

## ***Jairus and his Daughter: Jesus Ministers Directly to Children***

Summer Sermon Series “*God Uses People Like Me*”

Kenwood Baptist Church

Pastor David Palmer

June 4, 2017

**TEXT: Mark 5:21-43**

This morning we begin a new summer equipping series that seeks to inspire us that God can use people like me. When we read through the Scriptures, especially the New Testament, we



encounter the names of men and women, and many of them seem very famous to us. There are well-known names like Peter, John, Mary, Paul, or Timothy. However, most of the names in the New Testament are mentioned only briefly—almost in passing, names like Epaphras, Demetrius, Joanna, Susanna, Gaius, or one of my personal favorites,

Nympha. I'd like to have a show of hands if you've ever heard a sermon on Nympha. This will be the last Sunday you'll ever be able to say that, because she will be the focus of our attention next week. Most of the names in the New Testament are mentioned quickly, but they describe ordinary people being used by an extraordinary God to accomplish remarkable things for His Kingdom. Most of us do not have a calling on our lives like Peter or Paul. Most of us have a calling to be used by God with the gifts He has given to us and to let God do remarkable things with each one of us. This morning, we are making a really significant decision in the history of Kenwood. It's a decision to say that the family should be together in worship. It's a decision to say that the Word of God can be heard under or over the rumbling of squirrely kids and an occasional crying babe. A wailing babe can go to the family room, but a crying babe is fine. I remember Dave Hansen said to me once: “If you can't do theology with a crying baby in the background, then you can't do theology.” It's important that families are together and that we learn together to hear God's Word. So, we begin the summer series with the passage in which Jesus interacts directly with children. This is in light of the decision that the pastoral team and church leadership have embraced for the summer.

I invite you to keep your Bible open to Mark 5 as we look at the story of Jairus and his daughter. Woven within that, there is a healing that reminds us that adults matter to the Lord as well. We look at Mark 5 and we enter into the gospel narrative. We read in Mark 5:21:

*“And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about Him, and He was beside the Sea.”*

In the gospels, the *Sea* is the Sea of Galilee. Matthew, Mark, and John describe this as a *sea*. Luke, who has a Gentile background, cannot bring himself to call the Sea of Galilee a *sea*



because for him, the *Sea* means the Mediterranean, so Luke calls this a *lake*. It's really more of a lake, but the Sea or Lake of Galilee is the largest freshwater lake in Israel. It is 13 miles long, 8 miles wide, and its depth is 141 feet, so don't try to dive down and touch the bottom. It is 693 feet below sea level and is the second lowest lake on earth, second only to the Dead Sea. It is remarkable that as you approach the Sea of Galilee and you see signs that say you're standing at sea level, the Sea of Galilee is hundreds of feet below you.

It is a remarkable view. The Sea of

Galilee is the scene for many gospel narratives, and much of Jesus' ministry takes place in Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is also known as the Sea or Lake of Kinneret, with the Plain of Kinneret next to it. This is the Hebrew word for *harp*. If you look at the Sea of Galilee, it looks like an ancient Israelite harp. There's a restaurant about five minutes from our church called Kinneret Café, which is *Harp* Café. So, the Sea looks like a harp. Some people have wondered how the ancients could have noticed that it looks like a harp. They didn't even have drones. The reason they could see that so clearly is that the Sea of Galilee is several hundred feet below sea level and you can see the whole thing, making its harp shape visible, even in a pre-drone era.



The setting is by the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and Jesus is there ministering, probably on the northern side of the Sea of Galilee. He has just healed a man who was troubled by demonic power at the southeast portion in the area of Gerasa, and He has come to the northern section. He is standing by the water, and one of the rulers of the synagogue comes to speak with Him. Mark tells us his name is Jairus. In Hebrew, the name *Jair* is well attested. It means that *the Lord brings light*, and that ending, -us, is an ending for Greek and Latin names. This is really the Hebrew name *Jair*, and there are many famous *Jair's* in the Bible. In Deuteronomy 3:14, we read:

*"Jair the Manassite took all the region of Argob, that is, Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and called the villages after his own name, Havvoth-jair, as*

*it is to this day.”*

Jair attacked Bashan and captured territory as Israel came to inherit the land, and that whole area became known as *Havvoth-jair*, or the villages of Jair. In Judges 10:3-4, we see a remarkable thing about Jair the Gileadite who was one of the judges:

*“After him arose Jair the Gileadite, who judged Israel twenty-two years. And he had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys, and they had thirty cities, called Havvoth-jair to this day, which are in the land of Gilead.”*

Thirty sons! That's a big family! What is remarkable about Jair's 30 sons is that they had 30 donkeys. You're thinking, why is that significant? It's significant because the 30 sons rode on 30 donkeys because they had 30 cities. When you ride into a city on a donkey, it signals the true owner or lord of that city. That's part of the reason that Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. We remember the slaying of Goliath by David, but did you know who killed Goliath's brother? We read in 1 Chronicles 20:5 that it was Elhanan, the son of Jair:

*“And there was again war with the Philistines, and Elhanan the son of Jair struck down Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.”*

The last Jair mentioned from Scripture is Mordechai from the book of Esther. We learn this from Esther 2:5:

*“Now there was a Jew in Susa the citadel whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjaminite.”*

So, this is a significant name, a noble name in the Bible, but what matters for us in this passage is that Jair comes to Jesus, and Jair is a ruler of the synagogue. Notice he is one of the rulers, and this again is an oblique piece of evidence for how often the community of faith is organized with a plurality of leaders. He is one of the leaders; he is not the only leader. He comes to Jesus and falls at His feet in a posture of worship and reverence. He implores Jesus earnestly, and we discover why he has come to Jesus in Mark 5:23:

*“My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live.”*

His little girl is close to dying. The Greek text says that she is *at the end*. He has come to Jesus earnestly imploring Him and asking that He would come and lay His hands on his little girl so that she might be made well and live. Jair comes to Jesus, hearing His reputation and power to heal people. This little girl that he loves is ill and close to dying, so he comes to Jesus, urging Him to touch her and make her well. Mark tells us that Jesus agreed to go with him. We are not told exactly where they're going, but presumably to his home. Jesus agrees to depart with him, and a great crowd of people, hearing this, that healing is about to take place, come and gather around and follow Jesus. This great crowd is pressing in on Jesus. Mark describes the scene of a

large group of people, presumably Jesus near the middle, heading towards the home of Jair, and they are bustling and crowding around Him as they are walking along the way. Within that crowd, Mark draws our attention to a woman in the crowd, beginning in Mark 5:25.

This woman, we are told, had a flow of blood, an illness of some kind that caused hemorrhaging and that this had gone on for 12 years. For the Greek lovers among us, or those reading the Scriptures in the original, Mark does a beautiful job of highlighting our attention to this woman. He describes her in seven ways with several participles before we see her do anything. She is a woman who has been bleeding for 12 years; she is a woman who has suffered greatly under many physicians. I consider Kenwood to be one of the safest places in Cincinnati on Sunday morning because of the number of doctors in the congregation. I always feel very safe here for many reasons. No offense to those who practice medicine here, but this woman suffered from the doctors because they took her payment and did nothing for her. She suffered; she spent everything she had; and her condition only grew worse. Yet, this woman had heard reports about Jesus, and so she came up from behind Him in the crowd. With the hemorrhaging of blood, this woman was ritually impure; she was a source of defilement for those around her. We are not told her name, although early Christian tradition tells us that her name was Bernice. The Greek sources say *Bernice*; the Latin sources say *Veronica*. These are actually the same name. Eusebius, the early church historian, says that her house was still known and that there was a plaque outside of her home that could be seen in his day recalling this healing. But this woman with a significant problem, hemorrhaging for 12 years, spending all she had, growing worse, had heard of Jesus, and she came up behind Him, and finally we get a main verb after several participles: and she touched Him. She reached out and she touched Him. We read the reason she touched Him in Mark 5:28:

*“For she said, ‘If I touch even His garments, I will be made well.’”*

So, she reached out and touched Him and immediately her wound was cured. Mark says in Mark 5:29:

*“And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.”*

She was aware of it immediately. She felt that she had been healed, and in the midst of this swarming crowd, Jesus Himself perceived the touch. He perceived that divine power had gone forth from Him to heal her, and He asked in Mark 5:30:

*“And Jesus, perceiving in Himself that power had gone out from Him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, ‘Who touched My garments?’”*

His disciples said to Him in Mark 5:31:

*“You see the crowd pressing around You, and yet You say, ‘Who touched Me?’”*

But, Jesus knew that someone had touched Him and touched Him in faith. He looked around to see who had done it, and the woman, knowing what it happened, became afraid. The text doesn't tell us exactly why she was afraid, but we can speculate that she had fear that because of her impurity, maybe she had defiled Christ with the touch. Maybe she was afraid that she had done something wrong by pressing through the crowd. Sometimes, we get the wrongheaded idea in our minds that because of our sin or disease or the problems in our lives, we need to fix ourselves up before we come to Jesus. That is a grave mistake. We don't have the power to do that, number one, and when we make that decision, we cut ourselves off from the source of Him who could heal us. Whatever her fears, they are relieved immediately as Jesus looks at her and she is trembling and afraid and Jesus calls her "daughter." We read in Mark 5:34:

*"Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."*

She departs, and the scene shifts back to the narrative with which we began, the narrative of Jair and his daughter.

While Jesus was still speaking and telling this woman that she was healed through faith in Him, there came a group of people from Jair's house, and they said in Mark 5:35:

*"Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"*

It's too late; the opportunity is gone. In Mark 5:36, we see that Jesus ignores the word that is spoken:

*"But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, 'Do not fear, only believe.'"*

The ESV obscures this just slightly by translating this as: "But *overhearing* what they said." The text actually says that Jesus *ignored the word that was spoken*. Isn't it great that you can have a *divine ignoring*? Sometimes the things that we say are untrue, and sometimes we say things with certainty and conviction—like what those who came from Jair's house said: "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble Jesus anymore? It's over! Move on." Sometimes someone says to you that the situation of your marriage is hopeless. Sometimes someone says to you that you will never succeed and fulfill God's call in your life. You missed it. Sometimes someone will say to you that you have sinned in such an egregious way that the Lord can never forget—that mark is still going to be with you. You know, at times Jesus, omniscient, sovereign, all-powerful, just ignores what people say to us. Aren't you glad? I'm so glad that Jesus has ignored some of the things I've said. Well, Jesus ignores what people are saying, and He says to Jair: "*Don't be afraid; just believe—only believe in Me,*" even as He spoke to the woman and said: "*Your faith has made you whole.*"

Well, Jesus goes to Jair's home, and when He arrives, Mark tells us in Mark 5:38:

*"They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly."*

Jair had a prominent place in his community, and one of the ways that you showed prominence in the community is often by hiring people to be professional mourners. They would come so there would be a large gathering in your home. The professional mourners were actually trained to sing responsive singing and to clap certain rhythms and to signal great community lament. These are people who are good at this, and when you have enough of them, it creates a real hubbub in the community and signals that this was an important person; this is an important family and there is serious mourning going on here, so join in. When Jesus walked into the house, He said in Mark 5:39:

*"Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping."*

They laughed at Him. They looked down on Him, and so, just as Jesus ignored the word that was spoken, He said: "Why don't you guys all just get out of here?" Isn't that great? I'm paraphrasing little bit, but do you see that in Mark 5:40? It says:

*"And they laughed at Him. But He put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with Him and went in where the child was."*

If you are not prepared to see God's work, then step outside. But you know whom He takes with Him: He takes Jair, her mother and these intimate disciples, and they go in to where this little girl is, and just as the woman touched Jesus, Jesus touches the this little girl. He takes her by the hand and says to her in Mark 5:41:

*"Talitha cumi,' which means, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.'"*

In Aramaic, *talitha* means *little girl*. It's a common name. One of Jonathan's classmates is named *Talitha*. *Cumi* means *arise*. It is also the same word in Hebrew or Aramaic for *resurrection*. Jesus takes her by the hand and raises her up. We see this little glimpse of the eyewitness nature of the gospel records. This is a small side point, but notice that the only way you could record the Aramaic statement of Jesus here is if you had been there to hear it. Mark's gospel is written in Greek, and yet Peter was there. Mark was the translator for Peter's preaching, and Peter must have told Mark that this is exactly what Jesus said, and he left it in his gospel in Aramaic. He is kind enough to know that most of us don't know Aramaic, so he translates it for us and says: "By the way, that means, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.'" It's a touching portrait of the vividness of Christ's ministry, and guess what? Just as the woman who touched Jesus was healed immediately, when Jesus touched this little girl, she got up and she began walking, for she was 12 years old. Mark links these two healings with this chronology, that just as the woman had been ill the entire lifetime of this little girl and now she was healed,

the little girl is healed as well by the touch of Jesus. These two healings show us that Jesus has the power to make us whole and give us new life.

Let me apply this to us in a couple of ways this morning.

Number one: We all need to ***stay close enough to Jesus so that we can touch Him.*** The woman needed healing and got close enough to Jesus that she could touch Him. This little girl needed new life and was touched by Christ. Notice that in Mark 5, these two groups are in the same passage, at the same time: a little girl, her father, her mother, and this older woman. There they are together and these healings take place and the work of Christ in each of their lives strengthens the faith of the other. So it should be at Kenwood, families together in worship.

I'm very excited about this change and having kids here in worship. Sometimes parents will say to me, "Well, you know what, my child can't sit still for that long." I try to gently remind them that if your child can go to school for half the day, most schools are not organized around free range organic children that just roam about. So I remind them if they can sit through a half day or full day of school, they can sit through a 30-minute sermon. We won't be doing stage tricks or gymnastics or fire shows in order to keep their attention, but actually there is something very, very powerful that happens when we are together. I'll never forget the times teaching our own children where to find a song in a hymnal, pointing out that the date of the song, sitting side-by-side with our children and showing them where to find passages in Scripture and to follow along. Some people would say to me, "Well, we'd have children in the service if they were like yours, but our kids aren't any different. So, from a young age, just does help them along. There is so much to learn. Kids today are growing up in a generational fragment where many of them relate only to people who are either six months younger or six months older than they are. It's like living on a tightrope. It's actually so comforting to see people who are older and younger, and younger people long to have relationships with those who are older. Let's be honest, when we are older, isn't it encouraging to see that God still has a future for the world? Another very common objection that I hear is: "Well, Pastor David, there's just no way the children will understand the sermon. They won't understand everything." My immediate response to that is: "Well, neither do the adults!" Right? That's why God put 52 Sundays in the calendar, so that we can recapitulate the gospel. That's why there are two services for the preacher, because I get to preached myself. And, if you understand everything that I'm saying, that means you're not growing. If I understood everything I read in the Scriptures preparing for Sunday and I don't learn anything, I'm not growing. Stay close enough to Jesus so you can touch Him.

Number two: ***Believe that Jesus has the divine power for healing and new life.*** The woman believed that Jesus could heal her. The synagogue ruler believed that Jesus could heal his

daughter.

Number three: ***Let God use you to display His power to others.*** Let God display His power in the place of your need. Don't be ashamed or embarrassed about the place that you need Christ in your life, and let Him touch you where you need healing. Let him touch you where you need His power to be on display. The outcome of both of these events is amazement in the crowds. When the girl began walking, we read in Mark 5:42:

*“And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement.”*

When God uses us, we will not get the glory, but other people will be amazed at Jesus.

I'm very excited about the summer series: *God Uses People Like Me*. The study guide for this series was written by our Executive Council, and I think that's really exciting. I think it's exciting that spiritual leaders in the church said: “Let us help guide the community into God's Word.” I love that. I love that we're together as a family, and when we are together, we have the opportunity to see God at work in and through each of us, and the effect of that will be a radiating amazement at the great things the Lord has done.

The greatest thing the Lord has done is this. It is the greatest love He showed us. Jesus says: *“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”* This communion table is the time when we remember the greatest thing that Jesus has done: He took bread and broke it in the presence of His disciples and said: *“This is My body broken for you.”* He took the cup, the cup of thanksgiving and told them: *“This cup is the New Covenant in My blood poured out for you.”* This is not the table of Kenwood Baptist Church. It is the table of the Lord Jesus Christ. Families, I encourage you to teach your children to wait to partake in communion until they have confessed their own saving faith in Jesus. It is okay to watch to see and have this prompt questions. But, if you have trusted Christ, whatever age, and you have said: “Jesus make me whole. I believe,” then partake with us. Would you join me in prayer?

Precious Lord Jesus, we extol You and magnify You, that You have laid down Your life for us. We ask, Lord, that You would bless us, that You would meet with us now as we remember Your broken body and shed blood. We thank You, Lord, for the great gift of this morning. Prepare our hearts now to celebrate.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.