

When we look at the gospel of Mark, we see the sequence of events which show the vanquishing of powers hostile to God. In chapter 1 Jesus drives out impure spirits (1:21-28). In chapter 4 Jesus calms the storm (4:35-41) and again in chapter 5 Jesus heals the Gadarene demoniac who was released from a legion of evil spirits as Jesus commanded them to go into the pigs. The disciples were afraid when they were in the boat on the lake when the storm came. Jesus hears their cry and got up and muzzled the storm and asked it to be calm. This storm immediately subsided. Similarly, with the demoniac Jesus delivered him and asked him to go home and testify to his people what God had done. The sequence of incidents that Mark puts together now reaches a climax with the rising of Jairus's daughter and the healing of the woman who was sick for twelve years. The authority that Jesus exhibited in the muzzling of the storm and the healing of the demoniac now soars to new heights as he shows that Jesus has authority over death and disease.

Mark tells us that the daughter of Jairus was sick and he comes to Jesus pleading for her life. He requests Jesus to put his hands on her so that she would be healed and live. So Jesus went with him. As they were walking along, a large crowd followed them and were pressing around him. A woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years was among the crowd. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

Jesus immediately realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" The disciples were indignant with him as the whole crowd was pressing him and anybody could have touched him. But this was no ordinary touch because Jesus knew that power had gone out from him. Therefore, he kept looking at the crowd to see who had done it.

The woman who was healed knew what had happened and came and fell at his feet, trembling with fear, she told him the whole truth. Jesus turned to her and said, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." The Greek word used here *'esosken'* can mean both *'saved'* and *'healed'*. Here both physical healing and spiritual salvation is meant: 'be freed from your disease and go in peace.' The touch of faith brings about the woman's healing. We too are called to trust Jesus by faith to heal us both in body and in spirit. The power of God is available to those who believe and therefore we are called to approach Jesus with confidence.

While Jesus was still speaking, news came to the synagogue ruler Jairus that his daughter had died. The message was meant to stop Jesus from proceeding further as the little girl had already died. However, Jesus reassured him saying, "Don't be afraid; just believe." The key thing that is stated here is that Jairus was requested to believe and not to be afraid. It must have been very tough for Jairus to believe when he was told that his daughter had died.

Jesus takes Peter, James and John with him and asks everybody else to leave. He took the child's father and mother and went to the room where she was laid. Jesus held her hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up." Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around and the people were completely astonished.

Jesus is the only person who has power over death. He is the life giver, he defeated death on the cross and rose again on the third day. Because of this, death is a defeated foe. Jesus is the life giver and therefore he has the power to change our dead situations. Jesus discloses his kingdom as a saving reality by displaying his power and authority over history, nature, demonic powers, life and death, because he is the Son of God. May we appropriate this life giving power and celebrate life.