

*Where we start . . .*

Where have you found yourself waiting for something only to end up frustrated at the length of the wait?

What is it about waiting that seems to bother so many of us to such a degree? Why is waiting hard?

*What we read . . .*

Although in the account that we will read Jesus does some amazing things, tucked right in the midst of the story is a tale of waiting. See if you can pick up on it as you read Mark 5:21-35.

Why had Jairus come to Jesus in the first place? What did he anticipate?

What do you think went through Jairus' heart and mind when Jesus stopped to speak with the woman who was now healed? What would you have been feeling or thinking?

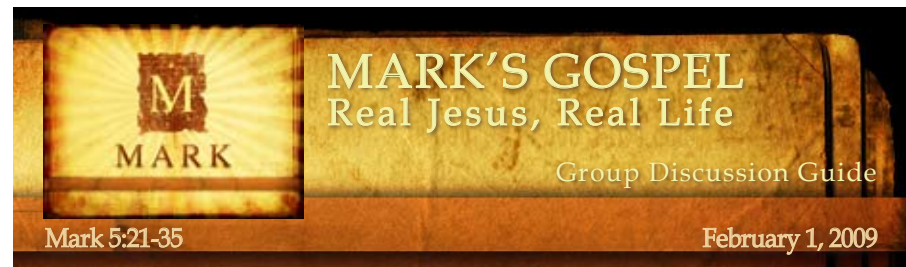
What does Jesus tell Jairus when the report comes that his daughter had died? Why does Jesus need to extend this call to Jairus?

Ultimately, how does the story turn out for Jairus? How do you think he might tell the tale if asked about what had happened?

*Why this matters . . .*

Jesus was *not* too busy to tend to Jairus' need. He, in fact, met Jairus' need. He simply didn't do it according to Jairus' preferred timing. What does this picture, for you, about how Jesus addresses the needs you bring to Him?

What will help you to "stop being afraid" and simply "believe" (5:36), when Jesus' timing in your life is different than you wished it was?



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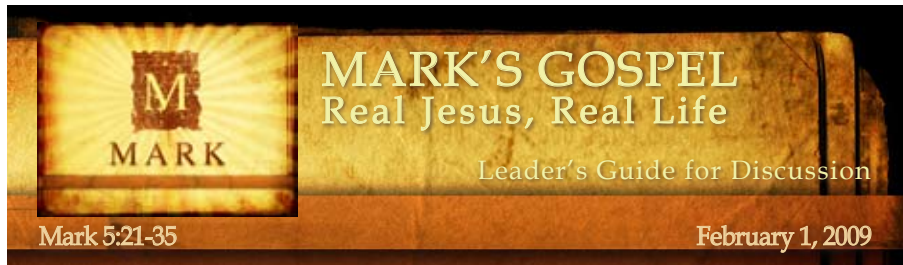
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*Diving in . . .*

Mark, drawing on Peter's eyewitness experience, often provides us with close-up snapshots of Jesus' life and ministry. When we get to those moments, it is important to pay close attention to what we are told. Often there is much more going on than just the report that "Jesus healed this person" or "Jesus can do this!" As the story unfolds under the inspiration of the Spirit, we catch glimpses of who Jesus really is and how we can relate to Him. Such is the case this week as we watch Jesus slow down on His way to address a seemingly urgent need. But He is not hurried; and He is never late. He takes the time to not only do all that needs to be done, but also shows up at the right time to do what is needed. That is a great reminder.

*Discussing . . .*

Most of us have felt the frustration of waiting; we know what it is like to anticipate something and to be left in limbo for what we expect to come to pass. But it's one thing to experience that when waiting at the Post Office or the DMV, and altogether a different thing when we feel we are waiting for the Lord to act on our behalf in the midst of a challenging time of life.

As we see in the account this week, not only do we learn of Jesus' grace in bringing healing to two different individuals, but we get to enter into the challenge that Jairus must have faced when he was left waiting.

Mark weaves two accounts together; the healing of a woman with a flow of blood and the raising of Jairus' daughter. And it is the details that Mark gives us that can turn our attention to some fresh insights into how and why Jesus does what He does.

As you read the passage together, try and enter into the moment. Feel what the characters must have felt; imagine what it would have been like to be there. Don't merely read "at arms' distance."

When Jairus comes to Jesus, his daughter is "at the point of death" (5:23; ESV). Literally, she is "on her last." The situation is desperate, and Jairus would have been greatly encouraged and relieved when Jesus turns to go with Him. But then something happens.

Mark tells us of the woman who comes and grasps at the edge of Jesus' garment. And, in so doing, she is healed. Don't lose sight of a couple of very significant pieces of the story that Mark gives us.

First, notice the extent of the woman's affliction. According to 5:25-26, she had suffered for many years, she had seen many doctors and submitted to many treatments and had not gotten better, and she had spent all that she had. And then, notice, that when she does turn back to speak to Jesus, she tells Him "the whole truth" (5:33). She told Jesus about all that she had experienced—and that couldn't have been told in a word or two.

How long did it take? Minutes? An hour? More? It's hard to say. But for Jairus it must have seemed to be a mind-numbing and heart-rending eternity. After all, the woman was healed; both she and Jesus knew it. And his daughter was dying.

And then the report comes: the little girl has died! This is a real account of what really happened so try and be real with what must have been going on with Jairus.

Frustration probably doesn't even begin to describe it. His hope for her healing has fled. His anger at the delay would be coming full into bloom. How is he feeling toward the woman who delayed Jesus? And toward Jesus who wasted so much precious time talking to the woman? It may be hard to define exactly, but it is not hard to imagine how challenging it must have been for Jairus.

And then Jesus spoke. "Do not be afraid. Just keep on believing." The language Jesus used tells us that He was calling Jairus to "keep on" believing. That wasn't an invitation to "keep thinking the right theological thoughts about Me" as much as it was a call to "keep relying on, trusting in, depending on Me!" Although Biblical faith must have an "identity" component (*Who* is the object of my faith?), it is much more than that. Biblical faith is to press on through the identity issue to really rest on, rely on, depend on, and place confidence in the object of my faith. Jesus wants Jairus to keep on trusting Him, even though it looks like Jesus' timing is off, that His strategy has resulted in tragedy, and the case is now hopeless.

It is true that we should come away from Mark's account of the raising of Jairus' daughter with stunned and joyful amazement at Jesus' power over death. Clearly, that is part of what we need to see. But in addition to that, we must not lose sight of how Jesus handled the situation and what His handling of this pressing need tells us about what He does in our lives.

Jesus welcomes us and our cries for help; He is willing and glad to extend grace and power to us in the midst of our needs. But He may not address those needs the way we expect Him to; He might not step in at the time or in the way *we* deem best. It isn't that He is distracted or absent-minded; but He does live and work and minister according to *His* time table, not ours.

That may mean we will have to learn to rest on, rely on, depend on, and trust Him even when it doesn't seem that things are playing out *the way* we think they should or *when* we think they should. We can, like Jairus, take a deep breath . . . let our hearts be calmed and set aside the fear . . . and "keep on trusting" Jesus, confident that He will always do the right thing at the right time.