

THE REAL JESUS
A Series on the Book of Mark
“The Timing of Jesus”
Mark 5:21-43
New City Church of LA
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Speaker: Kevin Haah

0. Vision of New City

Talk about the new location.

Welcome to New City. We're a multi-ethnic, multi-socioeconomic come-as-you-are church in downtown LA. We're a church where everyone is welcomed. *Talk about the new location.*

Vision statement: Focus on serving the city and the outreach projects we have.

We're in the middle of a series called THE REAL JESUS. We've been going through the Book of Mark a passage at a time.

I. Introduction

We've all experienced times in our lives where God doesn't seem to respond when we most need him. Whether it's a job or a relationship or whatever, we've all experienced times when we cried out to God, but wondered whether God was listening.

After Grace I got married, we figure we enjoy about a year without kids and then we would start having kids. We had it all worked out. We'll go on a big vacation for our first anniversary, then she's get pregnant. Except, it didn't work out that way. Grace couldn't get pregnant for about 5 years. We prayed so hard. We prayed all the time. Our Community Group prayed every week. It was a very hard time. We tried everything medically, but we couldn't conceive.

It seemed like such a reasonable thing. We were ready, and why wasn't God responding?

Today passage is about the timing of Jesus.

II. Passage

Mark 5:21-43.

This passage tells us two things about the timing of Jesus: (1) His timing is not our timing; (2) There are good reasons for His timing.

III. First, His timing is not our timing.

Right away we meet Jairus. He's the president of a local synagogue. He is prominent, wealthy, but desperate because his little girl is about to die unless Jesus comes. Jesus agrees to come, and there's excitement, but imagine how he felt. He was rushed in his heart. Let's go quickly, he thought. He was probably walking really fast. But there was a huge crowd around him.

On the way, Jesus experiences a weakness—that there is a healing. He stops everything. Emergency entourage stops. He brings her out. He's having a discussion. Imagine the nausea of Jairus. Of disciples. She has a chronic problem. It can wait 2 more hours. The little girl has an acute problem. She's about to die. It is unreasonable. It is malpractice. If you did this in an emergency room, it would be malpractice. What are you doing? Hurry Jesus. He is frustrated. As Jesus is talking with her, he gets a message that she is dead. Jesus says: trust me.

Sometimes, we pray and God answers our prayers immediately! Sometimes, we pray and pray and he doesn't seem to answer our prayers on our time table. We come to realize that the timing of Jesus is just not our timing.

We're not asking for anything bad. We're asking for good things: we're asking for a job, for a relationship, for freedom from bondage of sin, for safety or salvation or return of someone we love. But, sometime God seems way too slow and frustrating.

I know some of you just lost your job. Bad economy. What's going on God? Looking for a job for a while and you are getting really frustrated. Why isn't God answering my prayer?

We feel like Jairus. We are frustrated. His grace and blessings never seems to operate on our timing. But, Jesus says, do not fear and trust me! What Mark is trying to teach us is that you can trust Jesus even through your roughest storms. Remember what he taught us already: Jesus allowed his disciples to go through storms. He is saying my grace and love is compatible with going through storms. My grace and love are

compatible with what seems you to be unconscionable delays. I will work according to my timing because I love you. I know what's best for you.

IV. Second, there are good reasons for His timing.

Just because we can't see the reason doesn't mean there aren't good reasons.

If you look into your chihuahua dog house for a St. Bernard, and if you don't see one, it's reasonable to conclude that there's no St. Bernard in the chihuahua's dog house. But if you look into your chihuahua's dog house for a no-see-um (it's a really small insect with a harsh bite) and you don't see any, it's not reasonable to assume that they aren't there. Because no one can see 'em! We think that if there were good reasons for the delay, we would know what they are and we could see it like St. Bernards than like no-see-ums. Most of the times, we don't see the reasons when we go through them; but, often see them later.

When Jairus was confronted with delay, he was probably really frustrated. And he couldn't see a justifiable reason for the delay. After all, she was suffering from a chronic health issue, and his daughter was about to die. Time was of essence! But, he doesn't know something about Jesus that we know: It's as easy for Jesus to raise someone from the dead as it is to cure a fever. But, this desperate woman needed more than just a healing; she needed salvation; she needed to get her dignity back; she needed to find wholeness in her life. Jesus saw that she needed him right there, or otherwise, she would walk away healed but without a healed relationship with God. But, Jairus has no idea. There is a reason that you don't know. When you are crying out to God, I want you to know that there is a reason that you don't know. Jesus is saying: don't fear, trust me.

Sometimes, the reason is to build character:

Do you remember the story of Joseph in the Old Testament? He was an arrogant young man who was hated by his brothers. In their anger at him, they trapped him in a pit and sold him off as a slave to Egypt. I am sure he prayed to God to save him, but God didn't respond right then. He experienced years of misery, bondage, and imprisonment, and through them, his character was refined and strengthened. Eventually, he became the

prime minister of Egypt and saved thousands of people from starvation. If God had not allowed Joseph's years of suffering, he never would have been such a powerful agent for social justice and spiritual healing. I am sure he didn't know the reason for his suffering when he was going through it. But, there was a good reason! It was building his character. It was changing him.

Often times, I feel like I know when something is best done: right now. I feel like I know all the facts. We want to feel like we are in control. We plan and we try to manipulate things around us to fit into our plans. It's really all about us, and when things don't go the way we planned, we ask: why isn't everything going the way we planned. We need to get rid of our self-centeredness, and way that it is done is through these delays.

God uses these delays to let us know that we don't control everything. That's it's not all about us. That's we can't just manipulate everything around us for our benefit. He breaks the cycle of our self-centeredness.

He uses it to build character.

He also uses it to build faith.

He came to Jesus with a desperate faith that Jesus can cure a fever; but he ended up with a faith that Jesus can raise the dead! When we go through rough times, God builds our faith.

It's like the cup we approach God with got bigger because our needs got bigger; we came to realize that we can't fill it on our own. The struggles of our lives can often lead us to a stronger faith.

A couple of weeks ago, Alastair, who is going through a very aggressive treatment of chemotherapy for cancer, in midst of his suffering, he shared that he is learning that suffering has a bottom, but God's love does not have a bottom. God is building his faith even in midst of delays and suffering.

God builds our faith even through exactly those things we think are causing the delays. A friend of mine shared this testimony with me:

I experienced the most difficult time in my life when I was 26 years old. On Saturday morning December 15, 2000, my dad was murdered by two gunmen who robbed his Liquor store. I quit my job to work at the store with my mom

while we tried to sell the business. My sister also quit graduate school to help out at the store. I broke out in hives every few days from the emotional and mental stress. I felt edgy and suspicious of every customer that came into the store.

During that time I read about Jairus. How devastated Jairus must've felt when they came and told him that his daughter was dead! Despair? Sadness? Anger at Jesus? Anger at the sick woman? But Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

I've read this story before, but when I reread this passage during my period of troubles, I gained new insight about faith and depth of God's love. I could sympathize with Jairus' anxiety while waiting for Jesus when He stopped to heal someone else. I think that the timing of this healing wasn't a coincidence. I think Jesus did it to help Jairus have more faith in Christ by healing another person in front of him. By faith, Jairus came to Jesus for help, but at a time when his faith was vulnerable, Jesus helped him maintain his faith by healing another person in front of him. "If Jesus can save this woman, then surely He will save my daughter too". Jesus further comforted Jairus by telling him not to be afraid.

In essence, I was Jairus. God didn't just say to me, "Have faith" and then leave me to fend for myself, but He reminded me through the Scriptures of how He had helped other people, how He had helped me in the past, and He will help me now. He reminded me that He will carry me through my toughest times. We sold the store about a month later. That was the toughest time of my life and I couldn't have survived it without God's comforting hand.

And sometimes, he uses it to show us the Kingdom of God!

God is trying to show us what the kingdom of God is like through the delays.

He's trying to reveal a great secret to us about the upside-down nature of the Kingdom of God. Although Jairus was able to humble because of his desperation, I am sure his worldview was hierarchical, and he viewed himself at the top of the hierarchy. But, Jesus radically altered this paradigm in the way he approached Jairus and the chronically ill woman.

Jairus is male, she is female; he is the president of a local synagogue; she is an outcast; he is at the top of the social food chain; she is at the bottom. Jesus turns to the needs of this outsider and makes Jairus wait in the moment of his most desperate need. This is a consistent pattern in the ministry of Jesus: outsiders are in and insiders are out or has to wait. It doesn't matter: Moral, racial, economic, religious. Jesus always connects to the outsider. Why? At the end of the book: he goes to the cross, and shows us the way

up is down. Way to get Power is to give away power and serve. To get God is to come with nothing. The way to have a great life is to seek to live for others. To live is to die. To find meaning in life is to give up and serve. There is a reversal of values. This is the upside down kingdom. There is always gravitation to the marginalized. Jesus does not come to Jesus on pedigree and power. Jesus is the most attracted to the most messed up. I don't care if you used to work for hell, how far you've fallen. Paul: God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the wise so that no one will boast in his presence.

This is the good news. This is the gospel! Jesus physically demonstrated the gospel right in front of him and said, do not fear, just believe.

Jesus said, blessed are the poor in spirit, and he also said, blessed are the poor. Essentially, he is saying, there is a blessing in the poverty. There is a blessing in the brokenness. There is a blessing in your desperation. There is a blessing in the delay! Because as you come to God with nothing, you gain everything. But, if you seek everything, you will lose everything! That's what the Kingdom of God is like.

I know it's hard to see it when you are in the thick of pain. But, I want you to know that God is delaying for a good reason. Just because you don't know it, doesn't mean there isn't one.

V. Conclusion

I want to conclude by looking at the rest of the story.

When Jesus got there, there is a lot of wailing. She's dead. Why does he make the reference to sleep? He takes her by her hand and says: *talitha*: literally, it means little girl, but it's a term of endearment, a name that a mother would use for their little girl—maybe a good translation is: honey. *Koum*—this means get up. She seats down next to her and says: honey, get up.

--Look at his power. There is no incantation. Jesus is facing a greater foe than the hurricane. He is facing death, the greatest enemy of the human race. He just gently rebukes. If we have Jesus by the hand, even death is like sleep.

--Look at his love. The Lord of the Universe, who created the world, taking me by the hand and saying honey, it's time to get up.

Why would you want to hurry someone like this? Someone who loves us so much. When you know his love and his power, you trust him.