

St Marc Grenoble
Sunday 27th June 2021
2 Cor 8: 1 - 15
Mark 5: 21 - 43
'Do not fear - Believe'

Good Morning

PRAY

As we continue our journey through Mark's Gospel, we again find crowds of people surrounding Jesus.

But, in this story, Jesus has more interaction with people in the crowd surrounding Him. So, let's try to see this story through some of the personalities Mark introduces.

Wherever Jesus went, throngs of people pushed, shoved, milled around, hoping to see, hear or meet Jesus. You'd need to be very determined and persistent to have any chance of getting close.

In every crowd there are a wide range of different groups of people. First, there are those who just happened to be in that place at the time; then, the curious, the mildly interested, the sceptics or detractors, and possibly also the opportunists - water sellers for instance.

But, there are also those who are determined to achieve what they came for – you could say 'the committed'. In this story, Jairus, the Synagogue leader, and the haemorrhaging woman both came into this category, but the way they approached Jesus was entirely different.

Jairus was a respected member of the community, who'd been elected leader of the synagogue (a position a bit like a churchwarden!).

He'll have been educated, and had responsibilities. It's possible that the Pharisees had been putting pressure on him, and others like him, to have nothing at all to do with Jesus.

But, his dear daughter was desperately ill; and he'd heard about, possibly even seen, some of the healing miracles Jesus had done. And Jairus knew exactly where he had to go to get help.

He just knew that all he had to do was to get Jesus to lay hands on his daughter, and she would be healed. Total - stop at nothing - faith!

Jairus pushed his way to the front of the massive crowd; got down on his knees and literally begged Jesus to come to his daughter.

Seeing his faith Jesus agreed to come as quickly as He could; but that was extremely difficult, given the crowd.

Also in the crowd was a woman who'd been bleeding for 12 years; we don't even know her name, but it doesn't matter.

She'd spent all the money she had, looking for a cure, and had simply become worse.

To make matters worse, her illness made her ceremonially unclean; so she was, possibly, not only a religious but also a social outcast. This poor woman was sick, lonely and afraid.

Not wishing to trouble or embarrass Jesus, because touching her would also make Him 'unclean'; she was convinced that all she had to do was to touch the hem of his cloak and she'd be healed.

She too pushed her way to the front of the crowd – local people probably actually moved out of her way, because they would have known she was ceremonially unclean - and she managed to touch the edge of Jesus clothes.

She was healed instantly and knew it. But, to her horror, Jesus knew it too and turning around asked a seemingly crazy question 'Who touched me?'

Trembling with fear, she owned up, gave her testimony and received a greater blessing than she'd ever even dreamed of - 'My daughter,' Jesus said to her, 'Your faith has rescued you. Go in peace. Be healed from your illness.' Jesus was promising her peace, and complete freedom from her suffering.

Meanwhile, people came from Jairus's house to tell him:
'Your daughter is dead; why bother the teacher anymore?' (They obviously had no faith in Jesus)

If you listen carefully, you can almost see Jairus turning to Jesus with a look of anguish on his face; Jesus had heard the message, and reached out to him, possibly even physically putting his arm around him.

'Don't be afraid, just believe.' (Trust me!) Jairus did trust, and as we know his daughter was raised back to life; despite the wailing sceptics (classic Jewish funeral behaviour) and the doubting cynics who were just laughing at Jesus.

However, that story leaves big questions. What relevance does this story have for us?

Does Jesus still heal?

Well, He obviously doesn't heal everyone, or we wouldn't be praying for people in church week after week.

So, why does Jesus heal some (if He does) and not others?

The simple answer is that we don't have all the answers! But, I do see people healed; while I see others who are given peace, comfort and assurance of His presence - perhaps that is, in fact, a form of healing in a different way?

It's also worth asking another question: picture the scene for a moment ... Where are you in the crowd?

Are you one of the curious, a sceptic, or even an opportunist? Or are you committed ... and trusting?

Will you stay safely in the crowd? Or will you push your way to the front and come to stand, or kneel, in front of Jesus and place your trust in Him? He may well surprise you with His response ...

Jesus always allows us to approach Him whenever we need help; we don't have to seek any special opportunity.

But, just in case you have a special need to bring to Jesus, **right now**, I invite you to come forward and stand, or kneel, right here at the front. While I pray for you ... (Those of you watching on Zoom can stand or kneel at home, right now and we'll include you in our prayers)

No one needs to know why; it may not be for physical healing it may be for some other concern or serious need you have.

All that you need is the courage to trust Jesus ...

Jesus knows exactly what you need; and will hear our prayer:

So, please, come forward now ...

And let's all pray: 'Come Holy Spirit' ... Lord Hear our prayers ... **Amen**