

Introduction: We turn to some of the Gospel miracle accounts, where Christ shows both His awesome Divine power and His deep human compassion for the afflicted, the oppressed and the spiritually unclean. My prayer is that this in-depth study of Jesus' miracles will *remind us* of the joy of having such a mighty, compassionate Savior. We begin with a study of two characters in great need of Jesus' healing touch: Jairus the synagogue ruler and the woman with the issue of blood. May God use these two Bible characters to bring us to the place of utter dependence on Jesus, driving us to unceasing prayer in our time of need!

Monday: read Matthew 9:18-21; Mark 5:21-24 and Luke 8:40-42. The first person in great need in Matthew 9:18 comes directly to Jesus to beg for the life of his daughter. He fights his way through the wall of people who were literally "*pressing Jesus on every side*" (Mk. 5:24). In fact, space was so tight that Luke describes the crowd as, "*choking or suffocating*" (Lk. 8:42). Have you ever been in a crowd like that? We read about the tragic results of such crowds which, in a stampede, can be deadly to those being thronged. Yet by a miracle of grace, and with the desperation of a parent of a dying child, Jairus manages to find Jesus and fall before Him!

But, just who was this Jairus, named a "ruler" in Matthew 9:18? Well, such synagogue rulers were prominent and powerful religious leaders, with great social standing. They ruled over the houses ("synagogues") of Jewish worship which sprung up wherever Jews settled in the 1st century world. Meaning simply "a place of assembly or meeting", these synagogues gave all Jews their sense of unique worship and education under God's Law. That is why, when the church met in Jerusalem in Acts 15:21, James reminded all present that, "*Moses*", i.e. the Law in the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures, "*has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath*".

Thus Jairus was a ruler in the place of worship for God's people in Capernaum, and comes to Jesus with all the standing of such an important office. Yet, despite being such a powerful man, behold how beautifully humble his approach to Jesus is! How beautiful to see how Jairus' trials have brought him so low as to bow at Jesus' feet! May our trials do the same!

Meditate and Pray: Lord, we thank you for the rich fruit of humility which you work into our lives through our trials. Lord, if you will make us like Christ through our trials; like your dear Son who also "learned obedience by what He suffered", then bring all the trials you deem necessary to bring us low like Jairus in order that, like him, we may follow Jesus. Amen!

Tuesday: read Mark 5:21-24 and Matthew 11:20-24. We are not told what particular facts about Jesus of Nazareth drew the ruler Jairus to Jesus to plead for the life of his daughter. It is in fact surprising, (in a place so hardened *against* Jesus' miracles as Capernaum - see Matt 11:20-24), that someone as illustrious as a ruler of the synagogue should publicly humble himself before this despised carpenter named Jesus! We are not wrong to think that such a public profession of faith in Jesus' power to heal his daughter was indeed a very costly stand to take!

But it may help us to understand when we remember that, according to scholars, "ruling the synagogue" included taking care of the Old Testament scrolls. Could it be that this ruler Jairus first experienced the power of the Lord Jesus when he provided the scrolls for worship in Luke 4:16-22, and witnessed Jesus open them to the prophet Isaiah? Was it Christ's bold declaration that *He* was fulfilling the words of that prophet the very moment when Jairus began to believe in Jesus as Lord of life and death? How wonderful to reflect on the work of the Spirit of Christ to convince lost sinners to come to faith, and to enable them to stand on their profession of faith no matter what the cost!

Meditate and Pray: Sing this hymn of commitment as a prayer that the Lord will enable you to stand for Christ as Jairus did, no matter what the cost. Hymn # 565:

1 All for Jesus! All for Jesus!
All my being's ransomed pow'rs:
all my thoughts and words and doings,
all my days and all my hours.

2 Let my hands perform his bidding,
let my feet run in his ways;
let my eyes see Jesus only,
let my lips speak forth his praise.

3 Worldlings prize their gems of beauty,
cling to gilded toys of dust,
boast of wealth and fame and pleasure;
only Jesus will I trust.

4 Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus,
I've lost sight of all beside;
so enchained my spirit's vision,
looking at the Crucified.

5 O what wonder! how amazing!
Jesus, glorious King of kings,
deigns to call me his beloved,
lets me rest beneath His wings.

Wednesday: read Matthew 9:18-21 and Luke 8:40-42. We well understand Jairus' grief and determination to reach Jesus, when we discover that the one dying was "an only daughter" in Luke 8:42. So we ought to sympathize deeply with the heartbreak of this important "ruler of the synagogue" as he comes to beg at Jesus' feet. His daughter is literally "at the point of death" if she has not died already. The need is urgent! His standing in the community means that many are mourning his loss. There are even professional mourners hired in Matthew 9:23 – a vast crowd with many weeping and wailing – for this is an important member of the community with a beautiful only daughter twelve years of age – entering into the flower of womanhood, by Middle Eastern reckoning! What a loss for this house! What a profound need!

Meditate and Pray: "Lord, in our deep need, a need so profound that it thunders in our breaking hearts, we sing these words from hymn # 157 in order to express our desperate cries of faith. We need you! Help us! Help us!"

*None other Lamb, none other Name,
None other hope in Heav'n or earth or sea,*

*None other hiding place from guilt and shame,
None beside Thee!*

*My faith burns low, my hope burns low;
Only my heart's desire cries out in me
By the deep thunder of its want and woe,
Cries out to Thee.*

*Lord, Thou art Life, though I be dead;
Love's fire Thou art, however cold I be:
Nor Heav'n have I, nor place to lay my head,
Nor home, but Thee. (Hymn # 157)*

Thursday: read Matthew 9:18-19 and Mark 1:21-28. We pause once again to ask how Jairus came to know of Christ's saving power, so that in his extremity he begged for the Savior's help. His education in the ways of Jesus did not begin when his daughter became so deathly ill. For as the synagogue ruler, Jairus would be familiar with the Law of God, and the prophecies of Moses, which pointed forward to the days when God would raise up, "a prophet like Moses" named the Christ. Furthermore, had Jairus not seen Jesus' power even over demonic evil in earlier days, in the very synagogue over which he ruled – see Mark 1:21-28? And what did the crowds say about Jesus' word both of instruction and miraculous power in Mark 1:27? Here is that verse in the ESV: *And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."*

Meditate and Pray: How well-planned is the great Triune work of producing faith in one sinner – even a prominent, well-known one like Jairus! First the Father sends His Son, born in our flesh, and living among men in Capernaum. Then the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit ahead of Christ to prepare the hearts of those who would by faith see His miracles and hear His teaching. Such respond with amazement when they hear Jesus' word in Mark 1:27, in the synagogue. Their number includes Jairus! Little did Jairus know how he would come to depend on that word from Jesus' mouth for the very life of his daughter! But such are God's well-laid plans. Sing about how *early God's plans began to be formed to bring you to Himself, using hymn # 466:*

*I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
he moved my soul to seek him, seeking me;
it was not I that found, O Savior true;
no, I was found of thee.*

*Thou didst reach forth thy hand and mine enfold;
I walked and sank not on the storm-vexed sea;
'twas not so much that I on thee took hold,
as thou, dear Lord, on me.*

*I find, I walk, I love, but oh, the whole
of love is but my answer, Lord, to thee;
for thou wert long beforehand with my soul,
always thou lovedst me.*

Fri/Sat/Sun: read Matthew 9:18-21. It is important to notice that, as Jesus walked on the road from the beach in Galilee to the house of the synagogue ruler Jairus, His power was not reserved just for this man of standing. Behold the woman with an issue of blood - unnamed, lowly and forgotten by everyone except Jesus, who by faith presses through the crowd and touches the hem of our Lord's garment. Such saving faith on her part, wrought in her by the Spirit of God, (who is the sole author of the faith that joins us to Christ), draws out the Divine power of God in Christ, unbeknownst to everyone except the woman and the Lord Jesus.

Now, there is mystery here, as to how healing power seems to go out of Jesus in what appears to be almost an automatic pulse of Divine power. As a man, Jesus does not know who touched Him, as Mark 5:30 makes clear:

³⁰ And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?"³¹ And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'"³² And he looked around to see who had done it. ³³ But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth.

Yet, is this really so hard to understand? Was it not through the power of the Spirit that Jesus was able to do miracles, as that Spirit filled Jesus in order to equip Him for His ministry? Could not that Spirit have compassion on this woman *Himself*, and draw out of Jesus some of the power which He had already placed in the Son of God in the first place? Who better than the Spirit to know what reservoir of power He had placed within our Savior? Who better than the Spirit to show mercy to this woman, having created the faith within her to start with? Let us magnify the saving power of the Spirit as He proceeds out of Jesus, into the very core of unclean malady in this woman, in order to provide cleansing in this woman's inner depths of sin and misery!

Meditate and Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, we would pray to you directly. Even as you directly attended to the hidden but profound need of this woman with an issue of blood; even as you alone knew the depths of her sufferings at the hands of many doctor for more than a decade; so you alone could reach deep inside her life and bring healing, wholeness and comfort to her. Please, Holy Spirit, work deeply in conviction, healing and forgiveness in our lives as you did in hers! Amen! Sing about this deep work of the Holy Spirit, using hymn # 330:

*Holy Ghost, dispel our sadness;
Pierce the clouds of nature's night;
Come, great Source of joy and gladness,
Breathe Your life, and spread Your light.
From the height which knows no measure,
As a gracious shower descend,
Bringing down the richest treasure
Man can wish, or God can send.*

*Author of the new creation,
Come with blessing and with power.
Make our hearts your habitation;
On our souls Your graces shower.
Hear, O hear our supplication,
Blessèd Spirit, God of peace!
Rest upon this congregation,
With the fullness of Your grace.*