



Rev. Frank Wang
Mark 5:21-43

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English Standard Version

Willing and Able

The 13th Sermon in a Series on The Gospel of Mark entitled
“The King and His Cross”

1. Welcome

- a. Welcome to Potomac Hills. My name is Frank Wang, and I’m one of the pastors here. Happy New Year on this the first Lord’s Day of 2020.
- b. Turn with me to Mark 5. We’ll be starting with verse 21 and going to the end of the chapter. We’re diving back into our series on the Gospel of Mark after our break for Advent in the Psalms. And while you’re turning there I’d like to take the chance to remind you where we’ve been and give you some context for the series on Mark as a whole. The hope is that we can all start 2020 on the same page.
- c. If you remember, we spent Fall 2018-Fall 2019 going through Jeremiah. It was a hard series: one full of sermons that dwelt on the sin of God’s people in the Old Testament and how we are very much like them. We spent a lot of time thinking about and mediating upon our sin, and to be honest, it wasn’t much fun. It was a profoundly uncomfortable time, and it should have been! But the Gospel never leaves us in our sin. It always moves us to the person and work of Jesus, and so we followed the movement to the Gospel of Mark. Starting this past Fall, we are spending a year looking at the wonder, the majesty, and the grace of Jesus. And this makes sense because your pastors don’t really hope to change your life with a single sermon. It’s the accumulation of sermons that really has the weight to tip the balance in your life.
- d. So if you’re new to this church or church in general, we’re so happy that you’re here with us. Stick around longer than your new year’s resolution to go to the gym more. You might find out that Jesus is far better than you could imagine.¹

¹The background and exposition of this text is adapted from the commentaries Mark by R. Kent Hughes, pp. 115-121; The Message of Mark by Donald English, pp. 107-112; The Gospel of Mark by William L. Lane, pp. 179-189; The Gospel of Mark by R.T. France, pp. 226-233; Mark by R.C. Sproul, pp. 97-106.

e. Now let's turn our attention to the Word of God.

2. ²¹And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. ²²Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet ²³and 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." ²⁴And he went with him.

And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. ²⁵And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, ²⁶and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. ²⁷She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. ²⁸For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well." ²⁹And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?" ³¹And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" ³²And he looked around to see who had done it. ³³But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. ³⁴And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

³⁵While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" ³⁶But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." ³⁷And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. ³⁸They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." ⁴⁰And 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. ⁴¹Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." ⁴²And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. ⁴³And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

3. Pray

4. **Introduction: Conflict Abounds**

- a. If you look at the course of human history, conflict has been a staple of the human experience. Think about it. We tend to mark eras by the battles that bookend them, and even within the relatively short period of American history, each generation has been marked by a war of some sort.
- b. But war isn't the only kind of conflict that we see. We daily wage a battle against the weather and other natural phenomena. We gear up against the cold, putting on layers of clothing to protect ourselves. When it snows, it can seem like a battle to keep the driveway clear, or a battle to clear it after the snow stops as your back screams at you. In some ways clearing snow can be a battle against my own sedentary lifestyle.
- c. Which brings us to conflict against our own bodies. As we age, things get harder. You have to battle a lot more simply to stay the same. And it's not just aging. Think

- about how we talk about disease. We have cancer survivors and those that have lost their fight against cancer. We talk about beating the odds.
- d. And of course we also have social conflict. The Twitter feuds and Facebook “debates”, really they’re just fights where people scream at each other in capital letters. And in our government, it seems like the 2 parties are at each other’s throats instead of trying to work together for a better tomorrow.
 - e. And of course we have the persecution of the church. There was the shooting at a Texas church last Sunday that grabbed headlines. There was also news that a secretive Chinese court sentenced Pastor Wang Yi, pastor and founder of Early Rain Covenant Church, to 9 years in prison for subversion of the State. On Christmas Day no less.
 - f. The prayer list is getting pretty long to be honest. And in the middle of it all is us. So, conflict seems to be part and parcel with life. It touches every part of life. And we suffer because of it. And all of that conflict and suffering creates neediness. Things aren’t the way that they ought to be, and we end up wanting.
 - g. And the great story of the Bible is that God sees our neediness, our suffering, our conflicts, and He responds with grace and peace. We see that grand story from the first pages of Genesis to the last pages of Revelation.
5. Roadmap: So this morning, the hope is to see that grand story of God’s response to sin, brokenness, and the Curse in the microcosm of Mark 5. And so, we’re going to be talking about what we need first, and then Christ’s ableness, and then lastly his willingness.
6. **What we need**
- a. So let’s start with what we need. As we look at this passage, we can see that it divides into 3 neat encounters. The first is Jairus meeting Jesus to ask him to come and heal his daughter. The second is the tale of the woman with a flow of blood, and the third is the spectacular resurrection of Jairus’s precious little girl. And each of these encounters highlights a need.
 - b. **Jairus’s Plea**
 - i. The first encounter highlights fear for our loved ones. We don’t get much detail about the little girl’s sickness, but we get a lot about Jairus’s need. Here’s a father whose little girl, his only daughter, is sick. Many of us in the room are parents. For those of you that aren’t, you have parents, so you will probably understand. A parent’s greatest fear is for their child to die. We will go to great lengths to protect our kids, to see them healthy. And you can imagine the fear Jairus has for his daughter who is clearly dying. And so Jairus is feeling profoundly fearful, insecure, and anxious. We see just how far he’s willing to go by looking at what he does. The fact that he falls at Jesus’s feet is shocking for a man of his station and dignity. Men, and especially leaders of the community, simply didn’t do stuff like that. Furthermore, the fact that he calls upon **Jesus** specifically is even more shocking. Jairus was one of the rulers of the synagogue. He likely would have been part of the religious establishment that had rejected and despised Jesus. To call upon this upstart religious figure that seemed to undermine Jairus’s own spiritual authority and position would have been wild. All of this underscores the desperation Jairus must have been feeling.
 - c. **The Woman’s Disease**

- i. And then we move to the account of this woman with a discharge of blood. And here, we see that there are a 2 distinct needs. The obvious one is the discharge of blood that she had been suffering from. Look with me at verses 25-26 to see her plight.
 1. *And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse.*
 - ii. Medically speaking, she was sick and had been searching for a cure. She had literally tried everything, and most of the so-called treatments were, to the modern doctor, simply superstitions. And now, after 12, **12!**, years of being sick, she had no options left, no money to continue to search for a cure, and no hope because it was all getting worse. She needs healing.
 - iii. But there is a social need too. For a woman with a discharge of blood like this would have been declared ceremonially unclean. Not only would she have been unable to enter the Temple, but she would have been ostracized from her community. Since she was unclean, she could transmit that uncleanness simply by touching someone else. And so this disease didn't just take her health, but it also took her community as well. Sure, some folks might have stayed with her and cared for her at the beginning, but 12 years is a long time. Who knows how many of her friends had dropped her along the way, the burden of caring for someone that was unclean would have been enormous.
 - iv. Think also about the practical aspects of her suffering. Not only does she have this sickness, this disease, but she also has the vulnerability that comes with being ostracized from her support structure, from the social safety nets of the day. Was she homeless? Hungry? Abused? All of that was possible. Can you imagine being in her shoes? The shame, the anger, the anxiety. All of it adding to the fear of your own body's brokenness.
- d. The Girl's Death
- i. And we finally arrive at the little girl's deathbed. What more to say here than that deliverance from death is our greatest need. The mortality rate is 100%. Death is coming for us all, and there is no escaping it.
- e. Unity in the Curse – Equal Opportunity suffering
- i. And it is in the diversity of these characters that we see the truth of the human condition. You see, Jairus, the woman, and the little girl are all wildly different people. Between the three of them, we have all the contrasts.
 1. Men and women. Healthy and sick. Alive and dead. Old and young. Rich and poor. A leader of the community and the pariah.
 - ii. It doesn't really matter who you are or what you've got. The suffering of the Curse is universal. The Curse is an equal opportunity hater. We are all in the same boat when it comes to dealing with the effects of sin upon the Creation because we're all ending up in the same place. The ground.
 - iii. And we're also united in our own approach to the problem. We do whatever we can. We try to control whatever we can because maybe it'll all work out if I just try hard enough. It's like I can, through sheer force of willpower, overcome whatever comes my way.

1. And we see that here too! Notice that Jairus didn't seek Jesus out before his little girl was on her death bed. This is Jairus's last ditch effort to save his daughter. And the same goes with the woman with the flow of blood. She spent 12 years and all of her money trying to fix things on her own.
 - f. Desperation
 - i. **But none of it works in the end for either Jairus or this woman.** Their desperation highlights their inability to control things. It highlights our **lack** of power, authority, and control over even our own lives. Both Jairus and this woman have come to the end of themselves, and they have found that they cannot overcome the problems in their lives.
 - ii. And they're left with no earthly hope. They've tried everything, and everything's failed. They're desperate for help, for a solution, for a miracle really. And with their last shred of hope, they turn, in faith, to Jesus.
 - iii. And they're not really looking **for Jesus**, but really for a magical talisman that will make their problems go away. If I have to put up with Jesus, then I will to get what I want.
 - g. And this where I will say that evaluating the faith of Jairus and the woman is the usual game plan when preaching this passage. And we do learn much about faith here. But that faith always drives us to the same place, the person of Jesus. The key is that they come to Jesus. The power is in the person, not the faith. Faith always moves us, just like the Gospel does. It moves us from fear to trust. It moves us from desperation to hope. But it doesn't move us to trust or hope in nothing. It moves us to trust in **someone or something**. It moves us to hope in **someone or something**. And so we need to keep our eye on the ball here. This passage doesn't ultimately point to the commendable faith of Jairus or the woman. This passage points us to Jesus. **He's** the one that they come to, to address their needs. **He's** the one that they come to for help. **He's** the one that they turn to for salvation. And **He's** the one that will ultimately deliver them.
 - h. And there is a tension that we tend to skip over as we read this. When Jairus walks up to Jesus and asks, he doesn't know what Jesus will say or if he's even able. When this woman slinks up to touch Jesus's cloak, she doesn't know what will happen, and she fears what Jesus would say. And so there are two questions that arise when coming to Jesus with our needs: Is he able to do anything about our need? And Is he willing?
7. Transition: Which brings us to Jesus's response to them.
8. **Jesus's Response: Ableness**
- a. 30,000 foot view
 - b. And so let's start with Jesus's ableness. Jesus is clearly able to heal the woman of her discharge of blood and the little girl of both the disease that killed her and the death that had overtaken her. That's not surprising. And it's important for us to understand that these two miracles come at the end of a line of miracles that we've been in for the last 3 sermons on Mark. It started with the calming of the storm at the end of Mark 4 and continued to the exorcism of the Legion of demons in the beginning of Mark 5.
 - c. I said the last time that we were in Mark, talking about the Geresene demoniac, the dude with a legion of demons, well I think I said something like, "Mark is making a

- point about Jesus's power and authority. He's systematically displaying Jesus's power and authority."
- d. Think back with me at the calming of the storm. He's flexing on the powers of chaos and showing his authority over the conflict that we have with nature and the Creation. Then comes the demoniac. There, Jesus is demonstrating his power over the spirits, demons, and over the spiritual realm. The storm in the man is calmed if you will. Again, the conflict with spiritual forces is won emphatically by Jesus. And then here in our passage today, Jesus is going up against the decay, corruption, and death brought on by the curse. Of course, he wins. Such is the transcendent power of Jesus.
 - e. The Gentle Touch: The Prince of Peace
 - f. But I think that what brings this down to where the rubber meets the road for us is the idea of "**peace**". This power isn't just cosmic in scope. That would be wildly intimidating, and God certainly is! But Jesus doesn't come simply to flex his cosmic power. He comes for us. And so, Jesus, when he calmed the storm, spoke, "Peace! Be still!". And he didn't just speak peace to the storm, he spoke peace into the hearts there in the boat with them, though the power was still intimidating. And when Jesus healed the demoniac, there was a peace that was wrought in that man's life. The move from a whirling hurricane of limbs that shattered bonds and screamed incoherently was replaced with a peace of mind and peace of body.
 - g. And today, Jesus spoke peace to this woman who touched him, without permission I might add. What a crime it was for this woman to have touched Jesus! She would have rendered him unclean according to the Law. But what happens?! Instead of making him unclean, her own uncleanness is overwhelmed by his cleanness, and she is restored. And when he calls her out, what words does he speak? Does he speak with chastisement for her presumption and for doing things improperly? No! Look with me at verse 34. "*Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in **peace**, and be healed of your disease.*"
 - i. He's not only speaking of the peace of being delivered from the disease, but also being delivered from her isolation. Did you catch what he called her? He called her "Daughter". It's the only recorded instance in which Jesus addressed a woman as "daughter". He is calling her to be one of his family members, which is no small thing in a society built on family. The tenderness of his address must have been a balm to her anxious, suffering, and lonely soul. Peace not just for her body and not just for her social status, but for her soul too.
 - h. Remember how we started with conflict in every aspect of life? Well Jesus is piece by piece undoing the curse. He is bringing peace where there is conflict. He is bringing rest when there is only restless anxiety. He is bringing healing where there is only brokenness, disease, and death.
 - i. What peace there must have been for Jairus to have his daughter returned to him. A relief, a joy, a peace that wipes away his tears and replaces them with joyful shouts of praise.
9. Transition: And why? Why does Jesus do this?
- 10. Jesus's Response: Willingness**
- a. He's doing this because he wants to all of you and all of me. His objective is not just to die for sin and to redeem a people, but to restore **intimacy**. He's not simply there

to make things new and whole. There's more to what he wants than just fixing what is broken. He wants to pour his love and compassion into it. He wants to establish intimacy with those he is redeeming.

- b. Think about restoring a car. You've got an old, busted 1968 Ford Mustang that once belonged to your grandfather. It's an iconic car that you dearly love. You could send it off to a professional restoration expert, or you could fix it up yourself. Over the years of working on this car, you pour in time, effort, money, blood, sweat, and tears. When it's finished and looks awesome, it's not just any car. It's your baby. You have an intimacy with it. And so way back at the beginning of this journey, you're excited. You're excited to restore things to the way that ought to be, but you're also excited to develop and restore a relationship to this car and to the one you love.
- c. Jesus is the same way. He's excited to go to work on the problem of the condition. And it all points to the fact that he's willing, which is absolutely key. It's what makes it all go. And He's not just grudgingly willing. We are his passion, literally. He went to bed thinking about us, and he woke up thinking about us. He's more than willing, he's pleased to help us, to redeem us, to restore us. It gives him pleasure and joy to know that his people are being made new. Look at how he responds to each encounter.
- d. When Jairus comes up to him after Jesus gets out of the boat, what does the text say? Look at verse 24. It simply says that he went with him. There's no discussion or hesitation. He simply goes. You can imagine Jairus's delight at Jesus's ready willingness to go. Jesus sees the need before Him, and he is willing! He's ready to go and to help Jairus.
- e. And then with the woman, he heals her even without being asked. Surely he is in full control of his power. He's not some automatic healing machine. Think about that! He doesn't even know who touched him, but he somehow knows that he wants to heal her. I mean all the other folks in the crowd are also touching him. They probably have minor ailments such as colds or coughs or what have you. The Bible doesn't record them being healed. But this woman is chosen to be healed and embraced. Do you see the willingness of Jesus? He wants this woman to feel his desire for her to be restored. That's why he's unwilling to let her be anonymous. He's not there simply to heal flesh and blood, but to heal the broken intimacy between God (him) and man (her). I think that Jesus wants this woman to hear him say, "You are my daughter, whom I love, go in peace and be restored."
- f. And then what about his willingness when news of Jairus's daughter's death arrives? In the face of death, the finality of it, Jesus is undeterred. He insists on the impossible.
 - i. She's dead? Don't fear, only believe. I will heal this girl, no matter what state I find her in. Death and disease are nothing once I've set my heart upon Jairus and this little girl.
- g. Do you see the compassion, the love, the tenderness that Jesus has for those whom he loves? Do you see the determination to use his power and authority to bring peace to those whom he desires to set his peace upon?

11. Gospel

- a. Jesus was so determined to bring peace to those around him that he wasn't content to bring a temporary peace that would eventually perish. The woman he healed would

someday become sick again and eventually die. Even the little girl he raised back to life would grow up, age, get old, and then eventually die too. The peace that Jesus works in this passage isn't meant to and doesn't last. Jesus is not content to leave us there, with a quick fix, a temporary solution. No. He's not here to simply make your life "better" and give you "your best life now". No, Jesus wants to change everything by drawing you to himself. Jesus is the gamechanger. And so Jesus went to the Cross to win you life. And this isn't just any old life. It is a New Life altogether. It's a different kind of life, a life that never wears out. It's resurrection life. And that's the Gospel. That Jesus died on the Cross for your sins and mine because he was willing and able to fulfill all of our needs, the greatest being needing to be made new and whole in Christ. That "in Christ" is what matters. We want to be one with him, united with him. It's all about Him. Being with Him, loving Him, and loving what He loves.

12. Transition: And as we wrap up this morning, that's what I hope 2020 will be all about.

13. Application: New Year, New Life

- a. It's a new year, and it's a season for memes, I mean, resolutions. So many folks approach this new year and say, "New Year, New Me." The new year feels like as good as a time as any for self-improvement. Many of us will make resolutions to eat healthier and work out more. Some of us will resolve to read more or be more hospitable, to get to know our neighbors better or to spend more time in God's Word. And most of these resolutions will be broken or forgotten come March or tomorrow.
- b. But think about this. The Triune God made a resolution way back before the foundations of the world. The Triune God resolved to love his people to the end. And in Christ Jesus, He is willing and able to keep that resolution, by take the old broken life that we had and replacing it with New Life and Peace. In Christ, we are altogether different. A new you indeed.
- c. Will this year be the year that you look to Jesus for New Life and Peace? Will this year be the year where you finally see just a little bit better that Jesus loves you beyond measure and is able and willing to fulfill what you truly need? Will this year be the year when we place our trust in the only one who is worthy of it? What's your New Life Resolution gonna be? You need to think about that and pray, and I'll close us in prayer in a minute.

14. Pray