

What Do You Really Believe?

Mark 5:21-43

Introduction

In *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, they're looking for the cup of Christ. It's said that the cup has healing properties for anyone who drinks from it. The bad guys need Indy's help getting through the last three puzzles and he won't do it. So, the leader shoots Indy's dad and tells him, "Now, Dr. Jones, it's time to ask yourself what you really believe?" Indy decides it's worth taking a chance if it could possibly save his father's life. So, he meets the challenges, gets the cup, and brings some water back in it for his dad, and his dad is healed. Of course, this is just a movie, but that's a question we all must ask ourselves from time to time in our lives—"What do I really believe?" When our back is against the wall, that's when our faith counts. Do we really believe in Jesus enough to just trust in Him? Last week, we saw the disciples and their doubts. Today we see a sick woman and a desperate father who put their trust in Jesus.

Jesus, Their Last Hope

This man and woman didn't have much in common, except Jesus was the last hope for both of them. The woman had this discharge of blood for 12 years. She had spent all she had, and suffered at the hands of physicians (**v. 26**). She had nowhere else to turn. The father's little girl had been sick for a long time and was now at the point of death (**v. 23**). Both were at the end of their rope. Both had nowhere to turn. Their backs were against the wall. Maybe this young rabbi from Nazareth could help. It couldn't hurt to try.

Hurdles

But they each had one last hurdle. For the woman it was fear. Her discharge had made her continually unclean (Read **Leviticus 15:25**). She would not have been allowed to worship at the synagogue or temple. People wouldn't even want to be around her. Yet, her plan was to touch the hem of Jesus' garment. That would make Him unclean. The father's last hurdle was when his servants came and told him his daughter was dead. He had heard about Jesus healing all sorts of diseases, but no one had ever heard of anyone being raised from the dead, except by an ancient prophet. His servants had given up, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" (**v. 35**).

Overcoming Hurdles

They each overcame their hurdles. The woman fought through her fear and touched the hem of Jesus' garment. Then after she thought she got away with it, Jesus called her out and asked, "**Who touched My garments?**" (**v. 30**). In her fear and trembling, she came to Jesus, fell down at His feet and explained it all to Him. Because of her faith, she was healed, physically and spiritually, as Jesus told her to "**go in peace**" (**v. 34**). Jesus helped the father get over his hurdle, when He said, "**Do not fear, only believe**" (**v. 36**). Doubt leads to fear. Doubt was causing the father to fear that Jesus might not be able to help. Faith and fear are like oil and water. They don't mix. You may be experiencing both, but one will have to win out over the other. Faith is taking a risk.

Trusting Jesus

Donald English said it best, “True faith is self-risking trust in Jesus Himself.” Both of our protagonists came to Jesus because of what they’d heard others say about Him. But when push came to shove, it wasn’t what others said. They put their faith in Jesus Himself. Other people can tell us about Jesus, or what Jesus has done for them. But true faith is putting it all on the line and trusting in Jesus Himself.

Receiving Faith

Where does this kind of faith come from? It’s a gift of God, a gift of His grace, given through the means of grace, Word and Sacrament. Hear the Word. Receive the Sacrament. Be blessed with faith.

Trusting Jesus

What do you fear? What has your back against the wall? It doesn’t matter what it is. Jesus can handle it. Are you willing to put it all on the line and risk it all for Jesus? What do you really believe? Don’t do it because I said to. Hear the words of Jesus, “**Do not fear, only believe.**”

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*