

Interrupting God

So before we get started I kinda feel like I should apologize to all the flute players in the room, because in a story of grace and acceptance they were the only ones kicked out of the room. And speaking of flute players, I feel like it's time for full disclosure in our relationship, I mean my relationship with you all, and that it's time to tell you that I do indeed have a flute player sister. And in fact, I have a twin, and as you can see, we used to look a lot alike. **(Slide - photo)**



But the truth is that we STILL look a lot alike **(Slide - photo)**



and I especially want to thank you, Summit Church, for how friendly you are. So friendly that my twin is now getting greeted as “kristen” often. Very often. City Market, on the trail, Walmart. It's a thing. So, lest you think I am being unfriendly or distant, just know that it might *not* be me who you are talking to.

Seriously though, when Pastor Jeff invited me to preach, he gave me freedom to interrupt the sermon series. So today, I'm talking about interrupting God. Mark 5 is one of my favorite stories in the Bible, and as I was preparing to talk about this story a few weeks ago I had it all kind of outlined in my head and I felt like I had a clear direction... you know, now this is gonna be so easy! miracle sandwich! Jairus and the woman, 2 healing stories and yay miracles and yay God! And this is a beautiful story of Jesus coming in to save the day, twice. It's almost as if he comes in with the magic wand and fixes everybody and everything. Then as I was feeling so smug that I could just kind of knock this out, I got interrupted. In fact, my whole thought process and the way I view this story got interrupted and blown apart.

I got a call from one of my dear friends saying that his 18 year old son had died after a long illness. This family prayed for their son to be healed and this friend of mine has more faith than almost anyone I've ever seen in my life, and yet his son died. Then I just thought, "how can I teach a happy miracle story in light of the fact that my friend just lost his son?" And that's the problem with miracles... we can't really hear about miracles without wishing we had one of our own. And I think all of us could use a miracle at one point or another in our lives. Most of us could probably use one right now. When we read about miracles but know that miracles don't always happen for us, how does that affect our view of God? Or maybe we wonder, "what's wrong with me that the miracle I needed, wanted, hoped for, prayed for, simply didn't occur?"

I've been there. I've had days where my belief is more painful than not. I've had days when I'm not even sure WHAT I believe. A couple months ago my therapist (shout out to therapists... they save our lives don't they?) she asked me "why do you still believe...stay at church...after everything you've been through - past church trauma - why do you still go?" It was a good question that interrupted me in my thoughts. The thing is, God is bigger than any damage done by the church. I still believe that there's goodness and love and hope and miracles. And frankly, I need help.

So back to thinking about this story and the fact that that we can't drum up miracles with the right prayers or formulas. It's not just a happy miracle sandwich. There has to be more to it.

This story has 3 sections, or 3 interruptions. Like a sandwich. The first interruption is a guy named Jairus.

Slide - "Interruption #1 - Jairus"

The text tells us that he was a ruler of the synagogue, so he was not unknown. He would've been a popular guy and he had a prominent role in the community. Being a ruler of the synagogue would be similar to our modern day elder or head of directional team but also planning services and he would've been very well respected and known. The other thing about Jairus' position is that it would've been a risk for him to go to Jesus. The reason is because Jesus wasn't exactly best friends with the temple leaders and that was because he was always breaking the rules. These guys had dedicated their lives to Judaism. And in their minds they were quite certain that they were right about everything. So Jesus came along and started breaking rules that were really important to the people in the temple such as healing on the Sabbath and

hanging out with sinners. So imagine how you would feel if someone came and kind of took over and broke the rules, but also is popular and the crowds are enamoured with him. There's a sense of a loss of control which made the religious leaders really angry with Jesus and eventually led to them killing him.

Anyway this is where we find Jairus, kind of in the boys' club of the temple. For him to go to Jesus would've been a big deal. He would've risked his reputation, maybe his status, and maybe his leadership in the synagogue. But he's desperate and frantic. His little daughter is dying.

How many of you have been faced with a situation where a child is at risk, sick enough to die? As a mom it terrifies me to the core. So my son Johnny has a life-threatening nut allergy. You know the kind where if you even touch a peanut or not you can go into anaphylactic shock, the one where you have to carry an EpiPen? Yeah that's my son and I remember when we found out when I found out about the allergy and it was terrifying. I was grocery shopping and he was about 14 months old. I was just shopping along and I pulled some cookies off the shelf because you know I was hungry and little Johnny grabbed one. Turns out the cookies I had chosen were peanut butter cookies and I didn't think anything of it, but I know now he went into a progression of anaphylactic shock. I had noticed that he was raspy and coughing a lot and just kind of off. When I picked him up out of the grocery cart, the lady at Nature's Oasis saw his little body and she said you need to get to the ER right now. You guys I started running so fast to the car...I've dropped my phone in the parking lot. I was crazy lady, I was terrified, I knew what Peanut allergy meant... I knew what anaphylaxis meant and I was terrified I would lose my son.



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So this is where Jairus is as his daughter is dying. Desperate... and this is his last resort, so he interrupts Jesus. The text just says that Jesus went with him. That hit me.

We always hear about the need to follow Jesus, figure out the will of God and follow it. But in this case, someone interrupts God and says, please! Will you come with me?!" And that's it. Jesus doesn't even say anything he just follows. So now everything is moving we're in the ambulance and everybody's on this sort of frantic parade following Jesus to get to this man's house to save his little girl. And then something really interesting happens. Everything halts to a stop. So picture the ambulance... you know racing down Highway 160 to the hospital and suddenly we hear screeching brakes as the ambulance stops. Everything stops.

Interruption #2 - "The woman with the "issue of blood" (Slide)

So the next character that comes into place is the hemorrhaging woman. Like Jairus, she also took a great risk to get to Jesus. But her risk was different. While Jairus's risk loss of status or maybe being judged, this woman's risk was in a position of already being humbled and one of the lowest in society. Her risk was exposing her shame. The text says that she had an issue of blood for 12 years which basically means she was in the red tent for 12 years, which by the way was the age of the little girl.

Besides the pain there are the physical aspects of what was going on with her. I did a quick Google search to find out what kind of issues a woman would have if she's in a perpetual cycle for 12 years . A person who experiences ongoing bleeding may develop iron-deficiency anemia from chronic blood loss, leading to extreme fatigue, weakness, dizziness, shortness of breath, and difficulty carrying out everyday activities. Over time, persistent bleeding can also cause hormonal imbalances, poor concentration, sleep disturbances, headaches, and emotional distress, including anxiety and depression. Just as importantly, continuous bleeding is often a sign of an underlying medical condition. Causes may include endometriosis, (PCOS), thyroid disorders, bleeding disorders, or even cancer.

Slide (list) "anemia, chronic blood loss, extreme fatigue, weakness, dizziness, shortness of breath, difficulty carrying out everyday activities, hormonal imbalances, poor concentration, sleep disturbances, headaches, emotional distress, anxiety, depression, endometriosis, PCOS, thyroid disorders, bleeding disorders, cancer"

So that's just a physical part of what she was going through. On top of that she was dealing with the emotional aspects of her condition. Not only the fact that she was excluded, but the fact that she was shamed. So back to the history a little bit of the

Jewish culture. In order to be accepted into the temple, you could not be impure in any way. So the fact that she was bleeding made her untouchable. She would've been excluded from community, friendships, family. No one wanted to touch her because if you touch blood, you would be instantly unclean which was a pain, totally inconvenient. Then you have to go through a ritualization process in order to return to community. She would've been unable to attend church, unable to get married, forget any sort of family gatherings, any sort of community. 12 years go by and she was written off. She had tried all the doctors, she spent all her money, so now she's poor on top of everything else. This woman was at the end of her rope. The shame would have been overwhelming.

Author Brené Brown defines shame as the intensely painful feeling of believing we are flawed and unworthy of love, belonging, and connection. Shame attacks the self, making individuals feel fundamentally unworthy and disconnected from others. She notes that shame is often unspoken, which gives it power, and avoiding it can lead to destructive behaviors and emotional isolation. **(Slide)**

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Having been in a position of deep shame myself, I know that shame eats you up, and shame for a woman in the area of femininity has a deeper stinging. Things like

miscarriage, infertility, abuse, pregnancy issues, breast cancer, menopause. She was lonely, she was scared and yet she takes a risk to go into the crowd. If she had been found out she would've been exposed, probably called out, embarrassed, shamed even more ...and yet her desperation, like Jairus, leads her to Jesus.

All she wants is to touch the hem, the fringe of his robe. So she touches it. And she would've been fine... she could've just gone along her merry way healed. Done. No one needs to know. But Jesus knew.

Jesus knew that she needed more than an anonymous touch. Again, for the 2nd time that day, Jesus was willing to be interrupted.

So let's interrupt the story for a sec. How do you think Jairus felt when Jesus stopped? How would you feel? I can imagine Jairus feeling angry, like not only the only did Jesus stop, and he's worried to death his daughter's gonna die - but he's stopped for the lowest of the low. I mean it was bad enough that she was a woman in a patriarchal society. She was also unclean, an outcast. Why does SHE get his attention? Why does she get the attention when a little girl is dying?

I'm not sure Jairus was ok with being interrupted, but Jesus was. So time stands still as Jesus says, "Who touched me?" The thing is, **everyone** was touching him. And even the disciples say "Jesus what are you talking about? The crowds are all pushed up against you! How can you say who touched me?" And Jesus waits. Why didn't he just let her go, let her be healed... you know two for one? He doesn't even have to do anything, he didn't have to deal with her. Healing still would have changed her life and she would have been FINE.

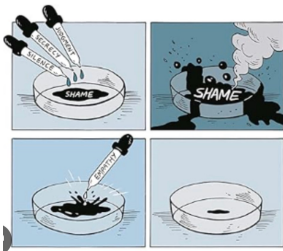
But I think Jesus knew better. Our Jesus didn't want to just heal her body. He knew there was more for her. We know that because of what happens next. She shows herself in fear and worry, and admits what she has done. **(Slide - photo)**



And then...he calls her ...daughter. He says “Daughter, your faith has healed you.” He made her a part of the family. And by the way this is the only time that Jesus called anybody daughter. In that moment he doesn’t just give her a temporary fix, but a brush up against grace, and the restoration of her body, mind and spirit. He melted away her shame in an instant.

Brene Brown talked about the remedy for shame when she said, “If you put shame in a petri dish, it needs three ingredients to grow exponentially: secrecy, silence, and judgment. If you put the same amount of shame in the petri dish and douse it with empathy, it can’t survive”

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And this is what Jesus did for her. In her secrecy silence and judgment he gave her empathy. He gave her time. He welcomed the interruption. The shame disappeared.

And He does the same for you. Have you ever had a simple word spoken over you that you could never speak over yourself? He gave her the word that she wanted most, but she could never get on her own. And doing that he gave her dignity. He didn't just wanna heal her, he wanted to restore her in every way: back into the family, back into relationship and joy. And no one can do that like Jesus. And the thing is... naming signifies belonging. You know even when someone you love finally calls you a nickname or a term of endearment: sweetie, son, bride, soul mate, best friend, sis, bruh. I think we all long to be called those names, the names that bring belonging, unconditional love, and safety.

All because Jesus was willing to be interrupted.

And now we have **“Interruption #3, the messengers” (slide)**

So off we go, the ambulance is about to resume its siren and race to the home, when at that moment some messengers from Jairus's house show up to tell Jairus that his little girl has died, and to not bother Jesus anymore. And then the cut is even deeper. I can imagine Jairus thinking. "Jesus! Why did you stop for her? You wasted time and now look! How **could** you?" I can imagine how Jairus's heart must've broken right there. The regret. If only Jesus hadn't stopped.

Yet Jesus reassures him and says "don't be afraid only believe." So they head on over to the house and the first thing we see are the mourners. In those days, mourners were hired. There were flute players and people whose job was to make it known that this girl was truly dead. When Jesus walks up, the text says that they laughed at him and mocked him. Jesus basically throws them out. And when he goes up to the bedroom, he only brought Peter James and John, and the parents. This is a sacred precious event. It's not to be done in public. It's the opposite of what just happened with the bleeding woman. This one's different. So Jesus takes her hand and says *talitha kum*, which means "little girl, get up." But there's more. The fact that the original Aramaic is preserved means it's a big deal, pay attention. There's only a few times in the Bible where the original Aramaic language is kept and several of them happen on the cross when Jesus is dying. The word *Talitha* is a term of endearment and it means a little girl. However the root for the word is "*Talith*" which means "Lamb."

Slide: Talitha = Little Girl

Talith = Little lamb

So when Jesus says to "*Talitha*" it's not just *little girl*. It would have evoked a memory as the good Shepherd gathering his lambs. This Jewish family would have instantly recalled the beloved words from Psalm 23 "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside still waters" and Isaiah 41 which says "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom and gently lead those that are with young." Jesus shows compassion and gentleness as he exercises authority over death. And again he names her, little lamb, like he named the bleeding woman *daughter*.

Behavioral-science studies on attachment show that affectionate language increases perceived safety; Mark's inclusion highlights not just a miracle of power but a relationship of tender care. Jesus comes to the little girl and gives her a term of endearment. It's like saying sweetie, little one, ladybug, whatever you call your kids this

is what Jesus does for her. He's not just the healer. He becomes like a father as he did with the bleeding woman calling her *daughter*.

So for the 2nd time that day, Jesus welcomes interruption to meet the crushing need of the world around him.

Jesus is a God who doesn't mind being interrupted. In fact he stops everything when he's interrupted. Nothing is too important for you to be able to interrupt the father and have him stop the show to pay attention to you. Like Pastor Jeff tells us every week, God made you to love you.

I'm going to interrupt the story again to share a video of one of our own members who is embracing interruption in her life to serve others.

Susan video #1

We've talked about interrupting Jesus, and the thing about Jesus' life is that everything He did was for a reason. And besides bringing healing, I believe he was showing His disciples a different way. Every interruption was a chance to show his disciples that life is in the -in-between, the interruptions. We've focussed so far on how the interruptions can serve others, but the other piece is that we actually **need** the interruptions. Take Jairus for example...when Jesus was interrupted by the bleeding woman, it seems like it was all for HER. But what if it was also for Jairus? Maybe the interruption is actually what gave him the faith to believe after his daughter died. Maybe the thing that he hated most in the moment - Jesus stopping to help the woman - was actually the thing that he desperately needed. He needed her faith for what was going to happen next.

We need the interruptions. Susan has a little more to say about that, so let's hear that now.

Susan Video #2

Let's be a place where interruptions are the thing. The place we see and experience more, deeper, fuller. And my question for you is, where's your interruption? Where is God interrupting your life with a nudge or a poke? You might already know, or maybe this is a new thought. And if you don't know, you're in a great place to find out - Summit is a great place to jump into where God is already moving. Join the caravan, let's see what happens. Let's pray.