**Fear and Faith**

Mark 5:21-41

The Rev. Jeff Stivason, Ph.D.

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**Jeff:** Heavenly Father, we give You thanks and delight in You and are thankful for this day, and we ask that You would bless it to us. Lord, we pray that You would do that by committing to us Your word and using Your Spirit in our lives to bring it to bear upon our lives, that we might be changed and conformed to the image of Christ of whom it tells. And Lord, we ask that You would help us to walk after Him, knowing that we will stumble and even fall, but that we have a Redeemer and a Savior and an Advocate before You. And we can go to You through Him, seeking the forgiveness of our sins. And delighting to know that we come to You now, asking that Your hand would be upon us for good, always drawing us to Yourself, that we might know the power of the gospel and the Savior. Father, we pray that You will bless this work to our hearts this morning, that we might not only learn from it but that we might be shaped according to it.

* Father, we also pray for the church. We ask that Your hand would be upon her in these troublesome days. Lord, we do pray and ask that with the new administration there might be new protections afforded to her. And yet we can never sit comfortably with the world. And so, Lord, we always pray that You would keep us vigilant. We ask, Lord, that we would always watch and pray, even against those who seemingly seem to be our friends. And yet, Lord, we ask that You would bless us and make us wise as serpents and gentle as doves.
* Father, we also pray for those we love. We certainly pray for Sig as he recovers from COVID. We certainly pray that You’ll keep it from Nancy, and Lord, we just ask for recovery on their behalf. Lord, we do pray and ask for those who are not with us because of illness or sickness or because of some other reason keeping them. And we just ask that Your hand would be upon us we study, and we ask it for good in Jesus’ name. Amen.
* **Brave Men:** Amen.
* **Jeff:** All right. Well as I mentioned, we’re going to look at Mark’s Gospel, beginning at verse 21. Let’s just read that before we get started. Whenever you’re ready.
* **Don Maurer:** Oh, I’m supposed to read it; okay.
* **Jeff:** You don’t want to read it?
* **Don:** Oh, sure.
* **Jeff:** Okay.
* *“Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when He saw Him, he fell at His feet and begged Him earnestly, saying, ‘My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.’ So Jesus went with Him, for a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.*
* *“Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse.*
* *When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, ‘If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.’ Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction.*
* *“And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, ‘Who touched My clothes?’*
* *“But His disciples said to Him, ‘You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, “Who touched Me?’” And He looked around to see her who had done this thing.*
* *“But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.’*
* *“While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house who said, ‘Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?’*
* *“As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, ‘Do not be afraid; only believe.’ And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James.*
* *“Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. When He came in, He said to them, ‘Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.’ And they ridiculed Him.*
* *“But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, ‘Talitha, cumi,’ which is translated, ‘Little girl, I say to you, arise.’*
* *“Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement. But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat.”*
* **Transcriber’s Note:** NKJV.
* **Jeff:** All right. So today we’re going to look at this outline, and we’re basically going to look at an introduction. That introduction is going to take us back to the last time we met together, because the last week we met together and this week go hand in hand; I want to draw you into that again through the introduction. And then I want us to look at the structure of the text that we have before us this week, and it’s pretty self-evident; I just want to draw your attention to it. And then we’re going to notice a lesson that’s in the text; I want you to see the lesson that this text is driving at.
* And so let’s start with the introduction. And let me remind you that when we go back to the beginning of this story, it’s not at chapter 5 verse 1. Actually, the beginning point of this story is in chapter 4 verse 35. If you go back to 4:35 you remember that this is the evening after Jesus had taught them. And He said to them, “Let’s cross to the other side of the lake.” And on the way over they took Him with them.
* He was sleeping on a cushion in the stern, and the disciples are afraid. Just listen to what is said in verse 38: *“But He was in the stern asleep on a cushion. And they woke Him and said to Him, ‘Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?’*
* *“And He awoke and rebuked the wind and the sea and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still!’ And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*
* *“He said to them, ‘Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?’ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, ‘Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?’”*
* Now basically you look at the story, and you find that it’s an interaction between Jesus and the disciples. And yet I think what you begin to see when you kind of step back from just these five or six verses is that this is actually a transitional point between the teaching of Jesus and the next couple of stories that we’re going to look at. And you see that in terms of the questions.
* The first question, a dual question, is, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”
* Now that’s Jesus’ question put to the disciples, as they fear going into the boat. “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” And then the second question comes from the disciples about Jesus, and it’s this: “Who then is this?”
* So you have a first question and a second question. And again you can see the chiastic structure of what we’re doing here. you have a., the first question. And that’s about being afraid and being faithless. And then you have this second question, b.—who is this who is talking to us?
* And then notice—and this is what we covered the last time we were together,--the question “Who is this?”—is answered in 5:1-20. And it’s a demon that answers that question. “You are Jesus, Son of the Most High God.”
* So if you’re looking at this in terms of the chiastic structure, you have a.—be not afraid and faithless,--and b.—who is this? And then b., where question b. is answered: this is Jesus, Son of the Most High God. And that’s the second question being answered.
* Now the beautiful thing about that is that if you go back and look at Mark, up until chapter 8 Mark is divided into three big sections. If you look at the first two sections, the first section is about the person of Jesus; the second section is about the work of Jesus.
* If you look at chapters 1-8, what you get is that it’s actually back and forth, back and forth: humans and demons. And the humans are constantly saying, “Who is this?” And the demons are actually identifying Jesus.
* The culminating point is in chapter 8 where a human—Peter—actually recognizes Jesus and says, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Most High God.” And this is where Matthew tells us that Jesus said to Peter, “You didn’t get that on your own; God revealed that to you.” So we are in the midst of that kind of section where there is a back-and-forth between demons and humans. The humans don’t recognize Jesus for who He is; the demons do. We don’t get that culminating point until chapter 8, but we’re in the midst of it. So who is this? The humans don’t recognize Him; the demon Legion certainly does.
* Now then, you get to our text. In 5:21-43 this answers the first question. So this is a question about fear and faith; this is what we’re dealing with today: fear and faith.
* Now I say this because I think this is one of those texts where you sort of look at it and you say to yourself, “This is an important text for today.” We may all well know who Jesus is; we may be able to answer that pretty readily. But we certainly live in a world that doesn’t. And sometimes, even though we know who He is, sometimes we are fearful, and sometimes we lack faith because we doubt. So I think this is a really good text just to look at and see how Jesus deals with it, and that’s what I want us to do this morning.
* So that’s the structure of it; at least that’s broad structure. I want us to look at a smaller portion of the structure this morning. But before I go there, do you have any questions from a couple of weeks ago that you want to revisit before we get into 5:21 and following? Is there anything that you wanted to talk about from this time? No? Okay.
* All right. So now I want us to look at our text. How do we look at it? How do we divide it up? How do we assess it?
* Well, basically what we have here is what is called a sandwich technique, a nontechnical term. *(Laughter)* It’s a sandwich technique. But when you think about this it is basically an inclusion. And an inclusion—an inclusio—has a point of beginning. It has a word, a phrase or an idea, or in this case a story. And then the end has a word, a phrase, a concept or a story, and it encloses a text.
* And typically oftentimes it is in the middle of the text where you find some key important features.
* I’ll give you a couple of examples of this. For instance go to Matthew’s Gospel, chapter 5. In Matthew’s Gospel you have the Beatitudes that start the Sermon on the Mount. Notice that in the first Beatitude in verse 3 it says: *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* And so you notice that you have that present tense: “Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
* And t hen if you were to look at verse 4, you have *“They shall be comforted.”* This is a future tense. Verse 5: “shall inherit”: a future tense. Verse 6: “shall be satisfied”: future tense. Verse 7: “they shall receive”: future tense. Verse 8: “they shall see God”: future tense. Verse 9: “They shall be called sons of God”: future tense. Verse 10: “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
* That’s an inclusion, very much like the one we have here. There’s a present tense at the beginning, a present tense at the end, and a middle tense, all future tenses. So there’s a sense in which this is an inclusio. And so what’s at the beginning is the same story that’s at the end. The story of Jairus starts the passage. The story of Jairus brings the passage to a conclusion. But the woman and the issue of the flow of blood is right in the center of the story. So basically what you have is an inclusion.
* Now these stories are related. And the stories are related because you have to go back to the first question. And you remember the first question; the first question is “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”
* I want you to see this; look at the text before us. In chapter 5 notice the two stories; let’s start with the woman. Notice what it says about her. It says this in verse 33: *“But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before Him.”*
* **Transcriber’s Note:** ESV.
* **Jeff:** “Why are you so afraid?” Now go to the story of Jairus and look at verse 36. *“But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler, ‘Do not fear; only believe.”* In other words, he wasn’t believing; he was faithless because of his fear.
* So in these two stories what you have is Jesus dealing with the two questions He posed to the disciples: “Why are you so afraid?”, and “Have you still no faith?” And so here we find the woman coming out of her fear and trembling to Jesus. And we have Jairus who is fearful being now told to have faith--to be faithful. L, to be full of faith.
* And so when you look at the text, one of the things that you discover is that the structure of it fits nicely back into the very first question. So what we’re dealing with is fearfulness and faithlessness, just like the first question posed.
* So the fact is—and Don, for your benefit,--you have a., which is Jesus’ question, which is “Why are you afraid?” and “Have you no faith?’ why are you faithless?”, and b.—the disciples’ question about Jesus to one another: “Who is this?” And b. prime: the question “Who is this?” is answered by the demon: “You are Jesus, Son of the Most High God.” And then a. prime: this is the story for today, taking care of the question of fearfulness and faithlessness. Okay, so that’s basically it.
* Now that kind of sets us up for the lesson itself that I want us to look at today. That’s going to be the bulk of our time together; I want us to take a look at it.
* First of all, notice what I said to you earlier. The woman in verse 33 comes in fear. And the man Jairus is faithless, or at least he’s doubting. And he’s doubting because he’s fearful. And Jesus encourages him not to be faithless but to be full of faith.
* And so what I want you to notice is that fear and faithlessness stand in relation to one another. Now the important thing about this is that we’re now going to move into something that I think is important for us to see, and we see the relationship. For instance here is this woman who comes to Jesus in faith, out of her fear and trembling. Go back, for instance, to verse 33. Notice that Jesus said, *“Who touched My garments?”* And the disciples say, “You see the crowd and you ask, ‘Who touched Me?’” And He looked around to see who had touched Him.
* Look at verse 33. *“The woman, knowing what had happened to her, came with fear and trembling and fell down before Him, and told Him the whole truth.”* Now notice what He says to her: *“Daughter, your faith has made you well.”* In other words, there is a sense in which faith overcomes fear. And so she comes even in the midst of her fear to Jesus.
* You know, we’re going to talk more about this idea of fear. But in my mind John Wayne gives an excellent definition of fear. He says, *“Fear is being scared to death, and saddling up anyway.”* I just think that’s an excellent definition of fear.
* Why? Because here’s this woman who comes out of her fearing and her trembling. She comes out of her being scared to death, but she does it anyway. And that to me strikes the idea of what we’re talking about.
* And we need to go to Jairus. Notice how Jesus couples them. Jesus says, “Don’t fear, but exercise faith.” And so fear and faithlessness stand in relationship one to another.
* Now I want you to see this. I don’t want you to go there, but I just want you to look at the board because it’s up there. I don’t want you to read it yet; we’ll get there. This is in Revelation 21:8. It says, *“But as for the cowardly,”*—that is, the fearful,--*“the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars,”* and so on. Notice how fearfulness and faithlessness are coupled together in that text. It’s just like we find in these two stories.
* Now I want to share the rest of this quote with you, and I think it’s going to be obvious to see if you haven’t figure it out already. *“But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, the sorcerers, idolaters and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”*
* Now I don’t know if that hits you like it hits me. But I think we have to ask ourselves: Do we hear that rightly? Of course those who are lacking in faith will be in hell, right? If you don’t have faith you aren’t putting faith in the Savior; that’s not a big surprise. But did it really say that the fearful or the cowardly will be in hell? It certainly did. Those who are cowardly, those who are fearful, are going to be in the lake of fire.
* Now that ought to juggle you, because to some degree or another I think we would all say that we exercise faith—not perfectly, but we exercise faith in Christ. Even if my faith is an imperfect fai5th Christ is still a perfect Savior. And so He saves me even though I have an imperfect faith because it’s Christ who saves me through faith, right? I get that.
* But I come back to this idea of fearfulness or cowardice, and I have to stop and take pause with that. That’s a pretty radical statement: that the fearful will be in hell. That doesn’t seem very fair, right? And the answer to that question is yes, you would be right; that’s exactly what the text teaches.
* But here’s the thing that I think we need to understand. We need to understand how this is being presented to us, because it becomes absolutely crucial for us. I want you to gather that not every fear is alike. In other words, not every fear is the same kind of fear as every other fear. And we certainly begin to see that in this text.
* There are different kinds of fear. For instance there is *phobeo. Phobeo* is a general kind of fear. When we think about our phobias today that’s where we get them, right? When somebody says “I have a phobia of spider” or “I have a phobia of heights; I have a phobia of going out. I’m agoraphobic, that is, I’m afraid to go out into the marketplace; I fear leaving my home.” When we begin to talk about phobias we begin to talk about what is generally fearful to us.
* And what I want you to gather is that the word *phobeo* which is the word most commonly used in Scripture is a word that describes what could happen to each one of us; we would be fearful about a certain thing; there is no doubt about that. But I also want you to know that the Scriptures call us not to be fearful. We’re gonna talk about what it is to be fearful and what the Scripture calls us to do.
* But let me give you just a couple of instances. The Scriptures call us not to be fearful. Take John chapter 14, for instance. In John chapter 14 verse 27 look at what Jesus says to His disciples: *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you: Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”*
* Or how about 1 Peter chapter 3, verses 13 and 14? *“Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?”*
* I want us to pause for a minute. There are a lot of people that will harm you. And this text is the end of a list of people that will harm you. There are ungracious, disrespectful, harsh slave owners who will harm slaves. There are husbands who dominate over wives in a fearful way; they could harm them. In verse 7 there are difficult wives. Finally there are just all kinds of people out there who might harm you. And he says in verse 13, *“Who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?”*
* “But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake”—in other words, even if those out there who can harm you do harm you,--even if they do, *“if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed.”* And then listen to this: *“Have no fear of them, nor be troubled.”* Have no fear of them.
* And then there is 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 7. This is more personal but it’s just as applicable to us as it is to Timothy. *“For God gave us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control.”*
* So in the Scriptures you are hard-pressed to find anywhere in the New Testament where you are told to fear. It is true that we’re told to fear God. But in the New Testament we are oftentimes told but not always told, “Don’t be fearful.” In fact that’s the common command from the lips of Jesus: Don’t fear.
* So we are to get the sense that *phobeo* is a general fear that we may encounter in life. We could certainly encounter it from other human beings, but we may encounter it from other things. For instance the story that starts us off has fear of the elements—fear of the sea and the storm that blew upon it. You don’t necessarily find this in the Scriptures, but you may find people who are afraid of bugs or spiders or all kinds of things like that.
* So there are these fears that we all have. And the New Testament’s injunction is: Don’t harbor them. In other words, don’t fear.
* Now what I want us to understand is that this story kind of tells us and gives us the way into thinking about that. In other words, the Scriptures aren’t necessarily calling us to erase all fear from our whole selves immediately or else we’re not saved; that’s not what He’s saying. What the New Testament, what Jesus is saying, is to overcome your fear: that is, do the thing that you ought to do even if you’re fearful, because in doing the thing that you ought to do you’re overcoming your fear; you’re putting that fear to death.
* So for instance, think about the person who is afraid of praying mantises. You know, there is a website that has a list of phobias on it, and it is massive. And it isn’t just people who are making these things up. This is a guy who is culling these phobias from medical journals and all sorts of places. It’s a website that just lists one fear after the other; it’s massive.
* But let’s say, for instance, that you’re afraid of praying mantises. So what do you do? Somebody is going to say to you, “Go over here to the table, and you have it right there.” This is how it goes, right? If you think I’m kidding you, you’re mistaken, because this is how it really is. You put a picture of a praying mantis on the table. And somebody over here is afraid of praying mantises. “I’m not going over there.”
* What’s the first step? The first step is to get him two steps closer, and eventually he gets over to the table. And then you have him pick up the picture of the pray8ing mantis up and hold it himself.
* Have you ever watched somebody who is afraid of a spider? You show him a picture of a spider and he jumps back from you. You say, “Take it.” And he says, “No, I’m not even going to touch the picture!”
* So what you’re getting them to do is overcome their fear. Take a few steps, sit at the table, pick the picture up. And then eventually what do you do? You bring in a praying mantis. They’re terrified as they hold the praying mantis. But John Wayne says that courage is being scared to death but holding the praying mantis anyway, something like that.
* And so that is the Biblical view of overcoming one’s fears. You’re living in faith even as you’re fearing. But that’s what it is.
* Now does everybody get that? Does that make sense to you? Do you want to talk about some of that? Yes?
* **Mike Davis:** We hear about the Great Commission in Matthew 28. The Great Commission is preached quite often in the Christian life. But rarely do you hear the context of chapter 28; it’s about fear. And it culminates with Jesus saying, “Hey, all authority has been given to Me. Take heart and go!”
* **Jeff:** Yeah, because it even says in verse 17 of Matthew 28: *“And when they saw Him they worshiped Him, but some doubted,”* right?
* **Mike:** Yeah. From there to the end of chapter 28 it’s about fear. And Jesus is saying, “Hey, all authority has been given to Me.”
* **Jeff:** And the beautiful thing about Matthew’s Gospel is that it starts off with Immanuel, which means “God with us.” And it ends with Jesus saying, *“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* So the whole idea of the presence of God in the midst of our fears, as being the One who overcomes, is a huge relief to us. Yes, Don?
* **Don Maurer:** As far as Revelation 21:8 is concerned, I have to admit that jars me. I’m just curious: Why do you think it is that cowardice or fearfulness is included with such things as sexual immorality or murder or idolatry?
* **Jeff:** You know, Don, that’s a good Segway right into the next slide. So the common word for fear is *phobeo.* But in Mark 4:40 it isn’t *phobeo;* it’s *diloi.* That would be the transliteration of it. So that word is cowardice; it’s not *phobeo.*
* Now when you think about that, think about what he’s saying to them. He’s not saying, “Why are you so *phobeo*?” He’ saying, “Why are you so *diloi?”*
* Now there’s a difference. And what’s the difference? I think the difference is this; let me put it this way. The difference between the two words is that *diloi* is best translated “cowardice.” And interestingly it’s not translated like that; it’s translated as “fearful” in Mark 4. But you find in Revelation 21 that *diloi* is translated as *cowardly.* *Diloi* is what you find in Revelation 21:8, not *phobeo.*
* So here now you have an even tighter tie between the text that we’re looking at in Mark 4 and 5 and Revelation 21:8. Why? Because what you find is, you find that the disciples are called *diloi*—cowards—and you find faithlessness. And here they are. He’s asking them, “Why are you cowardly and lacking in faith,” or faithless? In other words, think about it. He’s asking them, “Why are you on the precipice of being tossed into the lake of fire?” Because those two things will get you tossed there. “Why are you on the precipice of that?”
* Now what’s the difference between *phobeo* and *diloi? Diloi* is a fear that renders one a coward. Now you say, we’ve been talking about cowardice. What does that mean?
* I’ll tell you what that means. It means this: Cowardice means that you are paralyzed by your fear. Cowardice is when the thing that you fear paralyzes you to the point where you cannot act in faith.
* In other words, look at it this way: Something else has become sovereign over you such that you can’t actin faithfulness.
* So for instance let’s go back to the praying mantis. The praying mantis is on the table. And somebody says to you, “Take a half step toward the table.” And you say, “I can’t.”
* At that point you would say, “Okay, I can’t distinguish between *phobeo* and *diloi* at that point.” If you finally get him even with a lot of cajoling and persuading to take that half step, they have *phobeo;* they have fear, because he’s taken a step toward the table; he’s acted in faith.
* But let’s say that the person stands back. You’re cajoling and speaking tenderly to him and persuading him, you’re grabbing him. “I can’t; I can’t do it.” And he walks out the door. That’s *diloi.* That is a cowardice that is akin to paralysis. In other words, that picture of the praying mantis is so sovereign over him that he refuses to act in faith. Does that make sense?
* **Don:** Okay. So let’s put ourselves in the disciples’ shoes. That day Jesus is sleeping. There’s a storm; they’re going to drown. What should they have done? Nothing? I mean, they woke Him up? Isn’t that faith? Didn’t they know that Jesus could do something? What should they have done?
* **Jeff:** Well I think this is why these kinds of things are so hard. It’s hard to parse that question out and say for instance that they weren’t acting in faith. I think that what Jesus recognizes in them is the potential or possibility for them to be cowardly at this moment, right?
* Think about it. They’re fishermen; they’re out on the sea. I mean, what is Jesus going to do? He’s a carpenter, right? Even if they don’t recognize Him for who He is like the demon will, what is He going to do? They’re going to a Teacher, a carpenter at this point for help on the sea. And what does that have to say for them? It doesn’t bode well, right? And He recognizes in them a *diloi,* not a *phobeo.* That’s why He calls them out.
* So we have to go with Jesus on this and say that there’s a sense in which He’s calling out something in them, or that He recognizes the potential for it. John?
* **John Gratner:** Isn’t Jesus’ response not “Why didn’t you ask me to do something?”, but rebuking them for saying, “We’re all gonna die here that You’re dying with us!”
* **Jeff:** Yeah, that’s right.
* **John:** It was a rejection of being loyal to Him in that statement. It wasn’t a plea of “Lord, help us!” It’s “We’re all dying here; we’re going down, and You’re taking a nap? Get up and die with us!”
* **Jeff:** That’s right. It’s sort of like Jonah, right? “Why are you sleeping in the bottom of the boat?” So I think the difference is that *diloi* presents a paralysis. And that is the antithesis of faith, because paralysis means that I can’t act in faith, which is why I think that when you look at Revelation 21:8, why they’re coupled together is because cowardice means that something else has become your sovereign, and therefore you are faithless toward God. So I think that’s why they’re coming together here.
* Now we’re gonna go to the story. But what I want you to notice is that the disciples become spectators in both of these stories, right? They’re just watching this battle between Jesus and the demoniac. And they’re watching what happens and what is unfolding before their eyes between Jairus and this woman who has the issue of blood. They’re not participating; they’re spectators. They’re getting a lesson here, and so we need to keep that in mind.
* Now the woman and Jairus have a lot in common. The woman comes in fear and trembling, and Jairus is told not to fear. The woman is commended for her faith; Jairus is told to exercise faith and to have faith. And so there is a lot in looking at the text where we can see the commonality here.
* Now let me ask the question. Would she be a coward? Again in 5:31 we find the answer to that. “Who touched Me?” The woman comes in faith.
* Will Jairus be faithless? Well Jairus is told, “Do not fear; only believe.” And then he acts in faith. And what I think we have here is that we have two people who have a lesson for the disciples. And that lesson for the disciples is not only about who He is, but it’s about fearfulness and faithfulness. And I think that these two people are teaching that to the disciples. They are watching these people respond in faith. And so I think the lesson is: Will fear or faith mark our lives?
* I think that’s the question, right? And I think that when you really give some thought, if you’ve been thinking along with me about the fearfulness of our culture around us, I think that you can really lay hold of the idea of how relevant this text is, because we live in a world that is a fearful world; there are so many phobias out there.
* And I’ll tell you this; I’ll tell you this from experience. For some reason I never had trouble until the first day of my senior year in high school. I got salmonella and I ended up in the hospital. I dropped a ton of weight; it was kind of a scary thing.
* Anyway I ended up recovering from that. But cognitively I was messed up. All of a sudden I had a problem with OCD; I became an obsessive/compulsive kind of person. I hated to leave the house. When everybody else had already left, if my parents said they were going somewhere or my brother was going somewhere I was left alone; they or I would have to lock our house. And I had gone on this routine where I had to check everything a jillion times. Sometimes after an hour of going through that cycle I would leave, only to go back and recheck everything. What came up was, I couldn’t get out of this cycle. And that’s the way it was for a long time; that’s the way it was.
* I’ll tell you this: The Lord has broken that cycle in me. But I have to be vigilant against it all the time. And it’s one of those things; it’s funny. When I tell people about having to struggle with OCD, when I tell them that you can overcome it and you can get past it, they don’t believe that I actually struggled like they do. If I actually struggled like they do, they think that I wouldn’t tell them that I can actually overcome it, because they don’t believe that it’s overcomeable. They believe that it’s just the way it’s going to be. That is akin to cowardice.
* There’s a book called *The Anxious Generation*. *The Anxious Generation* is about the generation of children that has grown up with this kind of anxiety. You won’t agree with everything in it because I don’t think it’s a Christian book. But it will describe the way it is and where we are with this current generation. This text is important for helping us to understand that.
* Anxiety, if it becomes cowardice, is a threat to their spiritual well-being, and we need to keep that in mind. It’s not a harmless thing, right? Any thoughts or questions about that? Do you want to discuss it at all? Yes, Don?
* **Don Maurer:** These things that are happening to these people here in these accounts in Mark are extraordinary. It may be my lack of faith. But for example, if a loved one is dying I don’t expect the Lord to heal that person. I sometimes pray that would be the case. But if the person is old or dying of a terminal illness I don’t expect that person to recover, let alone if that person dies that he will be brought back to life; I would never pray that would happen. And I guess my question is that these are extraordinary circumstances, and that’s the whole point. The point is that whether it’s the storm or the circumstances where someone dies and you don’t know what to do, it teaches us that in our circumstances where we have so many fears like terrorism or whatever, and the trials in our lives, to put our faith in Christ. Is that it?
* **Jeff:** I think that’s where it starts, right? I think for instance that where it starts is putting your faith in the sovereign God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, because if you get into a situation in life that’s anxiety producing, you’ve got to be able to fall back on the sovereignty of God. In other words, what you have to be able to do is say that I’m ridden with anxiety about this situation. And yet I have to put both feet on the ground of the doctrine of God’s providence and sovereignty. I believe that nothing is outside of His control. And that’s my first step forward, and then I move from there. This God who is sovereign has revealed Himself in Christ. He can calm the wind and the sea and the waves at any moment.
* You know, though, here’s the thing that God does to us that in some ways I think is so frustrating. I’ll just say it and it’s recorded; it’s frustrating!
* We just got through the Christmas story, the Incarnation, right? And one of the things that I think about is Matthew 1:18-25.
* **Transcriber’s Note:** Matthew 1:18-25 is the account of Joseph discovering that Mary is pregnant, along with the angel appearing to him in a dream and reassuring him, announcing to him the birth of Jesus.
* **Jeff:** God has told Mary that the Holy Spirit in Luke’s Gospel that “the Holy Spirit is going to overshadow you, and that you’re going to have a Child who is going to be the Son of God.” In 1”18 and following of Matthew’s Gospel, during the betrothal period when Joseph and Mary weren’t supposed to have any sexual intimacy, they were married. But they were in a twelve-month period where they were waiting. She would be brought home to his house and they would have sexual intimacy. She is found to be with child. And Joseph doesn’t seem to know about this.
* So he’s going to divorce her. And you want to say, Wait a second! Why didn’t anybody tell Joseph? If God had selected Joseph to be the earthly father of Jesus, why did God allow it to get to the point where the holy family,--if I can call them that,--was contemplating divorce over the Incarnation? I mean, when you think about this you have to step into the text rather than staying outside of it.
* I mean, think about it. It says in the translation that Joseph considered these things. You know, if you look at the Greek lexicons, do you think he’s going, “Hmm! My fiancée is pregnant. What should I do now?” Liddell and Scott’s Greek dictionary says that Greek word can be “angry.” I have a tendency to think that’s what Joseph was: angry about these things. His girl is turning out pregnant, and he knows it’s not his; he’s angry about it.
* And yet he is a just man. He acts in justice, which is probably why God chose Joseph to be the earthly father of Jesus. But my point is, why does God let the disciples get into the storm so that they can manifest cowardice? Why does He let the holy family come to the precipice of divorce? He does that all the time with the like of those in the Scriptures. He does that all the time in our lives. He lets things get into a mess before they actually straighten out.
* And the point I’m trying to make is, that’s what God is doing in us so that He can form Christ in us. That’s intentional. And so the point is that you’re in the midst of the storm. And the point is, you’re supposed to be laying hold of God in Jesus Christ in the midst of the storm. You know that the storm will pass. The question is, how will you act in the midst of the storm? That’s the real question, because it’s how you act in the midst of the storm that’s going to form you after the storm. Yes?
* **Mike:** One of the big things in our culture today is that our culture pushes fear.
* **Jeff:** Yes.
* **Mike:** It’s on the news media. Every news channel has a severe weather team. It’s going to be severe from day to day; you know the weather is going to be terrible. We’re constantly bombarded with fear.
* **Jeff:** Yes.
* **Mike:** It’s to keep our attention so we’ll turn on that TV channel, that news station, or whatever. It’s a manipulation that we all go through. At some point it’s capturing your mind.
* **Jeff:** Yeah.
* **Mike:** We’ve got to be careful what we put into our minds as Christians. The enemy is not interested in our well-being.
* **Jeff:** Yeah.
* **Mike:** We have to be very careful about what we allow into our brains because we see this from every angle.
* **Jeff:** Yes. You know, one of the things that we need to do regularly is to speak truth to ourselves. I don’t know about you, but one of the things I do every morning is that there are certain things I just tell myself. I do it when I’m in the shower; it’s just a great place to do it.
* **Mike:** Do you sing in the shower?
* **Jeff:** I don’t sing. *(Laughter)* I don’t want to wake anybody up; I’m a bad singer. But anyway, for instance, I say the Apostles’ Creed; I’ll repeat the Ten Commandments; I’ll recite Scripture. I’ll say those things to myself; I don’t just recite them and recite them. I say that this is what I believe and this is what I am to do, and so on. I think that telling ourselves those kinds of things is hugely important because we’re being told so many other things by people all the time. If you don’t have anything else, we’ll pray and close out.
* Father, thank You for this day and for the time You’ve given us to be together. We ask that You’ll bless us. Lord, as we think about this really important topic we ask, Lord, that You’ll help us to overcome our fears and exercise faith. Lord, help us not to be cowards in the face of anything that could be a potential fear that would paralyze us. And help us to be good examples to others who are captured by anxiety. Father, help us to be men who are faithful and courageous and willing to do even if we are afraid, so that others might follow our example even as we follow Christ. Father, we ask these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.
* **Brave Men:** Amen. *(Applause)*