

[Mark 5:21-43](#)

Last week, when our reading was about Jesus stilling the storm on Galilee, the story came to quite a climax. Jesus' disciples said, 'Who then is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!'

It's quite a punchline. Mark leaves us in no doubt that he wants his readers to consider who this amazing Jesus is.

This week is different. While we have two amazing stories woven into one narrative, the climax after the healing of the woman with the flow of blood and the raising of Jairus' daughter feels like an anti-climax:

⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Keep quiet and have a snack. That's it.

It's not the only time Jesus tells people to hush their mouths about one of his miracles in Mark's Gospel, and many people have assumed that the reason Jesus took this apparently rather strange approach was that if word got out that he was the Messiah the expectations people would have of him would be nothing like the way he saw messiahship.

And with that in mind, we have to look more carefully for the themes of Jesus' mission that Mark wants to highlight here. I've found three.

The **first** is *unity*.

Look at the contrasts in the story. Jairus' daughter is young: she's only twelve. The woman, on the other hand, has had her distressing medical problem for as long as the girl has been alive. She is much older.

The woman is also now in poverty. She had spent all she had on doctors (verse 26). The young girl, on the other hand, is the daughter of a man who is probably quite well-to-do.

The woman creeps up on Jesus from behind (verse 27). Jairus is direct and open, falling at Jesus' feet to beg him for mercy for his beloved daughter (verse 22).

Young and old, rich and poor, bold and shy – the range is wide but the need is the same. However different they are, Jesus knows they need the mercy and grace of God.

And that's what he does. He brings people of all circumstances and life experiences into the family of God, because all need God's grace and love.

That's a picture of God's kingdom. Jesus crosses all our human barriers because everybody needs the grace of God. In our social lives and our friendships we might look for people with similar interests or experiences to us. But in God's family he brings together rich and poor, black and white, northerner and southerner, male and female.

I can look around congregations I've served and see people who owned two homes sitting next to others who were on a fixed pension. I can see my West Indian friends from the Windrush Generation and succeeding generations mixing with white Europeans. I've even found Arsenal supporters in the church, and that's hard for me as a Tottenham fan!

Seriously, this work of Jesus to bring all sorts of people into the love of God is the first sign of his work of reconciliation. He reconciles people to God and he brings them into a family where those same people, often or different or even opposing backgrounds end up being reconciled to one another.

I like to put it like this. Jesus accomplished that reconciliation at the Cross. And the Cross has both a vertical beam, indicating our relationship with God and a horizontal beam, indicating that we are also reconciled with one another.

Do you need that reconciliation with God or with other people? Receive all you need for that from Jesus.

The **second** theme I've found is **sovereignty**.

Sometimes I wonder how I would be feeling in this story if I were Jairus. After all, I have a daughter, too. But to come in desperation and plead with Jesus, who agrees to come to my house (verse 24), only to find that he then stops and spends time trying to find out who touched him (verse 30) when time is of the essence – I think that would shred any remaining nerves that I had in my body.

Not only that, we get to Jairus' house and we're told that the daughter is dead (verse 35). Why did Jesus delay?

It's a little like the story in John 11 where Jesus' friend Lazarus dies but he doesn't rush to Bethany where Lazarus lived with his sisters Mary and Martha. Jesus bides his time.

And so too here. Jesus isn't ruffled. He encourages Jairus to continue believing (verse 36) and he isn't rattled by the commotion caused by the professional mourners or the crowd laughing at him for saying the child is only asleep (verses 38-40).

It may not look like it to us, but Jesus has the situation under control. Taking only the girl's parents and his three closest lieutenants, he goes to the girl and heals her (verses 40-42).

I wonder whether there is something that feels like it's running out of control in your life? Is there something that seems to be descending into chaos and you're afraid of where that will leave you?

If you are, I encourage you to invite Jesus into the situation. You can sound as desperate as Jairus if you like, it doesn't matter. Jesus won't be fazed. Let him walk calmly with you through what you fear will be an impending disaster.

That's why I say this is about sovereignty. He's still in charge. So turn to him.

The **third** and final theme I've noticed in the narrative is *purity*.

The condition of the woman made her ritually unclean in Judaism. For Jesus to come into contact with her would make him unclean.

And similarly, if you touched a dead body, as Jesus did when he took Jairus' daughter by the hand (verse 41), that also made you ritually unclean.

It's as if the uncleanness always pollutes the clean. It's like dropping one blob of ink into a glass of water and seeing the ink affect all of the water.

Except that doesn't happen here. You could say that the purity of Jesus is so strong that it overpowers the ritual impurity of the woman and of Jairus' daughter.

In this story, darkness doesn't finally overcome good. It isn't even a fight between two equals as some make it out to be. It isn't even a fair fight at all. Jesus has all the power of divine holiness. That which would ruin lives cannot compete in his presence.

It makes me think about a couple of verses from the First Letter of John:

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the work of the devil. (1 John 3:8)

Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4)

Sometimes when we're involved with all our fallibilities the fight against suffering and sin is long and grim. But with Jesus in charge the final outcome is certain. None of this can stand in his presence. Instead of the virus of sin contaminating him, his holiness infects the darkness, exposes it, and cleanses it.

Isn't it good news that ultimately the pure holiness of Jesus overcomes all the darkness and despair of this world? If you're disheartened because the bad stuff so often ends up on top, look at this story and see signs that what Jesus does here puts all the powers of darkness on notice for what will ultimately happen when he appears again on Earth in glory.

Take heart from the superior purity of Jesus!

In fact, take heart from all three of the themes we've been thinking about today. Be glad that Jesus opens the kingdom of God to all people, that God longs to see all people reconciled to him and to one another. Rejoice in the sovereignty of God in Christ, where even when we get frantic and time seems to be slipping away he is still in charge. And take heart that suffering and death do not have the final word in all of creation, because the purity of Jesus is superior.

None of this might sound as spectacular as the calming of the storm on Galilee, but believe me, it's every bit as important.