

Part 10 Lord of Death and Disease (5:21-23)

Lord of Creation continued...

We have seen that Jesus revealed Himself as Lord over creation¹ and as Conqueror of Satan². Now He shows Himself to be Lord over death³ and disease⁴.

The two stories in 5:21–43 are intertwined. One story is told within another story.

Lord over Death & Lord over Disease

The disciples come to the western shore of the lake¹. A synagogue official, Jairus, comes to Jesus asking for his daughter to be healed². Jesus goes with him, followed by a great crowd who are eager to see another miracle³. As Jesus and Jairus and the crowd are going along a woman suffering from a constant haemorrhage follows closely after Jesus. Just as Jairus' daughter is twelve years old, so the woman has had the problem for twelve years also⁴. She has suffered from many doctors who have been unable to help her⁵. Like Jairus she also believes that one tiny bit of faith in Jesus will bring her healing⁶. As soon as she touches Jesus she is healed⁷. Jesus is conscious that something has happened⁸ and soon finds out about the woman⁹. But He reassures the woman and lets her know her faith has brought her healing¹⁰.

At about that time news comes that Jairus' daughter has died¹ but Jesus insists on continuing the journey to Jairus' house, allowing only four men to come with Him². He arrives and finds the girl has died, although Jesus insists that her death is only 'sleeping' and that she will soon be alive again³. He takes her by the hand and she is raised from the dead⁴.

Jesus' power over the worst human distress

The intention of these two stories which are intertwined seems to be to point us to the very great power of Jesus over the worst kind of human distress.

1. Both sufferers had pain and disappointment

1. Both sufferers have problems which are overwhelmingly painful. Jairus has seen his daughter steadily deteriorate; she is at the point of death when he turns to Jesus. 'My daughter is at the point of death', he says¹. The woman has been suffering for twelve years² and had received many disappointments in her attempts to get help from doctors³. She had used all her financial resources in her attempts to get assistance⁴. Both sufferers had faced great disappointments and it seemed almost impossible that anyone would be able to help.

Sometimes God allows some problem to continue in our lives for a long time. Or He lets some problem run to an extreme point where it seems that a change in the situation is impossible.

2. Both sufferers had great faith

2. The two sufferers both have great faith in Jesus despite the severity of their predicaments. Jairus believes that one touch from Jesus will bring restoration and life to his child¹. The woman believes that such power radiates out from Jesus, that even the slightest touch of His clothes will bring her healing².

3. Both sufferers challenged as they are about to get an answer

3. Jairus and the woman both find that at the very point where they are about to get an answer, great challenges come to what they are looking for. The woman was hoping to get a secret healing. One can understand why she felt this way. She was ceremonially unclean. Her being in a crowd and being touched by many people would make them angry if they discovered she was ceremonially 'unclean' according to Mosaic law.

1 4:35–41
2 5:1–20
3 5:21–24, 35–43
4 5:25–34

1 5:21
2 5:22–23
3 5:24
4 5:25
5 5:26
6 5:27–28
7 5:29

8 5:30
9 5:31–33
10 5:34

1 5:35
2 5:35–37
3 5:38–40a
4 5:40b–43

1 5:23
2 5:25
3 5:26
4 5:26

1 5:23
2 5:28

At the point where she seems to have received a miracle without anyone knowing – even without Jesus knowing – she is suddenly exposed. Jesus demands to know who touched Him. She is full of fear and tremblingly comes forward. Is she going to get into trouble? Will her healing be cancelled since she took it without permission? At the very point where she seems to be getting rescued from her twelve years of suffering, there comes a challenge to her hopes.

Jairus has something similar happen to him. He and Jesus and three disciples are walking to Jairus' home. It looks as if Jesus is going to do the impossible and Jairus' daughter will be healed. Suddenly a messenger arrives. 'Don't bother Jesus any further', he says. 'Your daughter has died'. What discouraging news for Jairus when all his hopes of healing are high. Worse still, when Jesus speaks of the girl being only 'asleep' – that is that she will be raised shortly – the crowd laugh Him to scorn. Like the woman, Jairus seems to be finding all his hopes blasted just at the point when he was getting something wonderful from Jesus.

4. Jesus gives both sufferers strong encouragement

4. Jesus gives both sufferers strong encouragement. 'Daughter, your faith has healed you ... Go in peace...', he says to the woman. She is not to lose the miracle after all! Jesus understands and only wants her to realize that it was faith that brought her such blessing.

Jairus too gets encouragement. 'Don't be afraid', Jesus said. 'Just believe'¹.

¹ 5:36

5. Both sufferers experience Jesus' mighty power

5. Both sufferers experience Jesus' mighty power in their lives. The woman experiences Jesus' gentleness and compassionate ways¹ and is given the miracle she had wanted. Jairus too sees Jesus' tender ways as He takes the girl by the hand, and talks to her not in the Greek of the educated people, but in the Aramaic of the ordinary people, the language which a child would use², and then when she has recovered Jesus is concerned to give her something to eat so that she will feel well and strong³.

¹ 5:34



² 5:41

³ 5:43

Jesus' instructions

Jesus gives instructions that the event should be kept secret. The excitement that news of a resurrection would bring would only interrupt His work. The four miracles¹ reveal Jesus' power over dangers and demons, over disease and death. But Jesus has no interest in pure excitement. He has come not simply to be a wonder-worker but to be the divine Son of God making His way to the cross. After the resurrection the stories may be told. For the moment Jesus wants to be acknowledged by a faith that recognizes who He is.

¹ 5:1–43

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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