

The Teacher who Acts – January 24 2021

Matthew 9: 18— 26

Introduction — the stories of Jesus affect people in different ways. Some folks out west tell of how some in their church were affected: members of our congregation were socializing after the morning worship service, and conversation turned to the sermon. The pastor had spoken about Jesus' encounter with an unfruitful fig tree. People made various comments before one woman piped up, "well, this morning's message has inspired me to take action." "What do you plan to do?" Someone asked. "I'm going straight to the store to buy cookies," she replied, with a wink. "I have a sudden craving for a fig newton."

Let us remember that the gospels — all four of them — are stories of Jesus' life and ministry. Matthew, especially, as he writes of the teaching, the parables, and the miracles of Jesus, tries to convey the growing sense of the twelve disciples and the hundreds of others followers who watched and listened to Jesus daily— the growing sense, as they saw the miracles and displays of power— that "Jesus is more than a good teacher and rabbi — so, who is he!?" The miracles and displays of power were performed by Jesus for two reasons: (1) that, unlike other teachers ( rabbis ), Jesus was one who acted — as the son of God, the messiah; and — (2) to show God's unfailing love.

We read of Jesus' first demonstration of power a few moments ago:

I. His healing power !!! — The woman and the girl — ( read vv. 18—26 )

1. Jesus and the disciples had returned to the Israelite side of the sea of galilee, when s man approached them. ( see gospel of Mark)

2. Jairus — a "synagogue ruler" (like a lay leader or deacon or trustee in a modern church ) — asked Jesus to "come and heal my daughter." This was remarkable For at least two reasons: 1<sup>st</sup> — (1) people had come to Jesus before to ask him to heal then, but this was the first case of someone asking Jesus to come to their home, to heal someone else.

2<sup>nd</sup> — (2) Jairus, (Mark ) the father who asked Jesus to come to see his daughter, was a leader of a Jewish congregation !! Although he was not one of the Jerusalem religious officials who so strongly opposed Jesus, Jairus had probably gotten the word from Jerusalem that no one should let Jesus speak or teach in any synagogue in Israel !!! but Jairus loved his daughter more than he feared the disapproval of the chief priests— so he asked Jesus to come and heal his daughter !

3. However, as often happened in his ministry, Jesus was interrupted on his way. Again, the gospel of mark gives us some more details. A woman prayed that Jesus might heal her, if she could just humbly touch the hem of his robe (or cloak). She did not want to inconvenience Jesus by speaking to him, and have him take time out of his busy schedule to heal her !!

4. What was wrong with this woman? “ bleeding ” for twelve years? Perhaps it was some injury that would not heal. Whatever, her continued bleeding made her ceremonially unclean, and “good Hebrews” avoided her.

5. So — she just barely touched the edge of his robe, and she instantly felt that she began to heal!

6. But, then— Jesus was so sensitive to the power of God flowing through him, that he felt the healing power go out from him!! He asked the crowd, “who touched me?!?” and finally, the woman confessed it was her.

7. And Jesus, instead of being angry with her, spoke kindly to her: “take heart. Your faith has made you well . Go in peace.”

8. Faith — trust in God — is so often the key that unlocks the power of God in our lives !!!

9. A short time later, Jairus got to see this amazing power of God at work in Jesus again — when Jesus raised his daughter from an early death !!! Again, faith — trust in God — was the key !! Just before Jesus knelt down by the daughter, he said to Jairus, “don’t be afraid. Just have faith.”

And the twelve year old girl was restored to health — which may be a miracle that foretells of his own resurrection, & the ultimate defeat of death of which his resurrection gives us absolute assurance !!!

What do we learn in these amazing stories of Jesus?? We learn that Jesus is:

ii. The king of power !!

A. As we saw last sun., matt. Wants his readers to again see that followers of Jesus are blessed with:

B. The strength of Jesus Christ to conquer any adversity , any “storm”, any trial in life. And, 2<sup>nd</sup>, believers are blessed with:

C. The power of Jesus Christ — power to overcome the evil forces of this fallen, sinful world— power to defeat the forces of God’s enemies who might trouble you. But—

D. What about skeptics who have argued that:

1. “Jesus is just another ‘strongman’ Demi—god of ancient stories, like Hercules ”...

2. Other have argued that the ancient story of Jesus was just another ancient story of a “god” who became half—human, like Apollo in Greek mythology . . . .

3. Some have thought that the miracles and demonstrations of God’s power in the gospels are too fantastic to accept as true in this modern, scientific world !!

3. But the power of God at work in Jesus was not, as in the Greek and Roman mythologies of ancient times, just fantastic stories to tell around the campfire or family room on late evenings !! Nor were they to show off power — to selfishly show “I’m bigger and stronger than you are !! !”

4. The motivation of Jesus' demonstration of power in casting out demons and healing the sick and dying was: love ! ! ! ! Jesus wanted to demonstrate God's unfailing and invincible love ! ! !

5. So— fear no one, if you trust in Jesus ! ! Do not fear:— the devil nor the demons of hell ; do not fear— the pains or trials of illness or disease, for Jesus can heal us, or give us the strength to survive the injury or disease; do not fear — the opinions of skeptics or doubters ; and do not fear death — for Jesus has conquered that old enemy, in the resurrection ! ! !

Conclusion — Gregory Elder shared this insight from his youth: growing up on the Atlantic coast, I spent long hours working on intricate sand castles; whole cities would appear beneath my hands. One year, for several days in a row, I was accosted by bullies who smashed my creations. Finally I tried an experiment: i placed cinder blocks, rocks, and chunks of concrete in the base of my sand castles. Then I built the sand kingdoms on top of the rocks. When the local toughs appeared (and i disappeared), their bare feet suddenly met their match.

Many people see the church in grave peril from a variety of dangers: secularism, politics, heresies, or plain old sin. They forget that the church is built upon [the solid] rock of Jesus Christ, (Mt. 16:16), over which the gates of hell itself shall not prevail.