



**“God’s Ways, God’s Ends, and God’s Means”**  
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**Markus 5:21-43**

For those of you familiar with C. S. Lewis’ children’s stories, “The Chronicles of Narnia.” You may remember a certain refrain that appears throughout the books. It comes at moments in which the main characters are in trouble. There’s a great danger and then a great need for help. And they begin to wonder to themselves, “Where is Aslan the lion? Why isn’t he here? Why isn’t he helping?” And the answer comes again and again, that Aslan is not a tame lion. He can’t be put on a leash. He can’t be domesticated. He can’t be trained to act when and where we please. Aslan is perfectly free. His ways are unpredictable, and his purposes are often mysterious. And yet as the story unfolds, we learn that Aslan will in fact accomplish all his purposes for the land of Narnia. He’ll do so when, where, and how he chooses according to his own wisdom and good pleasure. The Chronicles of Narnia are obviously derived from Scripture. Aslan is the Christ figure. The lion who created the world. He’d be a lion who would lay down his life for traitors. But Aslan reminds us that the God of the Bible is not a tame lion. And it is this unpredictability that we see played out in the pages of Scripture.

Jesus’ disciples discover the unpredictability of God. If you’ve been a Christian any length of time, I know you’ve experienced this, that God does not always act according to our timetable. He doesn’t order our lives according to our plans and our desires. And in fact, He often leads us and guides us down paths we would never have chosen, paths that are often difficult, fraught with hardship, trial, suffering and sorrow. And we too can wonder to ourselves, “Where are You, God? Why aren’t You acting? Why aren’t You helping?” And God’s word comes to us here in Mark 5 and reminds us that our God is not a tame God. The true and

the living God is unpredictable, and His ways are often mysterious. The prophet Isaiah reminded us, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are My ways your ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts higher than your thoughts.” This is something that is always true about God, but sometimes we feel it more profoundly than others. And this is what we see in our text this morning, a profound experience of the mystery of God’s ways. And we’re given a critical reminder, if you leave with nothing else this morning, I hope you will leave with this: the knowledge that God’s ways are not our ways, but God’s ways are always better.

I want to consider this Biblical truth with you this morning, under three headings: God’s ways, God’s ends, and God’s means. So, the first is God’s ways. God’s ways are not our ways. We see this particularly in this text this morning in terms of God’s timing. Mark tells us of Jesus’ encounter with two people, and these two people couldn’t be any more different from each other. We have on the one hand Jairus, the ruler of a synagogue, he would have been wealthy, he would have been powerful, he would have had influence, he would have had many friends. We can be certain of this, as he was well known in the community, and he was part of the inner circles. Contrast Jairus with the woman. Do you remember her name? We’re not given her name, are we? She’s just called “the woman” throughout. She’s a nameless woman who we’re told is poor. Because she spent all her money on doctors and these doctors couldn’t help her. We’re told that she’s been suffering from a chronic hemorrhage for 12 years, and this is no small matter. Because a hemorrhage would have rendered her ritually unclean, and this means she would not have

been allowed into the temple, into the public worship of God’s people. Anything she touched would have become ritually defiled and anyone who touched her would have been ritually unclean. Likely, she hadn’t experienced human touch for 12 years. She was an outsider and maybe a complete social outcast. Do you see how both people have different problems? Their lives couldn’t be any more different, and yet they both need Jesus. They both come to Jesus asking for help. But I want you to notice this: Jesus doesn’t give them what they ask for; He gives them something so much better.

Now, when you are a leader, you need to learn how to prioritize the important things over the unimportant. You need to prioritize what is urgent over what can wait. Notice how Jesus prioritizes. Jesus is on His way to address the urgent and the important situation. And He stops. I want you to notice this, that Jesus stops. And it makes no sense. Even His disciples were astounded that Jesus would stop. They are frustrated with Jesus’ decision. They forget that they are dealing with the fount of wisdom, and they begin treating Jesus like an absent-minded professor. The disciples begin to treat Jesus as if He needs a handler. They say, “Jesus, you see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, ‘Who touched me?’” Think about it. It makes no sense. The woman had had this hemorrhage for 12 years. Could it wait 12 more minutes? The daughter’s on the point of death. Time is of the essence. But Jesus is not a tame lion.

Jesus, according to His disciples, gets it all wrong. Here we have a ruler of a synagogue. He’s an important person. He could have helped Jesus’ ministry immensely. But Jesus, he needs your help, and he needs it now. Jesus’ disciples think they knew better, just like we often think we know better. How often do we think that we know better than God? We think we know better because we think we know everything. But Jesus’ disciples did not know everything, and neither do we. The disciples thought that this would be another occasion for

Jesus to heal the sick, to reveal His authority and His power over disease. But Jesus knew that this would be the occasion for Him to reveal His power over death itself. God’s timing is not our timing.

God’s ways are not our ways. But secondly, God’s ends are not our ends. Did you notice that this passage is so full of life? If I could reference C. S. Lewis again, you might remember when Father Christmas comes to the land of Narnia at a time when it is always winter, but never Christmas. And what happens when Father Christmas arrives? The snow begins to melt, plants begin to sprout, and we see life. Again, just a dim picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. As Jesus strides through this sin-cursed world—characterized as it is by death—, everywhere He goes, life starts appearing. And not just physical life, brain waves and beating hearts. That’s not the Bible’s vision of life. The life, according to the Bible, is shalom. It is peace; it is abundance.

We can see this life in the experience of the woman. She had been suffering with hemorrhage for 12 years and she came to Jesus seeking healing from her sickness, but what did she receive? Commentators know that Jesus not only heal woman’s physical ailment. As that is not amazing enough, but when Jesus brought this woman into the center of the crowd, He was doing something else as well. The hemorrhage would have made her unclean and according to Jewish law, she was unable to enter the community. She was unable to come in contact with others in the community and her condition disqualified her from entering into worship. Her daily experience would have been in that isolation, loneliness and sorrow. And almost every day of her life she would have been haunted by the question “why”. “Why me? Was it something I did? Was it a sin that I committed?” And in the words of Psalmist, “How long, O Lord?” This woman who has no identity, but Jesus drew her into the center of the crowd. He addresses her, speaking to her individually. And doing this way, He honor her,

and He dignify her. He restored her to the life of the covenant community. Think of the love of Christ here, restored her to the community and He gave her something else as well. He gave her words of life. Why do I say that? Notice that He teaches her about what happened. He said “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease.” Jesus not only heal her physically, but He nurture her spiritually. He tells you the truth of what happened to her so that she may walk in the truth for the rest of her life. Your faith has made you well. The woman would’ve been tempted to a pagan understanding of what happened. She would be tempted to think that Jesus has magic cloak, that’s how pagan would have thought. Jesus said it wasn’t the magic cloak, but it was your faith in me. The fact that you trusted that I could heal your diseases. I can heal your diseases, but I can do so much more.

Psalm 103 says, Jesus did not come just to heal our diseases, but to redeem our lives from the pit. Of course, we see this most clearly with the raising of Jairus’s dead daughter. Here Jesus reveals to His disciples, to crowd and to Jairus and his family, that He came to raise dead people to life. This is the end of the story for God’s people, not death but life. Although we die, yet we shall live. As Jesus said, “Whoever live and believes in me, shall never dies.” It is a powerful scene, isn’t it? The Son of God standing over a dead body, takes her by the hand and said “*Talitha cumi*,” in Aramaic, it means “Little girl, arise.” The voice that brought heaven and earth into existence, speak of life, giving words to those who are dead in trespasses and sin.

It is a lot like the prophet Ezekiel who prophesied about the dead dry bones. God asked Ezekiel, “Can these bones live?” The prophet gives the right answer, “Only you know Lord” and the Lord answered, “Preach! Speak the word of the Lord to dead and dry bones and God raised them to live.” Here, Jesus, the

prophet greater than Ezekiel, speak over this dead child and raised the dead to live. There is one more place where we see Jesus is live giving word at works and that is in the experience of Jairus. Specifically, in Jairus experience between verses 36 and 41. This is a picture of the life of every Christians. What Jairus experiences between the death of his daughter and the raising of his daughter. Because this is the life of faith. Jairus received the most terrible news any parent could ever hear. “Your child is dead. Don’t bother Jesus any longer. She is dead. It’s over.” We know this to be true, death is the final enemy. We know from experience that dead people don’t come back to life. But Jesus responds, “Do not fear; only believe.” It’s a call to faith. Between death and life is a call to believe. Trust Jesus and do not fear. This is the life of faith. It’s a life that is often difficult, it’s perplexing, is full of trials, is full of temptations and is full of sorrow. But it is a way of life, because it is a way that follows a savior. A savior who is a life Himself. Notice that Jesus did not give Jairus the answer. He just says, “Trust me” and He says the same to you and me.

God hasn’t told us everything, but He has revealed the end of the story. And the story that God has written is not a tragedy but is a comedy. At the end of a tragedy, everyone dies. At the end of a comedy, everyone gets married. But in the middle of the plays, you often don’t know what you are watching. Tragedy has comedies elements in the middle. And comedy has tragic elements in the middle. You don’t really know what you’re watching until the end. But God has revealed the end, and God has written a comedy. The fact that there is a marriage at the end, isn’t there? When Christ, the bridegroom brings his bride, the church, into their home and they celebrate. The great wedding shepherd of the lamb. A feast that will astound the minds for its glory. God’s way is not our way, God’s end is not our end. And finally, God’s means is not our means.

In Mark 10, Jesus’s disciples, James and John, come to Him and they asked Him a question, “When we get to Jerusalem, can one of us sit on your right and one of us sit on your left?” These were places of honor. James and John thought that Jerusalem would be a coronation, not a crucifixion. And Jesus said to them “When we get to Jerusalem, my right and my left are the last places you want to be.” Right? They thought the road to glory pass through glory, but Jesus knew the way to glory pass through the cross. It would not come through triumph but through defeat. It would not be through crowns, but through crosses. That’s the means to glory.

Mark the Gospel writer does not waste words. He wrote the shortest of all Gospels and writing in ancient world was costly. So, when Mark wrote something down, it’s important. Why does Mark tell us that Jesus talks to the dead girl by the hand? Why does Mark tell us that the woman touch Jesus’s garment? Why is it important for us to know? The fact, that Jesus could heal both from a distance. Jesus didn’t need to touch these individuals. Jesus is touching with a profound implication for Him, because it would have rendered Him ritually unclean. He would need to wash. He would need to sacrifice before He could be clean again.

Jesus keeps coming into contact with that which is defile, and He does this for a purpose. To show us what is He willing to do to redeem defile sinners. In touching the woman, in touching the corpse, Jesus became ritually unclean. This was serious, but at the end of the day a small matter. Ritual uncleanness was a part of daily life for Israelites, but it points to a deeper reality. It points to the progressiveness of sin. It taught Israelites and teaches us that everything about us is affected by the curse of sin. Sin is not just something we do but it is a part of our very nature. And Jesus doesn’t just come into the accompany of the ritually impure. He comes into contact with

them and in communion to contact with them, Jesus said this “I’m willing to become unclean so that you may become clean. I’m willing to become defile not just physically and externally but spiritually and in every way I’m willing to take on your defilement.” Just as when he was baptized, the only one who did not need to be baptized by John, said to his father “Lord, count me as one of these.” Jesus said in a fact, “I’m willing to become like you, so that you can become like me.” And it would be on the cross that Jesus, the holy Son of God, became defile, not just externally but in every way He become impure. He became unclean. He became cursed, rejected by His father so that He may clothe us in His righteousness. Though in ourselves, we are defile and impure, Jesus gives us His perfection so that he can present us to His Father as holy, blameless and pure.

This little girl will one day die again, this woman will one day get sick again. But Jesus make His point abundantly clear, that one day the risen Son of God, the one who triumph over sin and death and grave. This same Son of God will one day speak over the graves of every man, woman and child. He will speak over the graves of those for whom He die, and He will say “Little boys, Little girls, young men, young women, old men, old women arise and those who have die in Christ will be raised to glory.” This was not James and John way to glory. These wouldn’t be our way to glory if we wrote the stories, but this is God’s way. It’s the way of cross. The son of God will die for the sinners like you and me. This was the only way, divinely ordained way of securing our redemption. So, brothers and sister one day, we too will hear the voice of our savior, and He will call to us “Arise.” And we will indeed arise to everlasting life. May we live today and all our days looking forward to that day. Though we grieve by God’s amazing grace, we grieve with unshakeable hope, because Christ has risen.