

the other side: Jesus crossed the lake into Gentile land in Mark 5:1-20, he's now returning to Israel on the western side of the lake.

one of the leaders of the synagogue: he was most likely a leader of worship services. It shows that not all the religious authorities were against Jesus.

Jairus :His name means "he enlightens" or "he awakens." It's rare for a minor character in Mark to be named. So it must be significant. Jairus alone seems to see who Jesus really is.

daughter The girl is the daughter of Jairus, born 12 years ago, at the same time that the unnamed woman began her misery and suffering.

the point of death :This is an expression which means "terminally ill"

be made well "The word in Greek is {sozo} which means to rescue from danger, to save, to deliver a person (or people, like in the Exodus).

hemorrhages : The text literally reads "a woman being in a flow of blood." The turn of phrase is similar to that of "a man in an unclean spirit" used in Mark 1:23 and 5:2.

Mark is referring to a vaginal discharge outside of her period. Menstruation caused ritual uncleanness. Ancient societies (like the Jews) had cultural taboos and social restrictions from the belief that blood contains life (like we say our soul is in our blood). So whether she is having an abnormal heavy flow, or a chronic light hemorrhage, she, like any menstruant (niddâ in Hebrew) is unclean. As an "oozer" or zaba, she is to be quarantined, living outside of human society, and possible contagious contact with any and everyone as long as she is bleeding. Read the law in Leviticus 15:19-31 "Everything upon which she lies, sits, who whoever she touches or lies with during her impurity shall be unclean,... and shall wash his clothes, and bathe in water, and be unclean until the evening. If she is cleansed of her discharge, she shall count seven days, then offer a burnt offering; and the priest shall make atonement on her behalf before the Lord for her unclean discharge. ...Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, so that they do not die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst."

Maybe the woman only touches the clothes of Jesus out of fear of making him unclean? Or does she think that such a gesture suffices to tap into his saving power?

The story of Mark 5:21-43 is a juxtaposition of two stories about death and healing, women who seem to have no life, and are given new lives. This section is preceded by Mark 5:1-20 the first time Jesus goes to a Gentile (non-Jewish) land in Mark where he delivers a man of a legion of demons, transforming him into the first missionary. Jesus leaves him with a command about testifying to "family" : "'Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you.'" How is this encounter and command connected to today's text?

Mark 5:21-43

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

²¹ When Jesus had crossed again in the boat *to the other side*, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. ²² Then **one of**

the leaders of the synagogue named **Jairus** came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet ²³ and begged him repeatedly, "My little

daughter is at *the point of death*. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may **be made well**, and live." ²⁴ So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him.

²⁵ Now there was a *woman* who had been suffering from

hemorrhages for *twelve years*. ²⁶ She had endured much

under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷ She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and

touched his cloak, ²⁸ for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." ²⁹ *Immediately* her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

³⁰ *Immediately* aware that power had gone forth from him,

Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹ And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'"

He looked all around to see who had done it:

elsewhere Jesus seems to be clairvoyant: See Mark 2:8; 3:5; 5:30; 8:17. Why can't he see without seeing this time? Or is he purposely asking the question to provoke a response?

FEAR Is a natural response, and also a standard biblical response to encountering God in the OT (Theophanies).

"The whole truth" is like us saying "to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" – it's the whole story.

Daughter : She has no name, but Jesus now calls her daughter. In the OT this was a typical, respectful and affectionate way of addressing females, despite age and family relationships. See Ruth 2:8 and 3:10. But here does it mean something more? Is Jesus using it to talk about a new notion of family with this woman forgotten by all and left for dead for 12 years?

overhearing : The Greek word is {parakousas} which can mean overhear, to ignore and also to disobey. Jesus is asking Jairus to ignore and disobey what the world around him is saying.

believe In Greek the word {pistis} means both to believe and to trust. It has a bigger notion than to believe in a doctrine.

The mourners were most likely professional ones. In that day you would pay folks to come and wail mournfully as a sign of contrition and spiritual faithfulness. Jesus turns out those benefiting from the girls' demise, not her caring family.

The child is not dead but sleeping : This expression is curious. It seems to be the same metaphor "form of sleep" used by Jesus to talk about Lazarus in John 11:5-16.

Jesus touches the girl's hand thus coming into ritually unclean contact with a corpse (which was forbidden. "Whoever touches a human corpse will be unclean for seven days. Numbers 19:11

get up Mark uses the word {egeiro} which means to rise up, as well as to be raised up, to be resurrected. It's the same word used in Mark 16:6 to talk of the resurrected Jesus.

got up This word {aneste} to get up, also means to rise up from the dead. Mark uses this word in Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34 when Jesus talks of

³² **He looked all around to see who had done it.** ³³ But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in **FEAR** and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, "*Daughter*, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

³⁵ While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your *daughter* is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" ³⁶ But **overhearing** what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only **believe**." ³⁷ He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James.

³⁸ When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹ When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? *The child is not dead but sleeping.*" ⁴⁰ And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "*Little girl, get up!*" ⁴² And *immediately* the girl *got up* and began to walk about (she was **twelve years** of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. ⁴³ He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Today's text is followed by Mark 6 in which Jesus is rejected in his hometown of Nazareth, saying "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." Mark 6:4. Could this relate to a new definition of family and home? How might this story be about Jesus calling us to stand outside of our familiar notions, to see the new age God is creating in him?

Parallels Between A New Dead Sea Scroll Fragment (4Q521) and the Early New Testament Gospel Tradition

twelve : Is the number of the tribes of Israel, the general signifier of the nation of Israel. Is this a literal 12 years? A metaphor for the nation?

What do you think that these two intertwined stories are about?

Throughout the stories Mark:

1) Insists upon this notion of immediacy, how quickly, naturally or normally things unfold.

2) brings up the purity laws of the OT, specifically laid out in Leviticus and Numbers. Jesus seems to ignore them, transcend and subvert them, transform them to communicate and create a different sense of holy communion, a right way of being together and being with God. Instead of the uncleanness of the woman and the dead girl flowing to Jesus, is is the healing power of Jesus that flows to the bleeding woman and the dead girl. It seems minor to us, but in that day the notion of ritual purity and spiritual cleanliness was paramount. One could not approach God, enter a house of prayer – or even a town – if one was unclean. It was an emphasis on what humanity must first to do approach – and be worth of approaching – God. Jesus offers a different vision.

3) insists again upon the Messianic secret. Jesus tells the witnesses of the miraculous events to not tell anyone anything. Why? This has already happened in Mark in 1:44. Curiously following other miraculous healings the opponents of Jesus have called him demon-possessed (3:30) as well as begun to plot how to assassinate Jesus in partnership with the Herodians (3:6). Could Jesus be trying to avoid trouble like stars do today when they avoid the paparazzi? Or is he trying to control his message like handlers to for modern politicians? Or is he embarrassed of what he's doing?

What truth are they telling about God? Jesus? Faith? Us?

One of the more intriguing of the newly released Dead Sea Scrolls is a fragment now titled “Messianic Apocalypse” (4Q521). This text contains three rather striking features that are of particular significance for comparing the apocalyptic beliefs and expectations of the Qumran community with the emerging early Christian movement. First, the text speaks of a single Messiah figure who will rule heaven and earth. Second, it mentions in the clearest language the expectation of the resurrection of the dead during the time of this Messiah. And third, and perhaps most important for students of the New Testament, it contains an exact verbal parallel with the Gospels of Matthew and Luke for identifying of the signs of the Messiah.

First, a translation of the fragment itself:

[the hea]vens and the earth will listen to His Messiah, and none therein will stray from the commandments of the holy ones. Seekers of the Lord, strengthen yourselves in His service! All you hopeful in (your) heart, will you not find the Lord in this? For the Lord will consider the pious (hasidim) and call the righteous by name. Over the poor His spirit will hover and will renew the faithful with His power. And He will glorify the pious on the throne of the eternal Kingdom. He who liberates the captives, restores sight to the blind, straightens the b[ent] And f[or] ever I will cleav[ve to the h]opeful and in His mercy . . . And the fr[uit . . .] will not be delayed for anyone. And the Lord will accomplish glorious things which have never been as [He . . .]

For He will heal the wounded, and revive the dead and bring good news to the poor

. . . He will lead the uprooted and knowledge . . . and smoke (?)
(Michael O. Wise, translation)

This last part is word for word the same as Luke 7:22-23 and Matthew 11:4-5

“Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, **the dead are raised up, the poor have the glad tidings preached to them**”

taken from <https://clas-pages.uncc.edu/james-tabor/archaeology-and-the-dead-sea-scrolls/the-signs-of-the-messiah-4q521/>

In today's text of Mark 5:21-43 we also see events transpiring that, according to the texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls written by the apocalyptic group of Qumran, verify that Jesus is the Messiah of God as he heals the sick and raises the dead. The belief was that the Messiah would come not just to do good things, but to usher in and inaugurate God's new age – heaven on earth – in the world.