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Jesus Makes Haste Slowly Mark 5:21-45

The Lord does all things well, however, His timing is often very different from ours. To follow the real Jesus means to trust Him as Lord even when it appears that He has failed you and when you needed Him the most. Jesus called Jairus to exercise such faith when his world fell apart. This story is the last of three short stories revealing how Jesus transformed chaos into peace. In the first, with two words, Jesus transformed a raging storm at sea into a peaceful glassy pond. In the second He transformed a man tormented by a storm of raging demons into a man of peace, quiet, and sound mind. Here, Jesus transforms two people teeming with fear and sorrow into people of peace and great joy. Moreover, the way Jesus brought peace to both of them is as important as the peace they came to know. In both cases, Jesus slowed down the pace of their lives. Although both faced pressing emergencies Jesus did as my good friend Stan often says, “He made haste slowly.” If you want to lay hold of the point of this story you’re going to have to switch your mind from running at 78 to 33 speed.

Both characters in the story were in crisis and in a big hurry. Jairus needed Jesus to get into the ambulance, turn on the siren, and race to his home as fast as he could. The case of the woman with a hemorrhage was not as acute, however she had run out of money with no medical insurance. Her bleeding was uncontrollable and terminal. Both were filled with desperation. Consider three things. **First**, think about the fact and challenge of Jesus’ slow pace. **Second**, what can we learn from the fact that Jesus is just frustratingly slow? And **third**, why is there a reference to Jesus’ weakness in v. 30?

Jesus: God of Delays

After the encounter with the demoniac, Jesus and His disciples sailed back across the lake to Capernaum (Matt. 9:1). As soon as they landed, Jairus, the leader of the local synagogue stood waiting for them with an emergency. As the head elder of the synagogue he would have been wealthy, prominent, and at the top of his social group. Remember, the religious leaders ruled that Jesus was an instrument of the devil. That Jairus would seek out Jesus was a sign of great desperation. He cared more for his daughter than he did his reputation. Debby and I once visited a Christian mission in a small city in Bosnia. Mujahedin terrorists who lived in the hills around the city surrounded it. On Thursdays the mission offered free food and medical care to the needy. One Thursday morning, a desperate Mujahadin father brought his sick daughter down from the hills and stood in line for help. When the missionaries asked if he might be judged a traitor for coming to a Christian mission, He said, “Yes, but you Christians are the only ones who will help us.” I have seen the look of desperation on parents’ faces when their young children get a diagnosis of cancer. Grief and desperation cannot describe that look of helplessness and fear. This man’s little girl was about to die. When Jesus stepped out of the boat, Jairus fell down at His feet, and pleaded with Him to go and lay hands on her so that she would get better. And Jesus said, “Yes.” Then they headed toward her home. Imagine Jairus’ excitement over Jesus’ response. He must have been enormously relieved. So they take off with a crowd of people following behind and pressing in around them. Then something shocking happens. Jesus stops the ambulance, pulls the keys out of the ignition, and begins to ponder, looking around. Sensing that power or energy had left His body, He stopped everything and turned around to learn who touched Him. Jairus’ heart must have stopped. Who is an emergency worker supposed to care for first? Do you treat the acute and immediate needs of a twelve-year old girl who is about to die? Or, do you treat a woman with a chronic problem? Certainly, the needs of this woman can wait. Moreover, she has already been healed! Isn’t this malpractice? In our day this is ground for a lawsuit. While Jesus is chatting with the woman who was already made whole, Jairus’ worst nightmare happens. Jairus’

servants come from home and they tell him that his little girl died. Now it is too late to bother Jesus anymore. This is hard to read. If Jesus was not serious about helping her how could He be so cruel as to make Jairus think that He was? Beloved we are looking at the real Jesus. And rarely does Jesus do things on our schedule. When He does, it is no special sign that God is at work over against the times when He is seemingly doing nothing. I hear people say, "God is beginning to work or beginning to do something." What they mean is that they can see Him at work. Or they mean that favorable timing or circumstances give evidence that God is working. However, God was working when there was no evidence of it. Here, God was working when all the evidence suggested that He was *not* working! So, be careful when you see a combination of circumstances that fits your assessment of what God has begun to do. Notice, beloved, that God was moving, when He wasn't apparently moving. Jesus is the God of delays and Jesus is often very slow.

What Can We Learn?

As we said, God is working even when there is no evidence that He is. Or we could say that God's timing is just terrible. That is, if we start ordaining for God when He should act as we wish. Notice that you will get from and give to Jesus far more you bargained for (Tim Keller). Jairus came to Jesus thinking all he needed from Jesus was a cure for his daughter's fever. He ended up with a resurrection! He came thinking that all he *had to do* was to trust Jesus enough to get Him to his home to heal her. Instead, Jesus called him to trust Him for much more than that. When Jesus delayed, Jairus had to trust Him, when it looked like Jesus failed and deceived him. Have you ever felt certain that God has led you to begin something and as soon as you do the wheels fall off? It feels like you were played with or set up. You want to say, "Where is God?" or "Why does God not do something?"

Consider the woman. All she wanted was to touch Jesus' coat, be healed and then sneak off. Her faith was real but it was filled with superstition. She confused the supernatural with the superstitious. I once visited a very rich oilman who was in the hospital with a serious illness. When I went in, I heard a low level noise coming from somewhere in the room. When I asked about it, he told me that it was a tape recording of someone reading the Bible. I said, "Let's turn it up so we can hear it." But, he was not that interested in hearing it. He said that he was using it to protect him from evil spirits. So, he played it nonstop day and night. He did not distinguish between the superstitious and the supernatural. This woman said, "If I only touch His garment I will get well." All she wanted was to be cured. But Jesus was determined to do much more for her. He also was going to require much more from her. In her condition, it was illegal to be in contact with people. However, Jesus called her out to go public with her life. That must have been terrifying given the rules of contamination. But, Jesus called her to identify herself and explain her faith in front of all these people. This was far more than she bargained for. She could have run. Instead, she turned around and shared her story with Jesus, falling down before him in an act of worship. Jesus said, "Daughter, your faith has made you well, go in peace and be healed of your affliction." Jesus gave more to her than she ever imagined and He demanded more from her than she thought she would give. This is what it means to follow the real Jesus. He will give you more than you could ever imagine and it will cost you more than you want to pay. Debby and I have experienced pain and suffering in ministry that we never imagined even possible. And we have experienced more love, support, and extravagant kindness than we ever thought possible. Jesus wants to love this woman, honor her, and make her a disciple for life, not just fix her body. And that connection with her was so important that He was willing to let Jairus' daughter die before he would let her go. Jesus stopped everything so that she could begin a relationship with Him. Jesus wanted to see her, look into her eyes, hear her voice, speak to her, teach her and acknowledge her faith. Jesus wanted her to come to Him for eternity not just for that moment. And, He would not let her remain anonymous or let her story remain private. He asked her to give more than she expected and He gave to her far more than she expected. He will do the same for you. If you go to the real Jesus He will give you far more than you could ever expect and He will demand far more from you than you think you can give. Still want to follow Jesus?

Also notice that Jesus changes all the price tags on social values. By making Jairus wait and everyone else wait until He was finished with this woman, Jesus gave her a status and honor she would have never have known. Look at the difference between these two people. Jairus had everything: social standing, wealth, he is a man, a religious leader, has a wife, a child, and servants who attend to his needs. Jairus is at the top of the social and community ladder. The woman's social standing could not have been more opposite. She was a woman whose name is not mentioned; she was invisible. She was poor and spent every last penny on doctors who could not help her. For twelve years she had a disease that kept her in a perpetual state of ceremonial uncleanness. She could not be touched or hugged, attend synagogue or temple worship. If she had a husband and children she would have had to stay away from them. And in that culture, she would have been seen as cursed by God. What did Jesus do in front of everyone? He privileged her over the man who had everything. Jesus honored her, prized her, and treasured her relationship with Him, seemingly over that of the man who had everything. This was a reverse of social values. *Jesus made the powerful and the privileged wait while He tended to the dishonored and disrespected.* Why? Because with Jesus the way up is down; the way to get power is to give it away. This is the proper use of power and authority: to serve, not to be served; to give, not to get; to help, not to gain advantage over others. The way to live is to die. The way to fulfillment is to seek the fulfillment of others. And that reverses the values of the world. Jesus does not come to people on the basis of status. He raises up the lowly and casts down the mighty. Jesus gives special treatment to those at the bottom and not those at the top. And at times this drives the rich crazy. Some think they are more strategic because they are rich. Who did Jesus treat as more strategic? Here it is: this anonymous woman. But what can a poor, sick woman offer society? One thing: the peace that comes from knowing the Savior who said to her "Go in peace." Paul says that God has chosen the foolish to confound the wise that no one would boast in anyone but the Lord.

Beloved, if God seems to be behind schedule it is because there is a critical factor you just do not yet know about. Here is what Jairus did not yet know. It was no more difficult for Jesus to raise the dead than to heal a disease. Jesus was turning a woman into a lifelong disciple, which needed to be capitalized on at that moment. Is God delaying something in your life? If so, there is some crucial fact that you just don't yet know about. When I look at the delays of God, a great deal of my anxiety is caused by the fact that I am so puffed up with pride and that I think I know what ought to happen. Here is a newsflash: God knows more than we do.

Jesus' Weakness

Why did Jesus experience a weakness or draining of energy in verse 30? Why did this happen with this woman when he did not experience anything like this when He cast out 6,000 demons or stilled the raging storm? In v. 35, the messengers come from Jairus' house and they say to him,

"Your daughter has died, why bother the teacher anymore? Then Jesus said to Jairus, "Do not be afraid, only believe." And He allowed no one to follow with Him except Peter, James and John..and they came to Jairus' house and He beheld a commotion, and loud weeping and wailing. And entering in, He said to them, "Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep." And they began laughing at Him. Putting them all out, He took along the child's father and mother and His own companions and entered where the child was. And taking her by the hand, He said to her, Talitha kum, which translated means,"Little girl, I say to you get up." And immediately the girl rose and began to walk; for she was 12 years old. And immediately they were completely astounded. And He gave them strict orders that no one should know about this and He said that something should be given her to eat."

Scholars are divided about this. Was she in a diabetic coma? Was Jesus saving her from premature burial? Or was she really dead and here Jesus was giving us a new definition of death for those in Christ? Paul explained death for a Christian as falling "asleep" in the Lord (1Thess. 4:13-14). I take Jesus to mean that she indeed died. The other gospels seem to indicate this. I take Him to mean that in the presence of Jesus death is but sleep. However, notice that Jesus takes her by the hand and speaks to her the way a mother would wake up a child in the morning on a sunny day. "Little one, get up; the sun is shining." He is being the ultimate parent here. Look, again, no dramatics, no rolling up His sleeves, no drum roll, no soft music and low lights, and no

theatrics. Jesus simply takes her by the hand and says “Little girl get up.” With her, Jesus is facing a greater enemy than that storm or demons. He is facing death, the final enemy of the human body. The One whose hand scattered the stars in the heavens, like seeds, lifts her by the hand out of that deathbed and says “Little one, it’s time to get up.” She does, and to prove that she is not a ghost, He has her eat something. *Why would you ever want to hurry someone this powerful and this loving?* Moreover, how could He hold us by the hand in spite of how much we have messed up? Verse 30 does reveal that the power to heal was not in His garment *per se*. This was not an act of magic. The power came from Jesus not the garment. But, it did weaken him. I cannot see any other way to read it. This is the only time anything like this is mentioned in the New Testament. So I take it to be a symbol for the fact that *Jesus must become weak if we are ever to become strong*.

For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we will live with Him because of the power of God {directed} toward you. 2Cor. 13:4

And God has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 2Co.12:9

On the cross, no one put a stop to His bleeding, and in that tomb, He became unclean. On the cross, Jesus lost His Father’s hand so that the Father will never lose ours. The only way to the crown was through the cross. He displayed power through weakness and life through death. His life and love with the Father was put on delay in unimaginable agony for you and me. Only through delay will we become the people God wants us to be. Only through delay will we receive more from Him than we can imagine and give more to Him than we thought possible. Jesus experienced the ultimate delay for the salvation of the world. Beloved, let us be conformed to His patience. Take him by the hand and let Him do what He wants to do. Do you really want to slow down someone as powerful and loving as Jesus?