

A Touch of Faith

‘There are two prisoners shackled to the wall of a deep dark dungeon. Spread-eagled, they are securely lashed by manacles and chains and actually hanging suspended, side by side, a few feet above the damp floor of the dungeon. There is only one small window high above their heads, maybe thirty or forty feet up. They are immobile and alone, pinned inexorably to the wall. One prisoner turns to the other and whispers, “Here’s my plan!”’

Now I’d like to hear that plan! That one guy has faith in his plan, and in himself presumably, to be able to pull off this seemingly-impossible prison break! Well, I see one problem with his plan from the get go. No mention is made of any faith in God. And for anything and everything, the very first prerequisite is to have faith in God, and be led by God by that faith. It’s easy for us to agree with that, especially considering those two pitiful prisoners. But, on the other hand, all too often, we’re just as bad as they. We usually live as if we have little or no faith in God. No different than nonbelievers. We don’t take God at His promises. We read and hear of His marvelous, steadfast faithfulness to His people, in ancient times, and often, even among people in our own day. But we think in the back of our minds that, well, that was then, or that was for some people, but not for me. Seems

like one of our biggest problems is that we're afraid we'll be disappointed if we step out in faith. After all, we're not too bad off just coasting along as we always have. We'll make it, one way or other, and we also think that, God will help us some way or other along the way. Because we know that He loves us.

If things go along not too badly, if we seem to have options, several avenues available to us, all offered by the world around us, we're all too often satisfied that this is the best there is. And we just go along with it. We have enough money, enough food and shelter, enough health, enough family and friends to live life reasonably comfortably, peacefully and safely. And there's nothing inherently bad about that. It actually all results from God's blessings. But most people don't realize this, let alone thank God for them, assuming they even believe in Him in the first place. So it is, on the one hand, a blessed life, but on the other hand, a stunted, retarded, circumscribed, limited life. In other words, it's far, far from the abundant life that Christ Jesus gave His infinite life on the cross of Calvary for. Did He die all so we could live like this? How He must grieve that we're settling for such a fake life! Hoodwinked by the devil yet again, if we just get by, we think we're truly blessed and fortunate. What a crock! We haven't the slightest idea of all that we're missing out on.

Consider the woman with the chronic hemorrhage. We've heard her story many times. But now consider more of the details. First, our Lord Jesus was on His way, responding to the

humble begging of a local rabbi, one in charge of the local synagogue. Falling prostrate on the ground is about the strongest form of pleading possible. His daughter was dying, and this loving father was now clutching at straws. He would do anything and everything to save his beloved daughter's life. As a rabbi of the day, he would have been a man of some means, and doubtlessly had retained the best doctors in the area. All to no avail. Time was of the essence, and getting Lord Jesus, the One Who supposedly could heal people, back to the house where He could see about his daughter was his last hope, the only thing that mattered.

But suddenly, Lord Jesus stops, in mid stride on the road, as the thronging crowds surged around Him, asking a quizzical question. "Who touched Me?" His disciples are incredulous. There are literally dozens of people at arms length all around Him. People were jostling each other as they followed after the Master. Not just one person, but literally a dozen or more people could have touched Him at any moment, even simultaneously. So what a ridiculous question! But Lord Jesus, as the Son of God, knew what He was talking about. By the way, He always does!

From Mark's report here, turns out there was a woman. Yes, a woman. Women are so often interrupting things, causing delays, forcing detours, you know how it is! And this woman has just thrown a veritable roadblock in Lord Jesus' and the rabbi Jairus' plans! Not a second to lose. His daughter was dying. But Lord Jesus would not be moved from the spot. He had to know. Actu-

ally, He almost certainly already knew, but it was necessary for both the woman, His disciples, and the surging crowd, to learn what had really happened, how, and Who deserved all the thanks and glory. Well, the woman who'd hoped to be healed, and then disappear back into the crowd, was forced into revealing herself. She was unclean. For she was bleeding which rendered her unclean. The law forbade her from getting close to other people. You know, the 6-foot rule? Oh, that's from our era, and a corrupt government—ours! But she was supposed to keep her distance from all other people, because she could be contagious, just as lepers were required to live separate from the general society.

And here this woman was, breaking all these laws! Who knows how many other people inadvertently and unknowingly touched her in the crowd. It says that she was trying to keep a low profile. Literally. Crouching down near the ground as they went, she managed to get close enough to the Lord to touch one of His tzitzit. These tzitzit are the “specially knotted ritual fringes, or tassels” that adorned the edges of prayer shawls, tallit, typically worn by men and boys, and also occasionally by women. As a rabbi, Lord Jesus would wear one. And this desperate woman determined in her heart that if she could touch just the end of one of these tassels, that would be the same as actually touching the Lord, and receiving His healing power. She believed. She'd tried everything else, every other solution the world offered. She'd spent all her money for twelve years., paying doctors for one

treatment after another. And yet, she grew worse, not better! At the end of her rope, she put her last hope on this famous Prophet. Well, she was healed. And she felt it in her body that very instant.

Now painfully aware that she was holding up the entire procession, she had to reveal herself. Trembling, crying, afraid of being ostracized or even arrested by the authorities, she reluctantly confessed what had happened. Contrary to the reprimand she expected, the Lord spoke gently to her, "Daughter, because you dared to believe, your faith has healed you. Go with peace in your heart, and be free from your suffering!" Hallelujah! Twelve years of suffering, over, just like that! She was literally reborn to a new life! But it wasn't so for Jairus' daughter. Not yet.

In the time it took for this woman to be healed, revealed, and released, it was already too late for the little girl. She had passed. People from Jairus' household arrived with the grim news. It's no use. Don't bother the Teacher any longer. But, as if it was all part of God's plan, which it was, Lord Jesus turned at once to Jairus and commanded him, "Don't yield to fear. All you need to do is to *keep on* believing". Forbidding the crowd from following them, Lord Jesus took only the two brothers, Jacob (James) and John, plus Peter, and went with Jairus to his house. Arriving there, the Lord dismissed the professional mourners telling them to go away. Only Himself, the three disciples and the girl's parents were allowed to go in with Him to the dead girl's bedside. Touching her with His hand, He spoke, commanding her to awake. She

came back alive, stood up and walked around! Imagine the tearful joy of her parents. Imagine the synagogue leader awestruck. Not only could this Master heal the sick and dying, but actually raise the dead! Undoubtedly, this Jairus became one of the Lord Jesus' committed disciples from that moment on. All glory and praise be to God and to His Son! How much greater the glory than if the Lord had arrived "in time" before the girl had died. It truly was, all according to God's plan!

We can easily see this in retrospect. But what if Jairus had been shown in advance that this is what would happen? Would he have believed? If you think so, I have a bridge in Brooklyn that I can sell you for a great price! We make our decisions based on our experiences. Just as Jairus did. Once dead, there's no coming back. But we forget, just as Jairus and the disciples and the family and friends around, all needed to learn, that with God, all things are possible. And when Father God tells us, when Holy Spirit moves in our inmost being, that we should believe, that we should have faith for a miracle, then we should "cast all our cares upon Lord Jesus for He cares for us" and allow Him to work before our eyes His stupendous, awesome, work. What did Jairus want? For his girl to be healed. Certainly not for her to die, and then be resurrected. Why, he and everyone knew, that that was impossible. But Lord Jesus did not do as Jairus wanted. What a disappointment! Really? What a wondrous work beyond his imagining! And all it took was a "touch" of faith!

