

Sermon – Mark 1:29-34 ; Mark 2:1-12

Rev. Bruce Stanley

Text and audio available for download from www.waitara.anglican.asn.au

“Compare the pair”

Background

Advertisement – compare the pair.

This ad is a great picture of the world. Here we have 2 people that are nearly the **same**. In exactly the **same** position in life. Two people with the **same** pay. The **same** job. But they’ve made **different** financial decisions. And they end up in completely **different** places in life.

The story today is about two completely **different** people. Completely **different** lives. Completely **different** financial situations. But they end up in the **same** place, because they make the **same** choice. Turn with me to Mark 5 and let’s have a look at these two people.

1. Jairus

The first person we meet is a ruler named Jairus. He’s a ruler of the synagogue. An important man. Respected in his community. He’s wealthy. He’s well known. He’s important. He’s got a lot of friends, and a family. But his 12 year old daughter is sick and dying. And he comes to Jesus for help.

2. The bleeding woman

The second person we meet is a woman. We don’t know her name, because she’s not really important in her community. She’s a woman with no name. A woman who is sick. She’s been bleeding for 12 years. She’s suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors. She’s spent all her money trying to get well, but was getting sicker! And on top of that, she was an **outcast** of society. Because she was always bleeding, she was considered in that society to be **unclean** and she was not allowed to touch anyone or even come near people. So she certainly should not have been in a crowd.

Compare the pair. An important man with a 12 year old daughter who is dying. An unimportant woman who has been bleeding for 12 years. And Jesus helps them both. Why? Jesus is on his way to this important man’s house to save his dying daughter, but he stops for this “nobody” woman. Why? Why does Jesus care about both of these people?

The answer is what the book of Mark is all about: Because Jesus came to earth to show us what the Kingdom of God looks like. And this is what the kingdom of God looks like. There are NO unimportant people. Jesus shows us that in the kingdom of God, everyone is important. He cares about everyone.

To Jesus, these two people are both important in the kingdom of God. Because every heart, every soul, every human being is important to God. God invites **everyone** into His kingdom. You see, while Jesus was on earth, he challenged the way the world treats people. To Jesus, everyone is equally important. And that’s important for us to know and understand. That no matter who you are or what you’ve done in your life, Jesus cares about you as much as he cares about **anyone else** in the world. We can never think for a moment that “Jesus has more important things to do than to worry about me and my problems.” We can never think that. And, on the other hand, we can also never think: “My problems are more important than anyone else’s”!

**In God's eyes, in God's kingdom, there is no one MORE important than you,...
and there is no-one LESS important than you.**

And what does that mean for us? If we're members of the Kingdom of God, then WE are called to see the world the way **God** sees the world – to see **people** the way **God** sees people.

So we see all people as important. We don't see one person as more worthy of our time than another. No matter what age they are, how educated they are, how poor or rich they are, what culture they come from, what their children are like, what their hygiene is like. No matter who they are, there is no class system in the kingdom of God.

Let me tell you two cafe stories. Maybe you identify with one story more than the other.

III – I saw a man the other day at a cafe with his daughter who was about 3 years old. And I thought that was nice. She was having a milkshake. He was having a coffee. But what was he doing? He was working on his laptop. Working. There was his 3 year old daughter spending time with him. And there he was, working on his laptop. I wonder how important his daughter felt?

III – At another cafe down I watched as a homeless man approached the counter. He didn't order a coffee. The manager called him to the counter and came out to him and gave him a hug, and talked to him for about 15 minutes. And I have to say, that was very moving. Here was someone who cared about this person as a person. And how do you think that made him feel?

Which story do you relate to more?

How do we see those people in our society who are like the bleeding woman in Mark 5. The sick? The outcast? The lonely? The mentally ill? The homeless? The refugee? What about the annoying people? You know – all the people you avoid when you go to the shopping centre or when you go to work?

Christians are people who are part of the kingdom of God. Do **we** see people the way **Jesus** sees people? Do we believe that EVERYONE is important? And most of all, do we believe that **everyone** needs to hear the good news of the Jesus?

So let's go back to our man and woman. Let's compare the pair again. An important man. An unimportant woman. Jesus makes time for both of them. Jesus gets involved in both of their lives. Jesus heals them both. But let's look now at what happens when they come to Jesus:

1. The woman

Verse 28: The bleeding woman comes to him, and she says to herself: *"If I just touch his clothes I will be healed."*

Verse 33. Jesus says "Who touched my clothes". And the woman comes forward, and she falls at his feet, trembling with fear.

And Jesus says to her: *"Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering"*

2. Jairus

Verse 22: When Jairus sees Jesus, he comes up to him and falls at his feet and PLEADS with Jesus – "My little daughter is dying. **Please** come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live."

But Jesus is distracted while he's healing the woman and, verse 35, some men come to tell Jairus: "Don't bother Jesus any more. Your daughter is dead. It's too late." And what does Jesus say to Jairus?

Verse 36: “Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, ‘Don’t be afraid, just believe.’”

The woman falls at Jesus’ feet. Jesus says: Your faith has healed you.

Jairus falls at Jesus’ feet. Jesus says: Don’t be afraid, just believe.

- Two very different people. But they have the same response.

They fall at his feet and believe. They put their faith in Jesus. And they treat him as King, as Lord, and as ruler of their life.

And this is the way **anyone** must come to Jesus. The ONLY way to come to Jesus is to put our faith in him, to believe that Jesus is who he says he is – that Jesus IS the Son of God and that has the power to save us.

And we need fall at his feet with humility and fear and trembling and acknowledge that he is Lord over our life.

And the way this story ends, shows us again that Jesus is Lord over all. He heals the woman, then he goes to Jairus’; daughter and raises her from the dead. Jesus is saying to this woman and Jairus – you put your faith in me. You call me Lord. And that’s the right thing to do. Because I can heal you. I can raise your little girl from the dead, because I have the power over all things. I am the king. I am the Lord of all.

Conclusion

Jesus came to earth to show us God’s kingdom. And this is the heart of the kingdom of God: everyone is important. Everyone is precious to God. And everyone needs the opportunity to hear about Jesus so they can put their faith in him as Lord.

So first of all, do you come to Jesus with faith? Do you believe in him as Lord? Do you fall at his feet and trust him with your life? Because this is the only way to come to Jesus. With him, not you, as King of your life.

But secondly, think about this: Do you see people the way Jesus sees people? Do you have a heart to share the gospel with **everyone**? We’re all travelling somewhere. Every day we have plans to go somewhere, to see someone. Perhaps someone important. Perhaps an important meeting. Perhaps an important day at work. An important holiday. Perhaps we’re travelling on an important career path. Just think about the road you’re on today. Think about where you’re headed. Are you prepared to stop for a bleeding woman? For a sick neighbour? For a homeless man? For a lonely refugee?

At All Saints, at this church, our mission is to **be disciples and make disciples** for Jesus. That’s our mission. To be disciples and make disciples. And to do that, we’re taking a lot of things off the church calendar. Less events. Less “plans”. More time to stop. Today we have a picnic. It’s a time to **stop** and be with people. In 5 weeks we have Family Festival. That’s a big event. But we need to come to that and sit down and **stop** and talk to our neighbours who are visiting us. We need to make that time. What we’re trying to do is to make church life less busy so we can have more time to stop for the people around us. Because people are important. Programs are not important. People are important to Jesus, and that means that people are important to us.

Let me encourage you today to do 2 things:

1. Put your faith in Jesus – fall down at his feet and treat him as your Lord and King in EVERY part of your life.
2. As you walk along in life, stop. Stop for people. Because people are important.

Let’s pray.