

## Two Miracles In One: Mark 5:21-43

**Introduction:** In Mark Chapter Five we have two intertwined miracles which were clearly seen as significant, given that Matthew and Luke also record them in their gospels. They concern the restoring to life of Jairus's 12 year-old daughter and the healing of the woman who had been sick for 12 years with a terrible affliction.

First a word on miracles generally; in the gospels, miracles are so common that we can easily take them for granted and lose the sense of wonder which they evoked among those who saw them. Just think, a sick child dies and comes back to life again, a sick woman is healed after touching Jesus' garment - both occurring before crowds of people, so there is no chance that they could have been fabricated.

Let's look at what could be called 'Two Miracles in One'. Jairus, a respected community and religious leader, has a daughter who is dying. He would have seen many of Jesus' miracles since he was the ruler of the synagogue in Capernaum where Jesus lived and actually did some of them. He begs Jesus to come and heal his daughter. Jesus goes with him immediately.

While on their way, a woman slips in through the crowd to touch his garment, believing that by doing that she would be cured her of her terrible affliction. She was right of course, but not completely. If she had been allowed to slip away unnoticed she may have thought Jesus was a mere miracle worker. She needed to know that there was nothing magical about the garment. She also needed to know *why* she was healed and, more importantly, *who* it was that did it. Also, it was important that her restoration to health was publicly known so that she

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could be fully integrated back into the community and not continue to be shunned as an 'unclean' outcast.

Meanwhile, before Jesus and Jairus reached the house, news came through that the girl had died. The messengers may have believed that Jesus could have healed her, but it never occurred to them that he could bring her back to life as well. They, and we, need to learn that with God *all* things are possible.

As mentioned earlier, the very public nature of these miracles in such that no one could get away with making them up. Capernaum was a small town. Everybody knew everybody else. If they were made up, anyone wanting to discredit the gospel stories could easily have done so. There is no record of any attempt by enemies of the early Christian movement ever disputing the historical truthfulness of these events.

So the real question raised by the 'two miracles in one' is what are we to make of them?

The first and obvious point is that they demonstrate the power that Jesus had over this material world. As a matter of fact, the Greek word translated as 'miracle' in the gospels literally means 'powerful act'. They show that the power that created and sustains the universe was at his disposal; more to the point, that *he* the one who is bringing in the kingdom of God. Matthew 12:28 says, 'If I by the power of God cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.'

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The second point about these miracles is that they show what is in the heart of Jesus – love. How often do we read of Jesus having compassion on people in need? How often do we see Jesus reaching out to the sick and suffering with tenderness and care? Remember how he touched the leper, thus himself becoming unclean.

That is what Jesus was like *then* and that is what he is like *now*; Hebrews 13:8 says, ‘Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.’ What this means is that you can come to him in prayer and know that the love he felt towards the people in this story, he feels towards you; 1 Peter 5:7, ‘Cast all your cares upon him because he cares for you.’

The third point to draw from all the miracles of Jesus is that they are signs of something even greater than power of this physical world. They are also signs of something even deeper than we might feel for someone in need. They were signs of something we are in danger of missing altogether if we are not careful.

Take as an example of this greater thing the healing of the paralytic in Mark 2:1-12. This cripple was lowered through the roof by his friends. When Jesus saw their faith he said to the cripple, ‘My son, your sins are forgiven.’ The religious leaders who were there called this blasphemy, but Jesus said, ‘Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say “your sins are forgiven” or to say “take up your bed and walk?” But that you might know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, I say to you [the paralytic], rise, take up your bed and go home.’

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In other words these, and all the miracles, are signs that Jesus and he alone, can forgive sins and make things right between us and God.

To summarize, Christ's power to do miracles, Christ's love in wanting to help needy people, and his authority to forgive sin, of which the miracles are signs, really sum up what the gospels are all about. They demonstrate and illustrate that God loves us and wants to bring us into his eternal kingdom.

Of course, the little girl and the sick woman who were healed that day both died in the course of time, but the grace and forgiveness that comes to us when we put our faith in Jesus lasts forever. That is the reality of which these two miracles in one are signs.