

MARK 5: WHO IS JESUS?
Pastor Kim Engelmann
West Valley Presbyterian Church

How many of you have a favorite kind of sandwich?
There used to be a sandwich shop in Manhattan NY right near
Columbia where Tim & I went to school

It was called Mamma Joy's - it was a small family run business
and it closed in 2000
It got me through school...
It had the best sandwiches ever
I dream about those sandwiches- sinking my teeth into one of
them - back in the day when I could eat whatever I wanted

Mama Joys put so much filling inside a sandwich that you
couldn't even fit your mouth around it
But the best sandwich they had there was the Muenster Cheese
sandwich.
It was amazing.
When we were in college, we would sneak those sandwiches
into one of those little cubicles in the library and chow down.
Best sandwich I ever have had.
I never have had a sandwich that even compares to it...

Now I want you to think about your favorite sandwich for a
minute
And now we are going to switch and look at a
A Markan Sandwich

No you can't order in a deli.
I am using sandwich to describe the structure of the two
Biblical stories we are looking at today.
There's the top layer
There's the middle layer
And then there is the bottom layer of what we are going to be
discussing in Mark 5.

Mark often layers two stories to communicate one message.

The first story, that Matthew read to you, is the story of Jairus who has a daughter at the point of death whom he wants Jesus to come and heal.

The other story stuck in the middle of the first story is the story of the woman with a hemorrhage.

So Mark tells the first story - the top piece of bread. Then Mark switches to the second story - the meat or the cheese in the middle. And then he comes back to the first story for the bottom piece of bread.

And just like eating a sandwich, when you take a bite you don't taste just the bread or just the meat/cheese in the middle - you taste the savory combination of the two.

So let's get started with first slice of bread - the first story begins in verse 22
We are introduced to a man with a name - the name Jairus.

“One of the synagogue officials named Jairus....”

Why is this so important?

Becausee, **Most of the Markan characters are nameless.**

Except for the twelve disciples, very few are designated by a name.

So Mark wants you to know his name - “named Jairus” - so Jairus' name must mean something.

And, indeed, it does.

His name means **“he awakens.”**

And as we'll see on the bottom piece of bread, at the end of this story, Jesus awakens Jairus' daughter from the sleep of death.

But we also can assume that Jairus – based on Mark's mention of his name - was awakened too by this miracle and put his faith in Christ.

So pay attention when you read scripture. If there is something there that is unusual, in this case a name, where there's usually no name, it probably means something. Put your detective glasses on when you read scripture – look for clues

Jairus is “**One of the synagogue officials....**” A synagogue official would mean the president of the synagogue or a leader of the worship services.

The man entreats Jesus, for his daughter who “is at the point of death.” Actually, the translation is “**Lay your hands on her, that she may be saved.**” The Greek word is *sōzō*.

That's the top piece of bread – ***Jairus falls at the feet of Jesus*** and begs the rabbi to come to his house and Jesus starts off with Jairus, the synagogue official, to save his daughter from death.

Since you know that we have a Markan sandwich, you know what's next.

This story is going to be interrupted by another story. And the two stories are to be understood, interpreted in stereo – together – with one message.

Verse 25 begins the “meat” or cheese part of this Markan sandwich. “***And a woman...***” again nameless...***who had a hemorrhage for twelve years and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse....***”

(do you see all the “ands” linking this together)

Now it's interesting when you compare Mark's account of the story with Luke's version.

What was Luke's profession? He was a physician, so Luke isn't nearly as down on the docs as Mark is.

Luke does not mention the financial disaster inflicted upon this lady by the medical profession.

He simply states, "She could not be healed by anyone."

But Mark blasts the doctors here basically saying She's been to every doctor in the area.

She'd been to the Kaiser Santa Clara and Palo Alto Medical Clinics, and Stanford and the walk in clinics of the day.

She's had horrible treatments done to her- involving leaches, and painful procedures because at that time what you did for this kind of condition, was pretty barbaric.

The medical bills have piled up - she can't pay them. She's out of money.

She's had this thing for years

And not one doctor has been able to figure it out... Despite all of her pain and effort and money

She has nothing to show for it!

Not only that but she has been isolated for years.

Why?

Because her illness, that hemorrhage, made her ritually unclean for the Jews.

Anyone who came in touch with her was made unclean as well, and had to go through a cleansing process to be purified again, and able to participate in the rites of the synagogue.

This woman wasn't even supposed to go into that crowd!

Everyone who jostled against her in that mob of people was defiled.

She does it anyway. She is so desperate.

Did you hear what the scripture said?

She had tried everything.

But she still has enough spunk in her to try one more thing.

She thinks...no one will know.

No one will find out – no one even knows who I am – I have been isolated for so long .

I will hide in the crowd and just reach out and grab Jesus' hem.

Maybe I will receive healing.

And then I will slink away.

Now Jesus might have been wearing the kind of a robe that rabbis sometimes wore at that time that actually had tassels on the bottom. So she might have grabbed a tassel.

We aren't sure. But what we do know is that she grabbed a part of the bottom hem of Jesus robe. And she is instantly healed.

I want you to understand that Jesus doesn't only heal this woman's issue of blood – her physical condition.

He heals her isolation.

He stops, right in the middle of everything and says "Someone touched me"

Now this is bizarre because everyone was touching him

He's in a crowd...a packed crowd and people are banging against him, pushing, shoving, trying to get as close to Jesus as they can.

And Jesus said, "Someone touched me". No wonder the disciples were like "HUH?"

And Jesus keeps looking for this person who touched him.

Jesus is never in a hurry.

God's timing is perfect in every situation even if we think he is too late, he is right on time. How many of you can say AMEN to that?

What do you think the woman is thinking, back there hiding in the crowd, when Jesus stops, and knows that she has touched him?

She is thinking, "Uh oh. I have just broken a religious law. I went into a crowd unclean. I am not hidden. I am exposed."

So that is why she comes *trembling forward* to share her story.

Jesus insists that she enter into a relationship with him. That she be seen, and known, and that she tell her story. Not just use his power...Jesus is not a vending machine

She needs to be in relationship with him...and he wants her to know that she is worth being seen by him.

What about you? Do you know that you are seen and known by the Lord today? That you are not just one of the crowd...an anonymous blur in the movement of life...

I felt that as I wrote this sermon that some of you today needed to know that God is very aware of you right now...in a very personal way. He knows your story, he sees you today, and asks that you tell him about it, because he wants to bring healing to you.

The woman is scared to be exposed. She come forward trembling

Does Jesus condemn her? No.

Does he say, "Boy, was I on today...even my robe heals people. Look at me!"

No.

He affirms her in front of everyone, and honors her faith, and empowers her and calls her "daughter".

“Daughter, *your* faith has healed you. Go in peace.”

Its an individual recognition of *her* – it’s a personal one on one connection.

By saying that, and by validating her, he puts her back into community.

Her isolation is broken, people know her story, they identify with her pain, and they rejoice in her healing

Okay.

Now...lets finish this Markan sandwich, we need the bottom piece of bread.

So in order to finish the sandwich we now

Go back now to the Jairus story

So, even as Jesus is talking to the woman healed from the issue of blood, word comes that Jairus’ daughter has already died.

“Why trouble the teacher any more? It’s too late.”

Jesus overhears the conversation with Jairus

He says, “Don’t be afraid, only believe” (v. 36).

It is best translated “**keep on believing.**”

The same belief that you brought when you asked Me to lay hands on your dying daughter – keep up that same faith.”

That must have been so hard for Jairus, to keep believing even though was dead! Its not always easy to have faith is it?

Maybe you’ve been having faith for something and the circumstances have changed for the worse, and now its much harder to believe that God is there for you.

Jesus tells you today keep on having faith! Just like you did before. I am the Lord of all creation, and I will answer you!

When they got to the house the professional mourners were there weeping loudly. We don’t have professional mourners anymore – they used to back in the Bible. We don’t pay

anybody to do that crying stuff...but they used to...back in Jesus' time

But you know I have Italian roots on my Moms side. And when there was a funeral, It was pretty intense. My relatives would wail. I mean it would go on and on for hours.

It was loud. And it was long. And if anyone could have been professional mourners, it was my Italian relatives. They knew how to ramp it up...

My grandfather was a pastor for many of these folks and he always told the story of when all these mourners gathered together and were going on and on because Cousin Ritchie, bless his soul, had died...

Well... Cousin Ritchie was a great guy...don't get me wrong.

But Cousin Ritchie was a little bit stooped over - he was an older guy - so that when they went to lay him down in the casket, they had to put a little wire across his chest to keep him lying down.

And when all those mourners had gathered, and were standing around the casket, wailing and carrying on - in the midst of the great emotion that was being expressed, Cousin Ritchies wire broke!

And Cousin Ritchie sat up in that casket. For a moment in that room where mourners were clothed in black veils and dark attire, you could have heard a pin drop. And then that room emptied out faster than the speed of light.

So Jesus comes to the house. And all these professional mourners were gathered, weeping and wailing and carrying on...

Jesus said to them, "What's all the commotion about? The child is not dead, but is asleep."

Now those professional mourners have done this a few times before and they know dead when they see it – they laugh at Jesus

So he clears out the crowd and enters the room with the child's father, mother, and His own companions (meaning Peter, James, and John).

This is one of the few places in the New Testament where the Aramaic is retained – “Talitha kumi’ he commands the little girl, meaning ‘Little girl, I say to you, arise!’

And immediately the girl arose and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And they were completely astounded.”

That's the bottom piece of bread.

Now let's take a look at this Markan sandwich and how both of these stories blend together even though there are sharp contrasts.

Jairus and the woman...They could scarcely have been any different from each other than they already are...

Jairus has a name. She is nameless.

Jairus is at the top of the social, economic, and religious spectrum.

She's at the bottom.

He is a synagogue official.

She is ritually unclean and excluded from the religious community.

He has a family and a large household.

She, lives in isolation because of her condition.

He is rich. She's impoverished from the payment of doctors' fees.

The only thing that these two have in common is that they are desperate and they both need Jesus.

Mark wants us to see that everyone – regardless of where they come from - needs Jesus.

That everyone, no matter how successful they seem, no matter how well off or how low down, are desperate for a Savior – sometimes when life hits us hard we are more aware of it than other times.

It's interesting that both of these stories in the sandwich are about females. One was 12 years old, the other was ill for twelve years. Both were unclean (one from a hemorrhage and one from death). Both asks are desperate asks, of Jesus when all other hope is gone.

Neither one of them were supposed to be touched in Jewish law. And yet that law had no bearing on anything. Jesus' touch made them clean...made them whole. Not the other way around.

Mark's layering of these two stories in sandwich form is intentional to bring these points out...and I want you to be aware of his style as you proceed through the gospel..

And **Who is Jesus?** Mark has shown us that as well

- 1. He is no respecter of persons**
- 2. He always responds to the cry of the desperate**
- 3. He is never in a rush. Even though he might seem late his timing is perfect.**
- 4. He calls us into a personal relationship with him just as he did with the woman**
- 5. He makes all things clean by his touch**
- 6. He is God, having complete authority over all sickness and over death itself.**

Marks Sandwich – Two stories that give one message:

Jesus is Lord, having complete authority over all evil, sickness and death and he will respond to you, no matter who you are, no matter what the circumstance.

Jairus and the woman had enough courage and hope in Jesus to ask him to do something for them, that changed everything.

Jairus had to wait a little longer than he thought necessary, and he had to keep having faith even when it seemed hopeless – and in the end Jesus responded to his cry.

That same Jesus is here today, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

If Jesus were here in the flesh, and you could see him, what would you ask him to do for you?

Many of you have known the Lord for a long time. But maybe you haven't really asked Jesus for what's on your heart.

Maybe you haven't felt seen by God lately. Maybe you don't want to ask him because it seems selfish, or you don't want to get disappointed.

A lot of people think those things, so they keep their prayers kind of general.

But the truth is God wants you to ask him; as much as any parent would want their child to ask them for what's on their heart.

You see when we ask, God has a chance to respond to us and it “awakens us” (meaning of the name Jairus) to God's love for us drawing us into a deeper relationship with him (just like the woman who was called into relationship with Jesus after her healing)

I'd like us all to go into prayer now together (MUSIC) and ask for one thing that's on our heart - reach out to Jesus - like the woman.

She had to battle the crowds to get to him, and you may have to battle all kinds of doubt, or feelings of unworthiness, or skepticism, or despair, or spiritual burn out, to reach out and ask.

But do it anyway.

It's okay to ask..to let the Lord know whats on your heart.

Allow his presence to draw you in.

Allow his peace to fill you today...

A MINUTE OF SILENCE WITH MUSIC...I close in prayer