

Mark 5 - The Dynamic of Faith

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A little over 30 years ago, when I got serious about walking with Jesus, I was— Sue and I were involved in a church in Montana that had a very energetic attitude toward the subject of faith. And at the time I was of the opinion that they actually went a little overboard. I thought that they emphasized faith to an unhealthy level.

I've come to understand that that movement that we were involved in— I didn't know it at the time; that was back in the early 80s—but that movement was something that had been going for a while, and it was called— well, the people that were in it called it the word faith movement. Some of us who felt that it was a little overboard called it the hyper-faith movement or the ultra-faith movement. And there was just this emphasis on miracles and signs and wonders that I felt was a little unhealthy. No, that's not true. I felt it was a lot of unhealthy.

And I even— I was a youth pastor at the time and I really didn't know much. The very first time the senior pastor asked me to get up and do a Sunday evening service, I got up and taught on what I thought was the balance of faith, and ended up—some of the people actually got up and walked out. My very first message in front of adults, and people walked out on me. It was just—it was a wonderful legacy.

Here's the problem. You see, I saw what I believed to be an excess in the area of faith. And so, what I did was, I swung the other way, and ended up swinging a little too far. And that happens sometimes because we can be rather reactionary, can't we? And that's what I did.

I ended up kind of deemphasizing faith because I saw these incredible over-emphasis going on. In fact, I would even read, sometimes, things that Jesus said in the Gospels, and I would be a little bummed that He said it.

For example, the times when Jesus would say to people: Your faith has made you well. And I would say—well, I wouldn't— I don't know if I'd actually verbalize it, but I would be like: You shouldn't have said that because some wacko is going to get a hold of that, and they're not going to know where to end, and they're just going to— and they're going to run.

And so, I was plagued a little bit by my Bible. But the more I spent time reading through the Gospels – spending time in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – I realized that I really couldn't avoid those statements. Jesus said them, and I had to finally kind of come to terms with the fact that He knew more than I did. You know how you have to do that eventually? It's like, gee, God, I think you're smarter than me.

And I started coming to terms with the idea that faith is critical. I started even seeing things in the Old Testament about how the righteous will live by faith, and it's for— it's by faith from first to last. So, I had a crisis of my own going on, where I was like realizing, okay, how am I going to— how am I going to reconcile the whacked-out, weirdy stuff that I saw going on early on in my walk with the Lord to what I really believe God is saying here in the Scriptures?

The reason that I'm bringing all of this up is because, as we get into this chapter in Mark chapter 5, we're going to deal here with the issue of faith, and we're going to actually look at some of the passages that I used to really dislike reading just because I thought that they—it was Jesus giving people a license to be weird.

But these passages, these stories that we go through here in this chapter are going to have some powerful things to say about faith, and how we see the dynamic of faith and the power of God operating. So here we go.

Chapter 1:1 tells us: *“They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. ² And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit. ³ He lived among the tombs. And no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain, ⁴ for he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he wrenched the chains apart, and he broke the shackles in pieces. No one had the strength to subdue him. ⁵ Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. ⁶ And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. ⁷ And crying out with a loud voice, he said, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.” ⁸ For he was saying to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!” ⁹ And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” He replied, “My name is Legion, for we are many.” ¹⁰ And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. ¹¹ Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, ¹² and they begged him, saying, “Send us to the pigs; let us enter them.” ¹³ So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea.*

¹⁴ The herdsmen fled and told it in the city and in the country. And people came to see what it was that had happened. ¹⁵ And they came to Jesus and saw the demon-possessed man, the one who had had the legion, sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. ¹⁶ And those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the pigs. ¹⁷ And they began to beg Jesus to depart from their region. ¹⁸ As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. ¹⁹ And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." ²⁰ And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled." (ESV) I want you to stop there, if you would please. Let's pray.

Jesus, we need You to open our eyes. We need You to help us to perceive, to understand, and even to ponder the things that we're looking at here today in this chapter. We pray for understanding. We pray for insight. We pray for illumination. Most of all, Lord God, we pray that You'd help us to apply all that we learn. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

Mark begins, you'll notice here, by saying that Jesus got to what we know is the east side of the Sea of Galilee to the area that he refers to as the Gerasenes. Your Bible may say the Gadarenes, if you have a different translation on your lap than do I. And that's very common. These lands here—these biblical lands had been conquered and reconquered, and people come in and just built cities, rebuilt cities. They demolish, rebuild them again. Things were named by different names over the years, and they became known by several different names. So don't get weirded out by that.

The important thing is to note here that when Jesus landed, He'd practically, hardly gotten out of the boat when suddenly, we're told, that He was immediately approached by a man who was yelling and screaming. Must have been quite a sight.

And we learn right away that this man had a condition that we know is demon possession. Mark tells us that he was—he had an unclean spirit. The Greek word that is translated unclean means foul. So this man had an unclean spirit. The fact of the matter is he had several, but we learned that a little bit later.

Evil spirits are essentially fallen angels, and as such, they are now called demons. And interestingly enough, demons know who Jesus is. It's interesting, isn't it? Here, Jesus gets to the shore of this area and immediately, it says, this man who has these demons knows—he sees Him and he runs toward Him.

I mean, I just picture in my mind, this guy running, break-neck pace, and he comes to Jesus, and he drops to his knees, and he immediately calls Him by name and title. And he's correct, by the way. What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most-High God? I know who You are, and please don't torture me, and on and on sort of a thing.

It's interesting, isn't it? Demons know who Jesus is. Men aren't so sure. You'll remember in the last chapter, we ended chapter 4 with the storm on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus is sleeping in the boat, and the guys are freaking out because the boat's starting to take on water. So they go and wake Jesus up. Don't You even care that we're going to die?

And Jesus gets up and rebukes the wind and the waves. And what do they say? Who is this? That's what men say. Who is this that even the wind and the waves obey Him? Demons go, I know who this is. This is Jesus, Son of the Most-High God. They know exactly who they're dealing with, and they tremble at His name.

Isn't that interesting? Men wonder; demons know. Not that you want to go around asking demons' things and getting their opinion on anything, but look with me again at verses 6 and 7: *"And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. ⁷ And crying out with a loud voice, he said, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?'"*

And we learn about this man's condition when we look in these verses that describe him. It says in verse 3— I know I'm jumping around a little bit here—it says, he lived among the tombs. He literally lived in a graveyard where dead people were.

And we also know that he had a kind of a supernatural strength about him to the point where no one could control him any longer. They would even bind him with ropes and chains, and he would break the chains. And we know from some of the other Gospel accounts that he lived there, and he was naked. He wouldn't keep clothing on. We know that he would cry out night and day.

Can you imagine what it would be like to live in a nearby village hearing this man cry out in the night, probably off in the distance, but you'd hear it nonetheless? What is that sound? Oh, that's the man of the tombs. He was so tormented, lived in such total anguish, that all he could do was just cry, scream, yell night and day.

And it tells us also in verse 5 that he would cut himself with stones, which is a form of self-destruction. This man was a man for whom humanity had been stripped away. Dignity was gone. Sanity was gone. All that remained for this shell of a man was a tortured mind and heart.

He was the proverbial lost cause. He was the kind of a guy that you would not approach because nobody could approach him any longer. He was so violent, so uncontrolled that it was dangerous to go near him, dangerous to be around him. Nobody could touch him. Nobody could heal him. Nobody could control him.

The next thing we learn in verse 9 is why his situation was so far gone. This is when Jesus has that conversation with him. It says that Jesus asked him: What is your name? He said: My name is legion. And then he changes to this multiple plural pronoun: for we—we are many. And at this point, the demons that are in this man take over. His vocal cords to the point where they begin to converse with Jesus, and speak of the fact that they are many.

Now, we don't know if the legion thing is to be taken literally, because you see, a Roman legion could be up to 6,000 men, soldiers—and it's—I don't know. Personally, I think it's doubtful that it's using an exact number here. I think it's probably more likely just a title to imply or to convey that there is a multitude of demonic spirits that have now taken up residence in this man. A host of demons, if you will. The bottom line is that this guy is beyond help. He's beyond hope, right?

So, I started off here this morning talking about faith, right? So, where's faith in this situation? Do you see anybody who's expressing faith here? Did the man fall at the feet of Jesus and say: I'm just—I've got all these demons, would You help me out? Do you hear any of the disciples saying: Wow, Lord, this guy is really in bad shape, but I believe You can do this? Is there any hint that you have from the text that there's any faith that anybody has at all about this situation?

Actually, there's none. And frankly, this story presents a mystery of faith because what we see in this story is the power of God being manifest without any apparent faith from any being expressed by anybody. What we see here is Jesus responding to this situation, the power of God delivering this man from these demonic spirits, and setting him free.

And so, after all of that happens, it says that the word gets around to the local townspeople and so forth, and they make their way out to this graveyard where all this has taken place. And instead of finding this man that was uncontrollable

and hopeless, they find him now—for the first time, they see him with clothes on, for one thing. Instead of jumping and running around and cutting himself, they see him just sitting calmly at the feet of Jesus. And it says that they saw that he was in his right mind. And it was so fearful to them that they even begged Jesus to leave their region.

In other words, they didn't have any expectation that this guy was going to be helped ever, right? So again, where's faith? Where does faith come into this situation?

Well, here's what I've learned in my years of walking with the Lord: I don't know. It bothers me sometimes to even say that, but there's a great deal about faith that we don't know.

What we see here is the power of God, and there seems to be nothing to account for it except God's desire to accomplish His own will.

Think about that for a minute. I'm going to put a passage up on the screen for you to think about as well. You probably know this: Ephesians chapter 3. It goes like this:

Ephesians 3:20-21 (ESV)

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

All right. Great couple of verses. What is he saying here? Well, people like to quote this all the time. God is able to do more. That's basically what we come away with. God is able to do more. But I want you to know this. There are two key words in here that we don't often key in on.

And the first one is, first of all, He's able to do abundantly more than all we ask. That's talking about prayer, and that's when you and I begin to pray, and say: Lord, this person needs a miracle, or this situation needs your touch. Or, God, I pray for this person. I pray for this individual. I pray for this situation. I pray for our country— whatever you're praying about.

The Bible tells you and I that God is able to do more, not just more, but abundantly more than what we're asking. But I want you to notice what else Paul says here in this verse. He says, not only is He able to do abundantly more than what you ask—which is what happens in prayer—He's even able to do abundantly more than you think. And sometimes what we think doesn't go very far. Sometimes when we see a hopeless situation like the man of the tombs, what we think is there's nothing that can be done.

That's what I think. I think that's what a lot of people thought about this man. This was, again, the quintessential, proverbial lost cause. There's nothing that can be done. We're just waiting for this guy to die, right? Because he's obviously beyond help. This man—we would, you would look at a man like that, and you would call him reprobate, which is a word we use to describe someone who cannot be saved. It is impossible. No way. No way. This guy's too far gone. Right?

Well, that's what we think. But you know what? God is able to do abundantly more than what we think. Aren't you glad that what we think doesn't limit our God? Aren't you glad about that? I am.

And I think that's the lesson that we get here, even about faith, because you know what? We've all addressed some issue or circumstance of life that is our man of the tombs.

Some situation that we look at—it might be going on in you. It might be happening in your marriage, in your home, in your body. It might be happening in other relationships or other circumstances. And you're looking at this and you're saying, there's just no way; it's impossible; this is a lost cause. And you don't even know how to pray, and—well, it's not like you don't know how to pray; you could probably think up some words, I suppose—but the point is you don't really—you can't get them out because you can't do it by faith. You can't say it by faith, and so you just choose not to even say it.

There've been things in my life—I've recognized certain things that are just like this insurmountable mountain in my life, and for some reason I just can't get past it. And I—somebody says, hey, let's pray about that thing, and I'm just—inside, I'm just going, oh, do I have to? Because you know what? I don't think I can pray with any degree of believing faith, because it just feels like my man of the tombs.

I think the lesson of the man of the tombs here is that when you and I face those kinds of situations, and we don't even know what to say or how to proceed, I

think that we need to recognize that it is faith that looks beyond even what we think. It's the understanding that God is able, even when I think there's nothing that can be done.

God, I'm so thankful that You are bigger than what I think, than whatever limitations that I place on You.

See, that was one of the problems I had with the faith movement when I witnessed it back in the early 80s. It seemed like they had everything dialed in on the subject of faith. They— and if they didn't see it in the Word, they'd make it up. It was like they just knew everything about faith. They'd probably read a story like this man, and they thought faith was the only thing that made God operate. I mean, that was kind of the gasoline that got him going sort of a thing.

You know what I mean? And they— we'd look at a passage like this, and I'd say, well, where's faith here? There's nobody that even has any sort of belief in. Oh, there was somebody who had faith. I don't know who was, but there's somebody. I don't know, because faith— without faith, nothing's going to happen.

See, I got a problem with that, because that strips away the sovereignty of God. And honestly, I can't explain to you why God seems to move sovereignly, powerfully in the midst of situations where faith seems to be entirely absent, and where other times He speaks to someone in a situation, and even says to them: Your faith has made you well.

I don't get that. I can't reconcile those concepts, like even the man of the tombs, and then what we're going to be looking at here as we move on.

Let's keep reading. In verse 21, it says: *“And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, (meaning, the other side of the Sea of Galilee) a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. ²² Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet (Jesus has had a lot of people falling at His feet this day; different reasons now, this time) ²³ and implored him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live.” ²⁴ And he went with him.*

And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. (Take note of that) ²⁵ And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, ²⁶ and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. ²⁷ She had heard the

reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. ²⁸ For she said, “If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.”

²⁹ And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

³⁰ And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my garments?”

³¹ And his disciples said to him, (You’re joking?) “You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, ‘Who touched me?’” (The question should be: Who didn’t touch me?)” ³² And he looked around to see who had done it. ³³ But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. ³⁴ And he said to her, “Daughter, (here it is; this is one of those verses I never liked) your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

³⁵ While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?” ³⁶ But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.” ³⁷ And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James.

³⁸ They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹ And when he had entered, he said to them, “Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping.” ⁴⁰ And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ Taking her by the hand he said to her, “Talitha cumi,” which means, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.”

⁴² And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. ⁴³ And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.”

These two stories are wonderful. They're woven together here, obviously, because they took place within the context of each other, time-wise. But they also have some very interesting things to say to us about faith.

It starts off with Jairus, a man who had heard obviously— well, both of these people had heard about Jesus, all the things that He could do. They have very different sort of specific needs, but I'm sure these people— Jairus, he heard, hey, the blind received their sight, the lame are walking, the deaf can hear.

Now, we don't know what Jairus really thought about all that. We don't really know. We don't know if he— when he first heard about the things that Jesus was doing, if he got excited; we don't know if he said— I don't know. We just don't know.

What we know now is that something had changed because now it was personal. Now he had a little girl— his precious little girl was sick and near death. And so now you see— you take this stuff in a completely different vein. And now he knows what he has to do. I've got to go find this man, and I've got to convince Him to come to my home, and lay His hand on my daughter. And that's what he did, what he was able to do. And Jesus said, okay, I'll come with you.

What I—as a father myself who's raised four kids and two of them being little girls, I can only imagine what it must've been like for Jairus to walk that day with the crowd up until the point Jesus dismissed the crowd. Because there was— did you notice that? There was a point where Jesus turned to the crowd back and said, you can't come. But it was after Jairus heard the news that his daughter had passed away. Up to that point, the crowd is there and they're— did you notice what it even said?

Look at verse 24 again in your Bible. What does it say? It says that he went with him, but this great crowd is there, and it says they not only followed him, they thronged about him. You know what that means? That means people are just surrounding Jesus. There's this massive humanity that is moving toward Jairus's home. But I don't know—crowds don't move real fast, especially when they've got the purpose of meeting the man in the middle here.

People are trying to get to Him—and we know this because the woman is doing it, too. She's clawing her way to just reach Him too. And you got to know there's other people, and they want to talk to Him, and some are asking questions, and some are— Jesus and stuff, and they're reaching in, and there's just this crowd.

Can you imagine what that was like for Jairus? Can you imagine the torture of seeing that crowd move so slowly toward the destination, knowing that every moment they delayed could be the last for his little girl? And then to make matters worse, the whole procession just comes to a stop, and Jesus is the one that stopped it.

Jesus, You said You were going to come. My daughter is at death's door. Do you understand the faith crisis that Jairus is involved in right now? And yet

Jesus stops the whole procession, and He says: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Somebody touched Me. And His disciples are like: I can't believe You said that. Everybody touched You. No, no, no. I felt power go out from Me. That's what it says in one of the other accounts. So He's looking around. Who touched Me? Who touched Me?

And this woman doesn't want to be known. She doesn't want to be seen. This is the interesting thing about this woman. Let's focus on her just for a moment. We're told here that she had a discharge of blood. It's sort of a vague— sort of a reference, but she had some sort of bleeding that was going on, and we were told that it had been going on for 12 years. That's a long time to be bleeding. She had gone to the local physicians, spent all the money that she had, and she was no better – and in fact, worse. And now, all of her resources were gone, and she's getting worse every day.

And so, here we are, with— yet in the midst of this tormented father who can't possibly get this crowd to move fast enough— here we are faced with yet another situation where we have a desperate, frightened, devastated woman who wants nothing more than to slip in unseen, to simply burrow her way through this massive crowd and touch His garment so that she might be healed.

But you know, there's a problem to all of this. You'll remember she had a condition where she was bleeding. Well, according to the Jewish law, that made her ceremonially unclean. And, you see, unclean people, whatever they touched also became unclean – and that includes other people. And so, people like this, people who had an issue of bleeding, they didn't go in crowds. She probably spent the last 12 years staying away from crowds, not touching other people, because if she did, she would render them unclean.

Let me show you. I told you— we were studying Leviticus on Wednesday night. It wasn't that long ago we read that...

Leviticus 15: 25-27 (ESV)

If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her impurity, all the days of the discharge she shall continue in uncleanness. As in the days of her impurity, she shall be unclean. Every bed on which she lies, all the days of her discharge, shall be to her as the bed of her impurity. And everything on which she sits shall be unclean, as in the uncleanness of her menstrual impurity. And whoever touches these things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening.

If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her impurity, (menstruation cycle) all the days of the discharge she shall continue in uncleanness. (In other words, she's in a perpetual state of ceremonial uncleanness all during that time) As in the days of her impurity, she shall be unclean. (And look at this) Every bed on which she lies (or anything that she touches, anything that she sits on, it all becomes unclean)... as in the uncleanness of her menstrual impurity. And whoever touches these things shall be unclean...

Including obviously touching her. And what they have to do is go through the requirements to regain their clean status so they can worship and so forth, which involved washing themselves, washing their clothes, waiting until after the day is over and so forth.

So, you see, this woman was an outcast from the standpoint that she wasn't to be in any sort of large crowd. Well, there's a problem. You see, wherever Jesus was, there were large crowds, and getting to Jesus meant getting through that large crowd. So, she's breaking all the rules.

And not only that, you got to wonder, too, about her physical strength. When you're hemorrhaging, when you're literally losing blood—you know, don't you? You lose blood and you lose strength. So, she not only has to break the law—basically the law of Moses—to get her way through this crowd, she also has to somehow dredge up the physical stamina and strength to walk wherever He is, and then make her way through to that crowd. I'm sure she's hoping that nobody's going to recognize her.

It says in verse 27, if you look in your Bible there, that she, too, had heard reports about Jesus. She came up behind Him in the crowd, and she actually got to Him. She touched His garment. And here's where, in verse 28, we're told what she was thinking: *“For she..., (thought) “If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.”* Isn't that interesting? Mark tells us what she was thinking because she obviously told it later.

But here's the question: Where did she come up with the idea of touching His garment? Where'd that come from? Was that written somewhere? Why didn't she come up with some sort of a different idea? What about touching His hand? If I just touch His hand, if I can just even brush against His hand, then I know that I'll be healed. Or how about if I just look into His eyes? That's all I got to do is look into His eyes, and then I'll know that I'm healed of my disease. No. She said: Got to touch His clothes. So where did that come from? Right?

Well, it came from her own heart. And then what happened? Verse 29, it says: *“And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.”* So, what's our conclusion about all of this? Jesus has magic clothes! That's the only option.

No, not at all. What's going on here is it's telling us about her faith. It's telling her about what she decided in her mind and her heart was the going to be the touch point of her faith. And I—it's not a biblical term, but I use it to describe that recognition, that determination in our hearts and minds of what's necessary to see this happen. What she decided was necessary was, I got to touch His clothes, and if I can just touch His clothes, that's enough.

Now, see, there were other people that came up with different sorts of ideas, right? Well, we read here, Jairus. What did he say? Hey, would you tear off a little bit of your garment and I can take it back and just lay it on my daughter? No, that might've been an option if somebody came up with it. But no, he wanted Jesus to come and lay hands on his little girl. Did Jesus have to lay hands on his little girl for her to be healed? Heavens, no. We saw people healed of diseases unto death with just a word, right?

Remember the Roman who came to him? The Roman soldier says: Hey, I've got a servant back home. He's sick. He's about to die. I need You to heal him, if You would. And Jesus said: All right, I'll come with you. He goes: Oh no, no, no. You don't have to come with me. No, just give the word. Just say the word and he'll be healed. And then he started talking about his rank in the Roman army, and said: I got men who are under me, and I tell them what to do, and they do it. You know why? They recognize my authority. There are people over me, and they give me orders, and they don't follow up to find out if I've done it because they know I'm going to do it, because they know I recognize their authority. You're a man of authority, too, and I recognize that You give the word, and it's done.

You remember what Jesus did when He heard that? He turned around to the crowd and said: You hear this guy? This is amazing. It said, He was astonished. How do you astonish God? You have faith. And this was beyond any touch point, right? He just said: Oh no, no, no. Just give the word.

So, you see different people, different faith. Here's what's interesting: Jesus meets them at the place of their faith. Did you ever notice? Jesus doesn't say to the woman: You didn't have to come out here and worry, work your way through the crowd. You just could have believed.

Or didn't say to Jairus: You—really? I got to go to your house? Lay my hands on her? All the way to your house? Can you see I'm kind of busy here? He didn't criticize any of that. He met people where they are.

Have you ever heard stories of people reaching out like during some kind of a Christian program and laying their hands on their TV and getting healed or something like that? And we all kind of go: So stupid. They're laying their hands on their TV because some whacked-out evangelist said, just reach out, touch your TV, and you're good. And we're just sitting there going, oh, sorry—and we all think that is so dumb.

You know what? It might sound dumb, and I wouldn't recommend it—I don't know; never asked anybody to touch their TV or radio or computer, and I wouldn't—but you know what? God meets people, sometimes, where they are. And sometimes, if their touch point even sounds weird to you and I, God isn't going to sit back and go: Really? Your TV? I can't work that way. I'm sorry. I don't do through TVs. All you're going to get is a little radiation burn, and that's about it. So don't do that anymore. There's other things, right?

What's your touch point? What's that place? What's that place in your heart that's going to where you believe this is where God is going to do His work? This is where—this is the dynamic of faith where it's going to be manifested, where I am going to see the power of God begin to move in my life in a supernatural way. It might sound silly to the person sitting next to you—and maybe it is—but you know what? To God, He just looks to that heart that is reaching out to Him by faith, because faith is huge.

And I love the fact that Jesus met this woman, and then—what does he say to her again? Here's that verse 34: *“Daughter, your faith has made you well.”* See, I wish Jesus would have said things like: My power has made you well; now go—or whatever. But it's like: Jesus, You said it was her faith that did it. Why did You say that? Because in this case, this is what unlocked—this was the dynamic that unlocked the power.

I can't get away from it. Can you? It's what it says. I've learned enough about the Greek manuscripts to know that you don't doubt these things. This is what Jesus said. He said: Your faith has made you well. Wow. Now, that doesn't mean I'm going to get whacked out about it and try to go overboard with this sort of a thing. But it says what it says.

All right, so let's go back to Jairus really quick as we close up here. It says in verse 38, they finally—Jesus dismisses the crowd, but when did He—again,

when did He dismiss the crowd? Here's Jairus, like: Jesus, can't we get going? Finally, they go through this whole thing with the woman and her bleeding, and Jesus says: Go daughter, your faith has made you well. And Jairus was like: Yeah, let's get moving.

And right when Jesus is still talking, he looks up and his heart must have just sunk when he sees— oh, those are some of my servants coming here. That can't be good. And his worst fears are realized when they walk up to him and say: Jairus, it's over. She's gone. So, you might as well just not trouble Him anymore. There's other people here that He can touch and heal, but it's too late for her. It's too late for your girl. She's gone.

Wow. So they finally get back. They finally— and what does Jesus say at that point? You got to wonder if Jairus even heard Him. He said: Don't be afraid. Don't fear. Just believe. Believe what? Just believe.

They make their way. Verse 38: *“They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.”*

By the way, these are hired mourners. They did that back in those days. It was considered to be an act of honor or an expression of honor toward the deceased to have a lot of people, if you could afford it, wailing outside your home when someone in your home died.

In fact, a particular rabbi wrote in the Jewish Mishnah, and said that even for those who are poor in Israel, they should hire at least two or more flutes and at least one weeping woman to come to your home and to cry. And they'll do it— not that they necessarily felt what they were expressing, but they were hired to do it and they did it.

And we know that they weren't really experiencing these emotions because when Jesus— verse 39— came into the situation, He asked them: Why are you carrying on and making all this noise about this situation? He says: The girl isn't dead. And it says— it goes on to say, they laughed at Him.

I always used to wonder how could they go from crying to laughing just like that? Well, they were hired. They were hired mourners. And Jesus comes along and says: What in the world is all the noise? She's not dead. And they begin to laugh.

And I want you to really take note of what it goes on to say in verse 40. This is very key, you guys. Very key. It says: *“But he put them all outside.”*

Now, I don't know if you underline in your Bible. Maybe just make a mental note of it. That is so important. He put them outside. These people now who laughed at the face of God's power, they get put outside. They will not witness or experience any of the dynamic of seeing God's power at work.

And it says that He went inside with the parents of this little girl, and also with Peter, James, and John, who He had separated out from the other disciples. He went into this area where she was, and you know how it goes. He spoke over her. She woke up, immediately got up, started walking around, and Jesus gave her back to her parents who were amazed. What did the laughers and the mockers get to see? Nothing. They got to see nothing.

And therein lies a great insight from the Word of God related to faith and stuff. But you might say, well, now wait a minute, pastor Paul. In the story of the man of the tombs, there didn't seem to be anybody that had faith that this guy was going to get better either, and yet they did get to see the power of God being manifest in that situation. Yeah, that's right.

So what's our conclusion? Yeah, I don't know. Really. This is one of those things. Again, after 30 plus years of walking with the Lord, I have to tell you that I do not have it figured out. I don't understand fully the dynamic of faith. I can't explain it to you.

I can't say: Here's why God moves sovereignly, powerfully in the life of this man who is bound in slavery to these demonic spirits when nobody around happened to believe that there was anything that could be done for him. And then over in these other situations, Jesus is saying: Just don't be afraid. Have faith. And according to your faith, you have been made well.

All I know is this: God is able to do abundantly more than we ask, and God is able to do abundantly more than we think. And that is the bottom line.

That's why I think that we need to learn from this, and apply this even in those situations where we don't know what to think or what we think is hopeless. There's no way—there's no way this is going to turn out.

Let me end here this morning by just putting a passage on the screen that you all know. We all had it on our refrigerator, probably memorized it, quoted it. But this is one of the most powerful passages in the whole of Scripture because it says:

Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart,” even when you don't understand what's going on in the situation and what you do understand seems to betray any idea of a hopeful expectation in the power of God working in that situation.

He says, no, don't go there. Don't go there. Don't fixate on what you know and what you understand, because if you do, that's where you're going to live.

And so, he says, rather than leaning or putting your weight upon those things, which you see and understand in the situation, understand this: God is able to do abundantly more than what you think. God is able to go, to exceed the boundaries of what you think. He's also able to exceed the boundaries of what you ask.

And what we are to do in situations where we don't understand it, we don't get it or whatever, we are to, according to this passage, acknowledge Him in all of our ways. That means to simply acknowledge God.

God, You're here. You're doing—Your Word says that You're good. I am going to acknowledge your goodness. In the midst of this situation, Your Word says that You're powerful. I am going to acknowledge Your power. Your Word says that You hear me. You hear us when we pray; I'm going to acknowledge that You're listening to me. I'm going to acknowledge You.

In fact, he says, acknowledge God in all of your ways, and in all of your thinking, and all of your speaking. Acknowledge the Lord.

I love it when I hear people acknowledging God in the midst of what is otherwise a very challenging, and what might even appear to some to be a hopeless situation. I love it when I hear it come out of people's— they'll tell me about the situation; they'll say, yeah, but God—and when I hear those words, I'm encouraged because they'll say: Yeah, but God is able. Here's the situation. Here's what's going on, but God is bigger than this. God is able to do even beyond what I think and far beyond what I can ask.