious power. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. You don't doubt.  
That he has saving power. You see the peace. That this friend has.  
You see that her life has been changed. And you don't doubt that. But you are uncertain.  
As to whether all this. Could ever be true. Of you.  
It may be. Some sin that has. Lingered there for years.  
Some failure. Some shame. Even some.  
Long hardening. Of the heart. And you felt in your heart.  
That though. He is a Saviour to others. Though he is a Saviour.  
To others you know. That there is a block. There.  
There. That keeps you. From coming.  
Look at this woman. Look at how our Lord Jesus Christ. Deals with her.  
Look. Look if you like at the infirmity. Of her faith.

And yet the Lord Jesus Christ. Didn't send her away. He received her.  
Blessed her. Strengthened her faith. Isn't one of the things.  
That we have to grasp. Is that it's not the greatness. Of our faith that saves us.  
It's the greatness. Of Christ. To grasp that.  
Faith is slender. As a single strand. Of a spider's web.  
That's fixed. In Jesus Christ. Brings all.  
The blessings. Of his salvation. A weak faith.  
Saves. As well as a strong faith. I'm not saying it doesn't matter.  
Which you have. Oh there are many benefits. In a strong faith.  
A strong faith glorifies. The Lord Jesus Christ. A strong faith.  
Will bring. A growing assurance. But a weak faith.  
A weak faith. Mere faith. Fixed in Christ.  
Will save. And this woman. Reminds us.  
Of that. So the Lord Jesus Christ. Calls her out.  
She is to take her stand. With him. And he gives her more than she asks.  
She comes it seems. Only wanting healing. Though there are deeper needs.  
In her heart. And the Lord Jesus Christ. Gives her peace.  
He meets her deeper needs. As well as the needs. Of her body.  
Here's a great lesson here. That faith. In the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Can never be. A hidden thing. You can never be.  
A secret disciple. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you remember the Saviour's words? Whoever therefore.  
Shall confess me before men. Him will I confess. Before my Father in Heaven.  
Oh I remember as a. As a young lad. I came to the Saviour. By his grace.  
And I was a boy of 14. Remember the struggles I had. To make my faith known.  
To let my parents know. And my grandparents. And I remember as a lad.  
Just late 17. Going into the Air Force. And knowing.  
That I had to take my stand. I had to nail my collars. To the Master.

I think. There was a very strong tradition. In those days.  
Of Christian lads going into the forces. That you knelt. By your bed.  
To pray. It really wasn't the best place to pray. I used to do my praying in the toilets.  
But. Praying. By your bed.  
It. Nailed your collars to the Mass. They knew.  
Reading the Scriptures. Remember doing that. Trembling.  
In what was known then as square bashing. Remember doing it in the billet. Before all the men.  
It wasn't easy. And I wasn't particularly brave. But the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Must be. Owned. Before men.  
If you confess with your mouth. Jesus is Lord. Believe in your heart.  
That God has raised him from the dead. You will be saved. Both.  
Both. The belief in the heart. And the confession.  
Of the lips. Both. Are needful.  
You know. There are two men in the Gospels. That were for a very short time.  
Secret disciples. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. I wonder if you could think.  
Who they were. Nicodemus. Joseph of Arimathea.  
It seems for a little while. That those men were secret disciples. Of the Lord Jesus Christ.  
But you know. It wasn't for long. When the Lord Jesus Christ died.  
On the cross. And they took that precious body. Down.  
Those men. Were there. It was the cross.  
That brought them out. But. You can never be a secret disciple.  
Of the Saviour. For very long. It may be.  
That there is someone here this evening. And you are very much in the same position. As this woman.  
You have prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ. You have asked for forgiveness. You have asked for mercy.  
And in your heart. You believe. You put your trust in him.  
But you have never told anyone. You have never come out. As it were.  
In the open. With your faith. And you find yourself saying to yourself.

Well. My faith is a private thing. I don't have to tell everyone.  
I can keep this to myself. I seek to live a Christian life. But I don't really need to.  
To say anything. I want to say to you. This evening.  
That they are not Christ's terms. You see. We must have the Lord Jesus Christ.  
On his terms. Oh. They are gracious terms.  
But he is Lord. It is not for us. As it were.  
To lay down the terms. He is Lord. And we must bow the knee.  
And we must own him. We must take up. Our cross.  
And follow him. And follow him by his grace. And in his power.  
All the days. Of our earthly lives. Through trials.  
Through storms. Difficult periods. Follow the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Just in these remaining minutes. I want to go back. To Jairus.  
Because these two stories overlap. Don't they? In a wonderful way. In a sense.  
Jairus was interrupted. And we must say that the Lord Jesus Christ. Was interrupted.  
For what he was going to do. For Jairus. It is a temptation for us.  
To think that the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Was very smooth. And calm.  
And that everything kind of fell into place. But as we read the Gospels. We get some impression.  
Of the pressure. The busyness. The demands.  
And it is like that here. He is responding to Jairus. And this woman.  
Comes in. So back to Jairus. Jairus has stood silently.  
While all this is going on. Watching and waiting. And with his heart as it were.  
In his mouth. His daughter is dying. And he is just longing and yearning.  
That the Lord Jesus Christ. Would come to his home. Lay his hand of healing.  
And of grace. On his daughter. And in this strange way.  
Jairus is kept waiting. Why? What was the Saviour doing here? Well I suggest to you. That he was testing.  
This man's faith. Drawing it out. Making it stronger.  
Making his faith. Work. You see.

Faith grows. By testing. And the Lord Jesus Christ.

Was drawing. This man's faith out. Do you remember the Syrophenician woman? Do you remember?  
She came to the Lord Jesus Christ.

For her demon possessed daughter. And she pleaded with him. And at first the Lord Jesus Christ.

Was silent. But she persisted. And then you remember.

The Lord Jesus Christ said to her. That he was not sent unto the Gentiles. But unto the house of Israel.

And that it wasn't right. To give the children's bread to dogs. And she comes out.

With this. Tremendous. Reply of faith.

Yes. But even the dogs. Can eat the crumbs.

That fall from the Master's table. Faith tested. Faith.

Drawn out. And that's what we see here. With Jairus.

Will Jairus give up? Will he despair? Will he go away? You see. If you are a Christian this evening. Then  
you must expect your faith.

To be tried. And tested. Do you pray like this? Do you pray.

Oh Lord. Give me a stronger faith. Oh Lord Jesus Christ.

Give me a firmer. Clearer grasp of you. And of all that you are.

I pray like that. Oh I pray like that. Every day.

But you know when we pray like that. The Lord. Sometimes has strange ways.

Of answering. That prayer. He answers.

Prayer. For stronger faith. For greater grace.

Often by trials. And storms. You want a lovely.

Example of this. You have it in. In that hymn by.

John Newton. Hymn number 698. It begins, I ask the Lord that I might grow.

In faith and love. And every grace. And the Lord has strange ways.

Of answering that. He uses. Trials and storms.

To test and to try. And to strengthen. Our faith.

It was a dark hour. For Jairus. Not only now was his daughter sick.

But he receives news. That she died. What was he to think.

And the Lord Jesus Christ. At that very point. Says to him.  
Don't be afraid. Only believe. Faith overcomes.  
Fear. Fear not. Only believe.  
Oh that we could hear the Lord Jesus Christ. That you could. Perhaps in the trials that you face.  
Even this evening. Or go back to. At the end of the conference.  
To hear Christ saying to you. Don't be afraid. Only believe.  
And so the Lord Jesus Christ. Went to his house. The house is full of mourners.  
Mourning is a very noisy thing. In the east. It's generally quiet isn't it.  
In our culture. And so when he got to the house. There was wailing and mourning.  
And the Lord Jesus Christ. Asks them. Why they are wailing like that.  
And says. She is not dead. But she is asleep.  
And they laughed him to scorn. They knew better. But you see.  
The Lord Jesus Christ. As he came into that home. And as he stood.  
At the bedside of that girl. Lifeless. Dead.  
Yet he stands there. As the resurrection. And the life.  
And he is as able to raise her. From the dead. As you and I are to wake.  
A sleeping child. And you know. He raised her to life.  
With all the tenderness. Of a mother's touch. We have the exact words.  
That Jesus spoke. And we have them in the Aramaic. Talitha.  
Cum. That's a marvelous thing. That was just.  
What Jesus said. To that girl. No magical formula.  
No strange incantation. Simple. Plain words.  
Daughter. Little girl. I say unto you.  
Rise. What gentleness. And yet.  
What power. You know when men. Try to do powerful things.  
And big things. Sound a trumpet. They beat a drum.  
But you know that isn't always. God's way. With extraordinary gentleness.

And tenderness. He raised this little girl. To life.  
This lovely humanity. In that. He deals.  
With this little girl. Not as a case. But as a little girl.  
And he speaks. To her as such. And yet in those simple words.  
Are all the power. Of God. You remember Elijah.  
Outside the cave. You remember the storm. The earthquake.  
The wind. The fire. Then.  
The still. Small voice. Sometimes.  
It's like that. Sometimes. When people are converted.  
And come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes. It's like the.  
Jailer. That's an earthquake. It's dramatic.  
But sometimes. Sometimes. It's like Lydia.  
Whose heart. The Lord. Opened.  
The Lord is very. Gracious. The power is the same.  
But he deals with us. Tenderly. And differently.  
And no two people come to him. By faith. In just exactly the same.  
Pattern. He deals with us. As individuals.  
Says the great. Evangelical leader in Geneva. In the 19th century.  
He used to say of his own conversion. That it might be compared to a mother. Waking her child.  
With a kiss. Because there was an. Extraordinary gentleness.  
About his own. Conversion. And then you notice what Jesus did.  
He took her hand. She was dead. And again.  
Under Jewish law. Under Mosaic law. You contracted.  
Defilement. By touching. A dead body.  
But our Lord Jesus Christ. Touched her. Identified with her.  
In her death. And in her need. And brought her life.  
And isn't that. How the gospel works. Isn't that in the end.

How the cross works. That the Lord Jesus Christ. Identified himself.  
With us. He sat where we sit. He took our sins.  
He took our place. Isn't that one of the most precious. Truths.  
In the gospel. Christ. In my.  
Place. Identified with me. And I with him.  
So that his death. Becomes my death. I died to sin.  
In the death of Christ. Paul could say. And I was raised to life.  
In his. Resurrection. That's how the gospel.  
Works. So. We leave these two people.  
Two examples of faith. The woman. Now wonderfully restored.  
And at peace with God. The father overwhelmed with joy. His daughter at his side.  
Two examples of how. Faith. Works.  
And how the love and the power. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. Comes to us and works.  
Within us. We've come to the end of our. Conference.  
Jesus Christ. Is the same. Yesterday today.  
And forever. He's still mighty to save. All that he was there.  
In the gospels. In his tenderness his power. His willingness to receive us.  
He is. Tonight. And when the service is over.  
And the congregation has departed. When you and I go back home. And go back to all.  
Our different circumstances. Some here perhaps. To circumstances that are hard.  
And difficult. We go back knowing. That Jesus Christ is the same.  
Yesterday. Today. And forever.  
All that he was in the gospels. All his compassion. His tenderness.  
His power. His wisdom. All that we see there.  
Set before us in that panorama. Of grace and of love. In the Lord Jesus Christ.  
All that. He is now. At the right hand.  
Of God. And he'll be with you. To strengthen you.

And keep you. And watch over you. Put your trust in him.

Renew your devotion to him. This evening. Obey him.

Serve him. Set him ever before you. It may be.

That as a congregation like this. We shall never again meet on earth. Just as we have met.

This evening. All of us. All of us together.

Never be gathered together again. Just as we are. This evening.

But you know. If you're a believer. If you're a Christian.

There's a day coming. When we shall gather. With all the saints of God.

All the redeemed. Around the throne. All the flock will be there.

The whole. Company of the redeemed. The great question is.

Will you be there? Will you be there? Be sure. Of that. Whatever else you know.

Or don't know. These are the greatest issues. May God bless.

And be gracious to us all. Amen.

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