

Greetings to you! The theme for our morning's meditation is, 'The life-giving power of God'. We have been looking at Mark's gospel over the past weeks and the sequence of incidents that Mark puts together now reaches a climax with the raising of Jairus' daughter and the healing of a woman who was subject to bleeding for twelve years. The authority of Jesus that was exhibited in the muzzling of the storm and the healing of a demoniac now soars to new heights as he shows that Jesus has authority over death and disease. Mark also uses a sandwich technique by beginning with Jairus approaching Jesus, interspersed with the healing of the woman with bleeding, followed again by the healing of Jairus' daughter.

Jesus and his disciples had crossed over the lake from Gerasa and reached Capernaum. On the shore there was a huge crowd that was awaiting Jesus. Among them was a synagogue ruler by the name of Jairus who came to Jesus and fell at his feet. A synagogue ruler was a person who carried the responsibility and the authority of a local synagogue and therefore was a man of some consequence in Capernaum. He comes and falls at the feet of Jesus knowing that Jesus alone was able to heal his daughter. His attitude was both one of humility as well as desperation. He implored Jesus to have mercy on his little daughter who was only twelve years old. Jesus acceded to his request and went along with him.

As Jesus went out there were a huge crowd that was pressing against him. A woman who was suffering with a hemorrhage for over twelve years drew near to Jesus. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors, but instead of getting better she became worse. She came quietly from behind the crowd and touched his garment thinking, 'If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.' Such was her faith that as soon as she touched Jesus she knew that she had been healed. Jesus also knew that power had gone out from him and suddenly turns around and questions as to who touched his garments. The disciples were indignant that Jesus had asked such a question when there was a huge crowd pressing him from behind. However, Jesus knew that power had gone out from him and somebody was healed. The woman stepped forward and disclosed all that had been going on in her life till the moment she touched Jesus. Jesus tells her, 'Daughter your faith has healed/saved you.' The Greek word (**esoken**) has a double meaning: both to be saved and healed. Here, both physical healing and spiritual salvation are meant. Jesus says, 'Go in peace and be freed from your suffering'. Jesus shows through this that he has the power to bring about healing in situations which seem humanly impossible. In our own situations even when doctors give up hope that is when God begins to work.

As Jesus was speaking, people came from Jairus' home saying, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher anymore?' Jesus tells Jairus, 'Don't be afraid; just believe.' The key thing that Jairus was asked to do was to hold on to the faith with which he had

come to Jesus. He had come with full confidence in the first place and now he was asked to hold on to it in the midst of his daughter's death. Jesus and his inner circle of disciples go to Jairus' home. There is already a commotion and probably even the professional mourners had come as there was loud wailing and lamenting. We can assume this with the sudden change of mood as the mourners begin to laugh as soon as Jesus said that the child was not dead but asleep. Jesus leaves the crowd behind and goes into the inner room with Peter, James, John and the child's parents. He then takes the child by her hand and says, '**Talitha qum**' which means, 'Little girl, I say to you get up'. The girl immediately got up and began to walk around. Jesus then tells the parents to give the little child something to eat.

In both these instances, we see the life giving power of God at work. 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. As we face situations which we think are out of control, or on the throes of death, we can be greatly reassured by the life giving power of God which will transform our situation from one of desperation to one of life giving hope.

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