

# Stories of the Master

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## ~ The Bleeding Woman and the Dying Daughter ~

You can learn much more about this story by doing these three things:

1. Read the story in Mark 5:21-43. You can also read it in Matthew 9:18-26 and Luke 8:41-56.
2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.
3. Answer the reflective questions.

### 1. Read the text of the story from the New American Standard Bible and from the Easy Read Version

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Mark 5:21-43 - NASB	Mark 5:21-43– Easy-to-Read Version
<p><sup>21</sup>When Jesus had crossed over again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around Him; and so He stayed by the seashore. <sup>22</sup>One of the synagogue officials named Jairus *came up, and on seeing Him, *fell at His feet <sup>23</sup>and *implored Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter is at the point of death; <i>please</i> come and lay Your hands on her, so that she will get well and live.” <sup>24</sup>And He went off with him; and a large crowd was following Him and pressing in on Him.</p> <p><sup>25</sup>A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years, <sup>26</sup>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— <sup>27</sup>after hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind <i>Him</i> and touched His cloak. <sup>28</sup>For she thought, “If I just touch His garments, I will get well.” <sup>29</sup>Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. <sup>30</sup>Immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that the power <i>proceeding</i> from Him had gone forth, turned around in the crowd and said, “Who touched My garments?” <sup>31</sup>And His disciples said to Him, “You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’” <sup>32</sup>And He looked around to see the woman who had done this. <sup>33</sup>But the woman fearing and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. <sup>34</sup>And He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction.”</p> <p><sup>35</sup>While He was still speaking, they *came from the <i>house of</i> the synagogue official, saying, “Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?” <sup>36</sup>But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, *said to the synagogue official, “Do not be</p>	<p><sup>21</sup>Jesus got into the boat again and went back to the other side of the lake, where a large crowd gathered around him on the shore. <sup>22</sup>Then a leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet, <sup>23</sup>pleading fervently with him. “My little daughter is dying,” he said. “Please come and lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live.”</p> <p><sup>24</sup>Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him. <sup>25</sup>A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding.<sup>26</sup> She had suffered a great deal from many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse. <sup>27</sup>She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe. <sup>28</sup>For she thought to herself, “If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed.” <sup>29</sup>Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been healed of her terrible condition.</p> <p><sup>30</sup>Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my robe?”</p> <p><sup>31</sup>His disciples said to him, “Look at this crowd pressing around you. How can you ask, ‘Who touched me?’”</p> <p><sup>32</sup>But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. <sup>33</sup>Then the frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had happened to her, came and fell to her knees in front of him and told him what she had done.<sup>34</sup> And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over.”</p> <p><sup>35</sup>While he was still speaking to her, messengers arrived from the home of Jairus, the leader of the</p>

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<p>afraid <i>any longer</i>, only believe.”<sup>37</sup> And He allowed no one to accompany Him, except Peter and James and John the brother of James.<sup>38</sup> They *came to the house of the synagogue official; and He *saw a commotion, and <i>people</i> loudly weeping and wailing.<sup>39</sup> And entering in, He *said to them, “Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep.”<sup>40</sup> They <i>began</i> laughing at Him. But putting them all out, He *took along the child’s father and mother and His own companions, and *entered <i>the room</i> where the child was.<sup>41</sup> Taking the child by the hand, He *said to her, “<i>Talitha kum!</i>” (which translated means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”).<sup>42</sup> Immediately the girl got up and <i>began</i> to walk, for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely astounded.<sup>43</sup> And He gave them strict orders that no one should know about this, and He said that <i>something</i> should be given her to eat.</p>	<p>synagogue. They told him, “Your daughter is dead. There’s no use troubling the Teacher now.”</p> <p><sup>36</sup> But Jesus overheard them and said to Jairus, “Don’t be afraid. Just have faith.”</p> <p><sup>37</sup> Then Jesus stopped the crowd and wouldn’t let anyone go with him except Peter, James, and John (the brother of James).<sup>38</sup> When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw much commotion and weeping and wailing.<sup>39</sup> He went inside and asked, “Why all this commotion and weeping? The child isn’t dead; she’s only asleep.”</p> <p><sup>40</sup> The crowd laughed at him. But he made them all leave, and he took the girl’s father and mother and his three disciples into the room where the girl was lying.<sup>41</sup> Holding her hand, he said to her, “<i>Talitha kum,</i>” which means “Little girl, get up!”<sup>42</sup> And the girl, who was twelve years old, immediately stood up and walked around! They were overwhelmed and totally amazed.<sup>43</sup> Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone what had happened, and then he told them to give her something to eat.</p>
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### 2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.

- In the West, we are public about sex and private about a woman’s menstruation. In the ancient Near East, they are private about sex and public about menstruation.
- Normally upon entering a village, the elders would welcome Jesus and would offer hospitality because he would be a celebrity. The elders would meet him and he would have a meal with one of them to show respect for their hospitality.
- The Greek word for synagogue leader could refer to different roles in the synagogue or even to wealthy donors. In this story, Jairus seems to be the synagogue leader.
- Medicine was primitive in the ancient world and often mixed with folk lore. Divine healing hoped for and Jesus’ healing was extraordinary because he did not use magic formula or incantations.
- Jesus is surrounded by crowds. We must remember that little new happens in these villages. When an outsider, especially a celebrity like Jesus enters, the entire village will know. Events are mostly public in such a situation.
- The bleeding woman is in the crowd. The crowd would be composed mostly of men and strict boundaries between men and women exist. For a woman to touch another man was highly irregular. Such a woman would barely look at another man and would not speak to another man who is not part of her family.
- The woman has uterine or menstrual bleeding. This makes her religiously impure. A woman who was having her period was considered impure (Lev 15:20-23) and her constant

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emission would have brought divorce if she was married or prevented her from ever marrying.

- Only the elite had money to spend on physicians. She may have at one time been a wealthy woman with money to spend on doctors. But now, she is reduced to poverty.
- The Roman World (from Pliny)
  - Contact with the monthly flow of a woman would turn new wine sour, make crops wither, kill skin grafts, dry seeds in gardens, cause fruit to fall from trees, dim the surface of mirrors, dull the edge of the sword and the gleam of ivory, kill bees, and rust iron and bronze.
  - Dogs that came near went insane and their bite became poisonous.
  - One thread from one garment worn by such a woman would cause such effects.
  - She could turn linen black by touching it
  - But she could drive away hailstorms and whirlwinds if she showed herself unclothed when lightning flashed. And if she walked through a field with her robe above her belt, bugs would fall off the ears of corn, but she must not do this at sunrise or the crops would die.
- The preceding points demonstrate how people thought at that time. Thus, a woman such as she would cause anxiety in a crowd, and it would reinforce her isolation.
- In Israel, men wore ankle length robes or tunics. Religious men were distinguished by the bottom fringe of their tunic which would have tassels as a reminder to keep the Law of God. These were strings that hung from the four corners of the garment and they would have one blue thread as a reminder to obey the Law. Jesus wore such a garment.
- Reaching for the fringe of the garment is to reach for this part that symbolizes his authority as a religious man with spiritual authority and Matthew 9:20 indicates that this is what she touched.
- When Jesus arrives at the house of Jairus, the mourners are there. Culture required at least two flute players and one professional mourner. But Jairus is a respected and well known man and many others may be there to cry and to dance the dances of mourning. In the ancient Near East, as soon as a death was announced the mourners would gather to help facilitate family and community grief.
- A 12-year old dying would be common. In the first century 60% of those born alive had died by their mid-teens.

Cultural insights taken from *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, Bruce J. Malina, *Encounters with Jesus* by Gary M. Burge, and the *NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*.

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### 3. Answer these reflective questions.

**The bleeding woman had to be desperate and courageous to approach Jesus and touch him. Have you ever known anyone this desperate and/or this courageous in following Jesus?**

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**Jesus had just returned from an unclean place. It was inhabited by Gentiles, it was a place of death (the tombs), he met a demonized man, and there were pigs in the area. When he returned to the western side of the Sea of Galilee he is touched by an unclean woman and then goes to touch a dead girl. What message do you think the Gospel writers are trying to convey by Jesus' frequent interaction with "unclean" people and things and his impact upon them?**

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**Jesus told the woman that her faith had made her well. In how many ways did she show faith in this story?**

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**Jesus told Jairus not to fear but only to believe. In what ways did Jairus show faith after he was told that his daughter was dead?**

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**Why do you think Jesus told Jairus and his family to tell no one about the resurrection of the daughter? How could they have kept it a secret?**

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