

A vertical photograph on the left side of the page shows water being poured from a white pitcher into a clear glass. The water is captured in motion, creating a blurred stream as it falls into the glass. The background is dark and out of focus.

SESSION 5

JESUS HEALS

▶ **The Point**

Jesus brings healing to our lives.

▶ **The Passage**

Mark 5:22-24, 35-43

▶ **The Bible Meets Life**

When it comes to pain and illness, many of us fall into one of three categories: call the doctor immediately, try our own home remedies or over-the-counter solutions, or ignore it and hope it goes away. I fell into the third group when I started suffering from heartburn and stomach pain. But after the pain had gone on far too long, I finally went to the doctor. After several rounds of treatments and tests, the doctor announced I had several things wrong: a hiatal hernia, severe acid reflux, and a pre-cancerous condition in my esophagus.

For months, I followed the doctor's instructions. But I finally made another decision: I asked others to pray for me. And they did. A short time later, the doctor told me: "Robby, you've done everything I've asked you to, but I'm still amazed. Your esophagus is just fine." It hit me: calling on the Lord should have been the first thing I did! The Gospel of Mark records the story of a man who didn't follow my example. He went to Jesus first. And in this session we'll explore together the incredible result of his faith.

▶ **The Setting**

After Jesus calmed the storm (see Mark 4:35-41), He again displayed His power and authority in the land of the Gerasenes. In this predominantly Gentile region, He was confronted by a demon-possessed man who lived among tombs. Jesus exorcised a host of demons from the man, leading the fearful local residents to insist that He leave. (See 5:1-20.) When He arrived on the other side of the lake, Jesus encountered a synagogue leader who desperately needed His power over sickness and disease.

What does the Bible say?

Synagogue leaders (v. 22)—
These were respected laypersons in the community who had administrative oversight of the Jewish houses of worship known as synagogues.

Mark 5:22-24,35-43

22 One of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet

23 and begged him earnestly, “My little daughter is dying. Come and lay your hands on her so that she can get well and live.”

24 So Jesus went with him, and a large crowd was following and pressing against him.

35 While he was still speaking, people came from the synagogue leader’s house and said, “Your daughter is dead. Why bother the teacher anymore?”

36 When Jesus overheard what was said, he told the synagogue leader, “Don’t be afraid. Only believe.”

37 He did not let anyone accompany him except Peter, James, and John, James’s brother.

38 They came to the leader’s house, and he saw a commotion—people weeping and wailing loudly. 39 He went in and said to them, “Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep.”

40 They laughed at him, but he put them all outside. He took the child’s father, mother, and those who were with him, and entered the place where the child was.

41 Then he took the child by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum” (which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, get up”). 42 Immediately the girl got up and began to walk. (She was twelve years old.) At this they were utterly astounded.

43 Then he gave them strict orders that no one should know about this and told them to give her something to eat.

Mark 5:22-24 Commentary

[Verse 22] After being asked to leave the land of the Gerasenes, Jesus returned to other side of the lake. He likely landed at Capernaum, where He had taught in parables earlier. (See Mark 4:1-34.) Once He landed, Jesus encountered a large crowd—and a man named **Jairus**. Little is known about Jairus except that he was **one of the synagogue leaders**. The synagogue system developed during the Jewish captivity in Babylon. With Solomon’s temple destroyed and the Jews taken into exile, the synagogue was developed as a place of local instruction and worship.

As a leader of his local synagogue, Jairus would have been the layman responsible for organizing and conducting worship services and religious instruction. Though not a priest or rabbi, synagogue leaders were highly respected in their towns. Unlike other religious leaders Jesus dealt with, Jairus came with humility. It’s likely that he bowed at Jesus’ feet out of respect and need, rather than reverence. Mark gives no indication that Jairus accepted Jesus’ claim of deity at this point.

Though Mark was silent on the synagogue leader’s background, Jairus apparently had heard about Jesus’ ability to heal, so he turned to Him in desperation. He simply had a need that could not be met any other way.

[Verses 23-24] Mark’s use of the word **begged** confirms that Jairus was desperate for Jesus’ help. In other passages, people came to Jesus with similar feelings of desperation. Later in this chapter, we see another desperate person, a woman with a bleeding disorder (see vv. 25-34), interrupt Jairus’s own desperate situation. This woman had seen numerous doctors and had spent all she had—only to grow worse. (See vv. 25-26.) She saw Jesus as a last hope for healing. Jairus may have been in the same situation, and his request tugs at the heart of any parent. His young daughter wasn’t just sick. She was **dying**.

While Jairus’s request, **“Come and lay your hands on her so that she can get well and live,”** was rooted in Jesus’ ability to perform a miracle rather than His position as God’s Son, the passage still hints at spiritual transformation. The Greek word for “get well” is also translated as “save.” It’s the same word Mark used for the woman with the blood issue in verse 34.

Jairus’s request also reveals a measure of faith on his part. Whatever doubts he might have had, he overcame them and believed Jesus could save his daughter’s life.

Jesus acknowledged Jairus’s need and **went with him**. As usual, **a large crowd** surrounded Jesus and followed Him on the way to Jairus’s house. This stands in stark contrast to the last crowd Jesus had dealt with. On the other side of the lake, a crowd of Gerasenes had asked Him to leave their region. (See v. 17.) Now, back among Jews, the crowds again welcomed Him and were willing to follow Him to find out what would happen next.

Mark 5:35-40 Commentary

[Verse 35] Sometime between his initial encounter with Jesus and his arrival at home, people coming from Jairus's house (either his friends or servants) gave him a devastating report: **"Your daughter is dead."** The people's words, **"Why bother the teacher anymore?"** may have carried a sarcastic tone. Perhaps they had originally tried to discourage Jairus from going to Jesus in the first place.

[Verse 36] Jesus **overheard** the people's comments. With His words to Jairus, **"Don't be afraid. Only believe,"** Jesus challenged Jairus to maintain his faith in Jesus' ability to save his daughter—to believe even in the face of death.

[Verse 37] Jairus had a choice to make. He could choose to trust Jesus and keep moving toward his home (and the body of his daughter), or he could choose to call the whole thing off and walk away from the hope Jesus offered. Whatever his questions—and his grief—he chose to move forward with Jesus. In turn, Jesus left the crowd behind. He allowed only Peter, James, and John to accompany Him the rest of the way to the house.

[Verses 38-39] Jairus's home was a chaotic scene. Unlike the somber and sedate nature of most funerals today in our western culture, first-century Jewish families expressed grief with loud weeping and wailing. Also, because Jairus was a synagogue official, many in the town would have wanted to show their respect at the loss of his daughter.

Jesus understood the situation better than anyone else present, so He asked, **"Why are you making a commotion and weeping?"** Under normal circumstances, it would have made perfect sense for this to have been a house of mourning. The little girl had died, and those close to her would have been heartbroken. Some have suggested that Jesus' words, **"The child is not dead but asleep,"** implied the girl was not actually dead. However, the family's reaction does not indicate the girl was alive. Plus, the use of sleep as a metaphor for death is found in multiple places throughout the New Testament. (See John 11:11-14; 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:13-18.)

Jesus' attitude demonstrated the truth that He knew how the story was going to end. Since Jairus had asked Him to intervene the outcome was assured—even after the girl had died.

[Verse 40] The response of the people present at Jairus's home was harsh. **They laughed** at Jesus' words. Their laughter did not indicate amusement, but scorn. They probably believed Jesus was at best uninformed or at worst insane. The people's laughter also revealed a genuine lack of concern for the needs and the grief of Jairus and his family. If they had really cared about what the family was going through, they would have responded to Jesus' words with anger or moral outrage—even if that outrage was based on a misunderstanding of Jesus' intentions. Instead, they mocked Christ and His claims.

Mark 5:41-43 Commentary

[Verse 41] Taking the child by the hand, Jesus spoke to the dead girl. While Mark quoted Jesus' words in Aramaic—**"Talitha koum"**—he also provided the translation for his Greek readers: **"Little girl, I say to you, get up."** Aramaic was the common language of the people in first-century Israel, meaning Jesus would have spoken Aramaic and probably used it to do much of His preaching and teaching. The emphasis of His words to the dead girl is on the authority of Jesus. He demonstrated His authority over death by raising this little girl from the dead.

[Verse 42] As soon as Jesus gave the command, **the girl got up and began to walk.** It is not clear who Mark meant when he wrote, **they were utterly astounded.** It could have been the parents and the disciples, or it could have been the unbelievers who Jesus had sent out of the house. In all likelihood, Mark was referring to everyone involved. While many first-century Jews believed in the resurrection of the dead, they would have been astonished to see it happen before their very eyes!

[Verse 43] Mark's Gospel systematically demonstrated Jesus' power and authority over many of the things people fear the most. Jesus is the One who taught with unquestionable authority. (See Mark 1:22.) Mark emphasized Jesus' lordship over nature (see 4:35-41), demonic forces (see 1:23-27; 5:1-20), and incurable illness. (See 5:25-34.) Now, Mark detailed Jesus' mastery over death itself. In his letter to the believers in Rome, Paul shared that nothing can separate believers from the love of Christ—indicating that nothing is powerful enough to overcome His authority and power. (See Rom. 8:35-39.) Death is the greatest enemy for humanity, but even it has been vanquished through Jesus' victory, authority, and power.

We need to remember that Jesus still has authority over illness and death. This doesn't mean He will heal every disease, but we shouldn't hesitate to pray for those who are hurting and ill. We also need to rest in the truth that through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus has overcome the grave on our behalf. Death really has lost its sting!

Jesus directed Jairus and his family not to tell anyone about this miracle. Elsewhere in the Gospels, Jesus made similar requests to the recipients of His miracles. It has been suggested the reason for such requests was to prevent misunderstandings as to the nature of His messianic role. (For an example, see John 6:15.) In the case of the raising of Jairus's daughter, it would have been impossible to keep secret that the little girl had been brought back from the dead. But secrecy would have allowed Jesus time to leave the area. Jesus sought to avoid too much attention so He could continue His mission.

Mark did not specify why Jesus said to give the girl **something to eat.** It might simply have been that she was hungry, or due to her illness (and death) she may not have eaten for some time. Giving the girl something to eat would also have served to demonstrate that she really was alive, having been brought back from the dead.

