

Dear Friends,

Mark 5: 21-24

Jesus is in the middle of a crowd again. Each person in the crowd wants something from him. Some want a touch that will heal their broken body or distressed mind, others want a word that will bring comfort, encouragement or challenge.

One of those who wants something is Jairus. He is one of the leaders of the synagogue. In this community he is at the top of the social and religious ladder. In a world of insiders and outsiders; he's an insider. In a world of clean and unclean; he's one of the clean. In a world of the blessed and the cursed; he's one of the blessed. Everyone pays attention to Jairus. They tend to give him what he wants.

Jairus throws himself at the feet of Jesus. This is not very dignified, not very respectable. He has his status to consider. He should be upholding his position. But he, one of the leaders of the mainstream religion comes and falls at the feet of this strange travelling preacher. The authorities in his religion have already condemned Jesus. They say he's no good. They say that it's the power of the devil that's at work in him. Jairus should have nothing to do with him. He certainly should not come falling at his feet. Jairus however crosses over a boundary. He the representative of orthodox religion crosses over to Jesus who, orthodox religion says, is beyond the pale.

We understand why Jairus is so desperate when we hear what he has to say. He says, "My little daughter is on the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well." His child is twelve years old. This is a matter of life and death. There is no time to waste. No time for delay. Nothing can matter more than getting, as quickly as possible, to the girl and healing her. She needs to be stopped from dying, before it's too late.

What Jairus wants is for Jesus to come at her from above and lay his hands down on her. He wants the power of God to flow through Jesus to her and save her life. Sometimes it happens that way. But sometimes something else is needed. We'll see.

Jesus goes with Jairus. The crowd continues to press in on him. It is urgent for Jesus to get to the girl quickly. Nothing must be allowed to distract him. There are many others in the crowd who want something, but surely, they will have to wait.

There is however a woman in the crowd. She has been suffering for as long as the twelve-year-old girl has been alive. She sees this as her moment to get to Jesus, her opportunity for him to heal her. To her, it is urgent that she receives his attention. Does the woman dare to reach out to Jesus when he is in such a hurry, with something so important to do? How will Jesus react if she does try to draw him away from the path he's taking?

God bless you,

Tony