



# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

## SESSION 7: CHAPTERS 5:21 - 6:6 "TOUCHING THE UNCLEAN"

The healing of "Legion" demonstrates not only the compassion of Jesus, but also his disregard for the ritual rules of religious cleanliness that a Jew was expected to follow. The demonic was likely to have been a Gentile and he lived among the tombs, both things making him "unclean". Now Jesus is about to



be touched by a woman suffering from some sort of disorder of her internal organs involving a bloody discharge, an "unclean" condition according to Jewish religious teaching. Then, Jesus raises and touches a dead girl. Dead bodies also were unclean and rendered whoever touched them "unclean". In all these cases of the "unclean", Jesus is shown in triumph, liberating the people from their conditions.

### **Read Mark 5: 21 - 43**

#### **QUESTIONS:**

There has been a debate as to whether or not Mark has put these two healing incidents together into one composite story as opposed to them having occurred as described. Either way it is clear that since Mark does not tell us everything Jesus did, it is always important to inquire why he recorded what he did in the way that he did.



1.(a). What do these stories have in common?  
What contrasts can be found?

(b). How do those who seek the aid of Jesus expect healing to be conferred?

How does Jesus explain the fact that healing takes place?

It is believed that many synagogue leaders had close ties to the Pharisees and so it is possible that some had been pressured into not being seen to support Jesus. For Jairus to bow before Jesus was a significant and perhaps daring act of respect and worship.

2.(a). What did Jairus want?

(b). Why were there so many people there?



- (c). What did the woman with the flow of blood want?  
Why did she approach Jesus the way she did?
- (d). What do you make of the "feelings" mentioned in vv.29-30?
- (e). Why did Jesus ask "Who touched me?"?

What do you make of the disciples' reaction?

- (f). Why do you think Jesus uttered v. 34?
3. (a). What effects does the arrival of the news of the little girl's death produce?
- (b). Why does Jesus restrict those who go with him (v.37)?
  - (c). Why does Jesus refer to the girl as "sleeping"?  
What does he do with the mourners? Why?
  - (d). Why do you think Mark quotes the Aramaic words Jesus uses (v.41)?
  - (e). What does v. 43 tell us about Jesus?
  - (f). Why does Jesus command the girl's parents and his companions not to tell anyone about this miracle, whereas he told the demon-possessed man in v.19 to tell everyone about his healing?



When life crowds in with all its storms and pressures, there is still room for us to go directly to Jesus or creep up behind him – if that's all we feel we can do – and reach out to touch him, in that odd mixture of fear and faith that characterizes so much Christian discipleship

- (g). What storms and fears in life should we bring to the Lord?

## Read Mark 6: 1 – 6

Both of the above incidents happen in Jewish territory, but they are followed by the rejection of Jesus in Nazareth and they seem to prepare the reader to view that rejection as all the more unwarranted, they may also prefigure the final rejection of Jesus which culminated in his trial and crucifixion?

4. (a). What reaction does Jesus find in his home town?  
What causes this negative approach?
- (b). What effect did this have on his ministry?  
How do you understand this?
- (c). In what sense is Jesus a prophet?
- (d). What does v.6 mean to you?

## FOR FURTHER REFLECTION



Luke has his version of these events in the eighth chapter of his Gospel.

Can you detect any particular emphases that the Third Evangelist brings to his telling of these stories?