

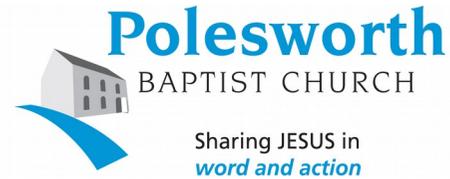
what the Lord had done for us.

“Brother, sisters, fellow Christ followers, don’t be afraid. Go to Jesus. We all know that healing’s a mystery. We all know it’s a gift. We all know that Paul is carrying around in himself a hurting that the Lord will not heal. We all know that our prayers, though they appeal to the Lord, cannot command healing. But we also know that Jesus does heal. It was my experience. The experience of my daughter. It was the woman’s experience. I don’t know her name. I’m so sorry, I don’t know her name. Where is she? Who knows her, has she slipped away?

“Let me close with this question. What has been the greatest day of your life? If you were to ask me that, some people, of a very serious type, might expect me to say, the day I became one of the rulers of the Synagogue. Others, of a romantic leaning, might hope I would say, the day I got married. But for me, my answer is this, it’s the day I trusted my daughter’s life to Jesus and He healed her.

“Praise the Lord for what he did for me, and my wife and my daughter that day. It changed our lives for ever. The things we used to be. The life we used to live. The Law, and the routines and the way we used to follow. All these ceased to be. We came into a new life. A new life founded in Christ Jesus. A new life joyful, joyful and yet also we know challenged. Following Jesus is true discipleship, comfort and joy, obedience and challenge. Joyful in Jesus and all that He is, and all the glorious wonder that He brings into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Challenged! By and through that same Jesus. Challenged by others who now persecute me, because I used to be, but am no longer, a ruler of the Synagogue. Challenged by Jesus, if you love me you will obey me. Challenged by the wonderful calling of love. The love of Jesus and others, that fills our hearts, most surprisingly with the peace that flows from obedience. The love of Jesus and others that enriches our spirits in joy.

“Don’t be afraid. As Jesus said to me that day, don’t be afraid; just believe. Abide in Him, as John is always saying. Abide in Him. Don’t be afraid. And He will say to us, as He said to that woman, “Go in peace and be freed from your past, in your new life in me.” Jesus will say. Amen.”



## Reflections on Mark 5 v 21 to 43 The healing of the woman and Jairus’ daughter

Many on the day of these two wonderful healings were thronging around Jesus, but they don’t seem to be trusting Him. They are like many people in the world today who have His name on their lips, but not in worship or in faith. But there were there two people who trusted Him and sought His help. There was Jairus and there was the un-named woman.

It’s quite common for the Gospels not to name those whom Jesus healed. That’s not really strange. Across the globe today Jesus is saving, healing many. We know that as a reality, but we don’t know who they are. The oddity is actually that we know Jairus’ name. I wonder if the simplest explanation for that is just that he became a witness to Jesus in the early Church. Perhaps as a Synagogue ruler he was not fazed by public speaking. Imagine if you were a witness to his witness.

“Hello, my name is Jairus. I was once a Synagogue ruler, as some of you know. Now here I am in what we’ve learnt to call church. How did that happen to me? My daughter’s the reason. When she was 12 years old she became sick. In fact, she was dying. Now that day, Jesus crossed the lake to our town. I heard about it. You could not hear. There was a huge crowd around Him, making a great noise. And I went to find Him. I knew, I believed, I knew He could heal my little girl. I found Him. I threw myself at His feet. And I, one of the town’s Synagogue rulers, I pleaded with Him, ‘My little daughter is dying, please come and put Your hands on her, so that she will be healed and live.’ And He came with me.

“And all the crowd went with us as well, of course. They were all pressing around us. Then suddenly, Jesus stops. And He starts turning around, looking, looking at the crowd and asking, ‘Who touched my clothes?’. I confess, in my heart were the very words the disciples said, ‘We’re in the middle of a crowd and yet You ask, “Who touched Me?”’ But their words and my unspoken agreement with them didn’t stop Him looking. Then He sees the person He’s looking for. And it’s a woman!”

Would everyone, from their old traditions, even in a new church, have been shocked? A woman! ‘What was all that about?’ Imagine her standing before you, before us, today. A woman, very probably in her late 20’s or early 30’s. And she is looking at you, she’s looking at us, and she’s got such a radiant face of joy, it is amazing. And what would she say today? What would she say? In our present situation she might begin with this question. “How long have you been in your social isolation?”

We might remember when it started, more or less, and be able to work it out, and say it’s about 9 weeks. “9 weeks,” we say. “9 weeks without church. It’s been very difficult, very sad, you know, 9 weeks without church. 9 weeks with out being able to get together with our families. 9 weeks cut off from normal life. 9 weeks without the hairdresser. 9 weeks without the ordinary doings, the comings and goings we take for granted. 9 weeks.”

“9 weeks,” she says, “that’s a long time. I was 12 years in social isolation. My body suffered a permanent menstrual period. And that constant flow of blood made me unclean. Do you know what it says in [the Bible book] Leviticus chapter 15 verses 19 to 33? Well, those words, they were printed in my soul, they were written in my tears. ‘Unclean’ is what they say. I was a shame. I was a cause of a risk of the impurity to others. If you sat on a chair I’d sat on, you’d be unclean. If you touched the clothes that I was wearing, you’d be unclean. If you touched me, you would be unclean. You wouldn’t be able go to worship. You wouldn’t be able to be with your family. I, I used to be married, I was unclean, my husband divorced me. I was a walking shame. A non-person. I went to the doctors in my desperation, I had some money then, you see and they all said, ‘O well, we can heal you, we can treat you, don’t you worry, here’s the bill.’ They took my money, but they gave me no cure.

“Then I heard Jesus was in town. And I knew He could heal me. And I went and I joined that crowd. I didn’t care if they touched me in the pressing of it, and that made them unclean, I needed Jesus. And I was going to go to Him. I knew that if I could just touch His clothes I would be healed. If I could just touch His clothes, I would be healed. And I did. I touched His cloak. And I knew, O I knew that my flow had stopped. I was freed from my suffering. Has Jesus ever freed you from suffering? If you are suffering

something now in body, soul or spirit, go to Him, my sisters, go to Him, my brothers. See what He can do for you. See what He did for me.

“Then Jesus stood still. I hadn’t expected that. I’d hoped He would carry on, taking the crowd with Him, while I revelled in the joy of the ending of my isolation. But He stopped, asking ‘Who touched my clothes?’

“I knew He meant me. I confess I was suddenly afraid. If I didn’t admit it was me, would I lose my healing? And if I did admit it was me, would He tell me off, like all the ordinary teachers would do, for breaking all the religious law and social protocols, and would I become ill again? I know I just had to admit it, it was me. I fell at His feet, trembling with fear, and told Him the whole truth. And you know what He did. He called me, ‘Daughter’. He confirmed my healing, He blessed me with peace and freedom. With His words He restored me to Israel and God and made me human again. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Go to Him, sisters, seek Him out, go to Him, brothers, trust Him for your future, trust Him.”

“Meanwhile, some men came from my house,” Jairus continues, “and they said, ‘Your daughter is dead. Why bother the teacher any more?’ But before I could react, Jesus, totally ignoring them, said, ‘Don’t be afraid; just believe.’

“Then everything happened in such a rush. I cant really remember the detail of it all. My wife I’m sure can fill some of it out for later, Mark, don’t you worry. We arrived home. The mourners laughed when Jesus said my daughter was not dead. He put them out. He took Peter, James and John with Him and me and both of us, the family and we went in to my daughter’s room, my dead, un-dead daughter’s room. He took her hand. An action that according to all the Law made Him unclean. Yet, He’s not bothered by such concerns. Somehow, who He is, He doesn’t get unclean; He cleanses the unclean. And He said to her, ‘Little girl, I say to you, get up.’, ‘Talitha Koum’. He said it as you might say it to a little child, who’s over-sleeping the morning. ‘Come on, get up.’ But He said it in His name. He said, ‘I say to you.’ And His ‘I say to you’ defeated her death. She got up, she walked about, her mother hugged her, I hugged her and her mother. And we were all having such joy, when above the commotion Jesus said ‘Give her some food, she’s probably hungry.’ And you know what, everybody had food. We had a great meal together, celebrating and rejoicing in