

## AT THE END OF OUR ROPE

Mark 5:25-34 Rev. Brian W. Secor

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Since the fall in Eden, this world has been marked by things that go bonk in the night & cause us pain, fear & terror. Uncontrolled, uncontrollable by us.

1. Four enemies of mankind — nature, demonic powers, disease & pain, death — all four submit to the Master's power. He speaks, he acts, he touches, he lifts & one by one our greatest enemies are conquered by Christ.
2. In Christ, there is victory. In Christ there is power to stand fast in faith no matter what comes to us. For Jesus is Lord, Lord of all, *Christus Victor* — Christ the Conqueror

Disease & suffering are an inescapable fact of human experience.

1. The event we are about to read & the miracle it describes brings into focus the problem of disease & suffering & how God acts to help us when we come to the end of our rope.

### I. OUR HUMAN EXTREMITY. V. 24B-26

#### A. Her case was hopeless.

1. For 12 years, she'd suffered w/ constant menstruation. Tried doctor after doctor, cure after cure & none helped.
2. Mark notes she suffered a great deal under the care of doctors but had gotten worse.
3. She was cut off from society & the worship of God.
4. At the end of her rope, she hears of Jesus & his power to help the hopeless & cure the incurable.

#### B. We too come to the end of our rope.

1. Biggest cause of despair is when we come to that point where the doctors can no longer help us. Our body has become our enemy. We have an incurable disease that we must live with, that we know will ultimately kill us. In meantime, it renders us weak, hurting, hopeless. We are at the end of our rope.
2. Whatever the cause of our pain, when we hurt, we seek to find ways to relieve the pain. We go to the doctors.
  - a. Sometimes they help. At others they do not. We are thrown back on our hopelessness & from our lips comes that unanswerable question, "Why God, why? Why me? Why does this have to be?"
  - b. In effort to get well or to escape pain, we spend all we have in money, energy & hope & we get no better but worse.
  - c. Then we remember Jesus. We remember he can cure the incurable, the hopeless, the helpless. Like woman, at the end of our rope, we seek him out as a last resort.

### II. GOD'S OPPORTUNITY IN OUR EXTREMITY. V. 27-29

#### A. Jesus had just returned from being rejected in a big way.

1. On other side of Galilee, in country of Gerasenes, demon possessed man liberated from that curse at the cost of 2000 pigs. Scared people of region to death so they, rather than face their greed & fear, begged Jesus to leave them alone.
2. Now back in Capernaum, he gets a far different reception. Crowds gather to meet him including this woman & Jairus, a local leader in the synagogue, begs Jesus to come to his house to heal his daughter who is on the verge of death.
3. This woman had simple plan based upon great faith. She didn't want to bother Jesus or take up his time. If only she get close enough to touch one of four tassels on his garment, she believed she would be healed. And that is just what happens.

#### B. Human suffering & pain is God's opportunity to save.

1. Throughout centuries, mankind has come up w/ several answers to how to deal w/ pain & suffering. Each of answers is unacceptable.
  - a. Stoic answer: feel no pain. Ignore it & endure it.
  - b. Buddhist answer: Pain is inescapable. Unless you are willing to give

up all desires & seek to escape life.

- c. Hindu answer: Get what you deserve based upon how you lived in your past life. Karma is cause of your pain.
  - d. Muslim answer: Pain is God's will for you. Submit to it.
  - e. Modern answer: Flee pain & avoid it. Seek pleasure, do what feels good. Shoot up, drink up, party hearty then you will feel no pain.
2. There is a Christian answer to pain. Not sure we always want to hear it & not sure we like it when we do.
    - a. Suffering is fact of life, pain & disease are real, because we live in a fallen world.
    - b. This world is neither paradise nor our ultimate home. Pain & disease exist to drive us to God & to force us to admit our weaknesses & our need for God's help.
      - i) God made the world good.
      - ii) Illness & disease are his ways of keeping us less than satisfied with this world as it is. so that we will seek a better world.
      - iii) In our weakness, God's strength is made manifest or plain.
      - iv) Suffering is God's opportunity to manifest his power in us & to lead us to a better life than we ever thought we could.
    - c. Suffering gives us the opportunity to exercise our faith in the Lord who conquers all pain.
    - d. Pain is an absolute necessity for this fallen world.
  4. There is a lot c. pain & suffering I do not know & do not understand. But I know the God who rules & the Jesus who saves by faith in him. I trust him & look to him for healing even when "why" is unanswerable.

### III. THE TENDER SYMPATHY OF OUR LORD. V. 30-34

#### A. The woman does not escape unnoticed back into the crowd.

1. Jesus stops, looks & listens.
2. Jesus demonstrates his great love for this suffering one.
  - a. It is a woman w/ whom he deals.
  - b. It is a single person that brings procession to a halt.
3. Jesus assures, blesses & liberates her.
  - a. Assures her that it was faith in him, not tassel, that made her whole.
  - b. Blesses her: tells her to go in peace. She came in fear; she leaves w/ the peace of God.
  - c. Liberates her: she is totally free of her disease, now & forever.

#### B. We do not escape the Lord's notice.

1. Jesus stops, looks & listens for & to us.
  - a. When we reach out to Jesus, he who holds galaxies together, takes time to reach back to us.
  - b. He looks for us. We are his chief concern. That's his business.
  - c. When he finds us, he listens to our story, all of it, gladly, compassionately, as we tell him the truth c. our pain, our grief, our hope & our trust in him. No one understands like Jesus—he's a friend beyond compare
2. When he finds us, he assures, blesses & liberates us.
  - a. Kindly he lets us know that we are his own dear child.
    - i) He reminds us that we did well to come to him in faith.
    - ii) He commends us for our faith.
  - b. He blesses us with deliverance. Jesus blesses us w/ total & complete salvation & with the presence of the Holy Spirit.
  - c. He promises us liberation from all that brings us into bondage & misery. For now, we have his grace so that we can bear our pain & endure it. For some, pain is ended. For all, we live above circumstances because the risen Christ is with us & the Holy Spirit within us. We are more than conquerors in him who is *Christus Victor*.

There is nothing in life more painful than suffering & incurable disease.

1. But, nature, demonic forces, & incurable disease are no match for the master of earth & sky. All shall sweetly obey his will, the will of him who says, "Peace be still."