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If Only I May Touch His Clothes...

Reflections [Prayer, Repentance and the Spiritual Life](#) 18 September 2026

[Mark 4:39](#)

[Mark 5:13](#)

[Mark 5:23](#)

[Mark 5:28](#)

[Mark 5:34](#)

[Mark 5:41](#)

[Matthew 21:21-22](#)

The Gospel according to Mark, from chapter four, verse thirty-five, to the end of chapter five, narrates a number of situations that seemed hopeless. It begins with the disciples of Jesus Christ caught in a terrifying experience on stormy, turbulent waters, their boat almost capsizing, and moves on to a tormented man living among the tombs. Then we read of the daughter of Jairus, who lay fatally ill. Woven into this account is the story of a woman who had suffered from a haemorrhage for many years. It is no wonder that many describe this passage, stretching across two chapters, as the "home of the hopeless." As I worked through the passage, however, I felt that this description does it no justice. I would rather call it the "home of the faithful." Let me tell you why.

There is no doubt that every case reported here seemed hopeless, to begin with — hopeless to the disciples, who lacked faith; hopeless to those who looked upon the tormented man in the graveyard; hopeless to the many physicians who thought only of extorting money from the poor woman; and hopeless, perhaps, to the rest of the household of Jairus. Yes, all of them were living in the home of the hopeless.

So it is with many of us Christians, for want of faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, when we ought to be living in the home of the faithful. That is the lesson to be learnt from this passage.

In the first two instances, Jesus demonstrates that He, as God the Son, rules over nature, over demons, and over illness. "And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (Mark 4:39). Here Jesus shows His authority over the wind and the waves upon the Lake of Galilee. In the second instance we read, "And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine" (Mark 5:13).

There is nothing impossible for Jesus.

Then we come to Jairus, a respected leader, a man of some standing, and an elected ruler of the local synagogue. He would, I imagine, have been responsible for overseeing worship, running the weekly school, and caring for the buildings. Though he might well have been under pressure to reject Jesus, he humbled himself to come and seek His help, saying, "My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live" (Mark 5:23). There was not the smallest doubt in his words that Jesus could make his daughter well. We know from the Gospel that, before Jesus could reach the child, word came that she was already dead. Jairus did not give up. He brought Jesus to his house, where his daughter lay dead. Jesus took her by the hand and said, "Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise" (Mark 5:41). The little girl was released at once from the grip of death.

Set within this account is the incident of the woman with the issue of blood. She was one among the great crowd thronging around Jesus. Such was her faith that she said within herself, "If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole" (Mark 5:28). As she did so, she was healed that very instant. After she had told Jesus the whole truth of her pitiful condition, He said to her, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague" (Mark 5:34).

Whatever it was that first brought this woman to hear of Jesus, she knew that she had to reach Him. She had come to realise that Jesus was her only hope, and she believed it with her whole heart. And so she took courage in her faith, touched His garment, and was healed. She was not like the others in the crowd, drawn to Jesus by His popularity, or in hope of being entertained by His miracles, or of a free meal. The second thing I admire in this woman is that she told Jesus the whole truth about herself — her rejection for twelve years, her search for physicians, her poverty, her feelings of guilt for what she thought she had done wrong, in touching His garment without leave, though she could not quite say what that wrong was. We, too, are invited to do the same with Jesus: to tell Him the whole truth about ourselves, the details, the particulars. The third thing I admire in this woman is her great faith — a deep faith in the power of Jesus to make her whole; a simple faith, bordering on the superstitious, even the magical.

The question before us is whether we have a faith like hers, and like that of Jairus. Do we have faith the size of a mustard seed? Let us examine ourselves closely.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." — Matthew 21:21-22 (KJV)

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