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Mark 5:21 - 5:43



Gospel of Mark - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg delves into the significance of Mark 5:21-43, which describes two miracles performed by Jesus. The first miracle involves a woman who suffered from a 12-year issue of blood, and the second involves a 12-year-old girl close to death. Gregg discusses the importance of faith healing, and how Jesus' ability to raise people from the dead demonstrated his power and built faith among his disciples. Gregg also explains why the term "sleep" is used in the New Testament to describe death, and how it refers to a temporary state before resurrection.

Transcript

Well, we're turning to Mark chapter 5, and the last time we read about and talked about the time when Jesus crossed the sea and stilled the storm, stilled the wind and the waves, and then he encountered the man who had a legion of demons and helped that man, delivered him, and actually sent him off to be the first person that we know of that was ever sent to preach. And to spread the news about Jesus to his neighbors and his household. And we're now at verse 21, Mark chapter 5, verse 21.

Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to him, and he was by the sea. And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw him, he fell at his feet, and he begged him earnestly, saying, My little daughter lies at the point of death.

Come and lay your hands on her, that she may be healed and she will live. So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed him and thronged him. Now, a certain woman had a flow of blood for 12 years and had suffered many things from many physicians.

She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind him in the crowd and touched his garment, for she said, If only I may touch his clothes, I shall be made well. Immediately, the fountain of her blood was dried up and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction.

And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that power had gone out from him, turned around the crowd and said, Who touched my clothes? But his disciples said to him, You

see the multitude thronging you and you say, Who touched me? And he looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. And he said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well.

Go in peace and be healed of your affliction. And while he was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he said to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not be afraid, only believe.

And he permitted no one to follow him except Peter, James and John, the brother of James. Then he came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. When he came in, he said to them, Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.

And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he took the father and mother of the child and those who were with him and entered where the child was lying. Then he took the child by the hand and said to her, Talitha Kumi, which is translated Little Girl, I say to arise.

Immediately, the girl arose and walked, for she was 12 years of age and they were overcome with great amazement. But he commanded them strictly that no one should know it. And he said something should be given to her to eat.

So we have two miracles in this latter part of Mark, chapter five. And they're kind of woven together because it begins with the request of the synagogue ruler to come and help his daughter, who he said is at the point of death. Actually, in Matthew's version, it has him saying in Matthew 9, 18, My daughter has just died.

Now, that's a bit of a problem, but not much, because some of the gospel writers in Matthew in particular is known to compress the story sometimes. In other words, the girl did die before Jesus got to her. And rather than tell it in two parts, well, she was almost dead.

And then she's dead. Matthew just compresses the story to have a dead girl reported to Jesus. And so he just he moves the story closer to its end right from the beginning, makes it a much shorter story.

It's just a manner of telling the story in Matthew's case. But the girl was not quite dead, of course. And a ruler of the synagogue was a man who was responsible for kind of presiding at the synagogue meetings.

He was not an ordained spiritual leader. He was not a rabbi. He wasn't a priest or anything like that.

He was just a guy who was sort of a fellow who made sure things happened as they should in the meeting. And there were many synagogues. There were synagogues in every town.

Some towns are so big they had to have several synagogues, just like local churches today, really. And so there were lots of these guys, but he'd be more like a deacon in his duties than like a pastor. But he had faith in Christ.

He knew that Jesus could do something for his daughter, at least before she died. He knew that. And so he came and he knew that she was near her end.

And so he begged Jesus earnestly in Matthew's version. In Matthew 9:18, it says he came and worshiped Jesus. It's not clear whether it meant he worshipped him as God.

Not likely to a synagogue ruler. That would be considered probably blasphemous, since I doubt that he knew that Jesus was God, but worshipped in the sense of bowing down and pleading with him like praying to him and begged him earnestly, saying, my little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her that she may be healed and she will live.

So he knew that Jesus could heal just about everything because Jesus had been doing that throughout Galilee. And this man knew that Jesus was his only hope if his daughter was to live at all. Her situation was such that he was quite sure she was not going to live if there was not a miracle to heal her.

It says, and Jesus went with him and his disciples did, too, by the way, it says in Matthew 9:19. And a great multitude followed him and thronged him. Now, before he gets there and before this miracle is performed, another miracle happens on the way.

And it's this woman who's had this issue of blood for 12 years. Now, I taught in this in my Luke studies in Santa Cruz, taught this story from Luke recently. And someone brought up the point.

Is there any significance in the fact that this woman had had this issue of blood for 12 years and this little girl was 12 years old? I don't know. I mean, actually, 12 is a kind of an important number in the scripture. Obviously, it has some kind of symbolism, has some kind of importance.

However, and maybe that's why it's mentioned, you know, I mean, they don't they wouldn't make up the number if it wasn't the real number. But there's a lot of people that Jesus healed. We're not told how long they were sick.

Lepers were not told how long they were lepers. But maybe in telling the story, the apostles thought it was interesting. The number 12 being a significant number that this woman's condition had actually been 12 years.

So it's mentioned in the little girl was 12 years old. So it's mentioned someone had suggested maybe this was the mother of the girl. She'd been bleeding ever since.

And, you know, a woman who has an issue of blood is unclean under the law. And so, you know, some kind of a drama was envisaged that sort of that, you know, you can make a movie on this kind of a plot. You know, the synagogue leader and his wife had a little girl, but the woman's bleeding never stopped.

So she was unclean. So she had to be put out of the house. And, you know, she had this continual bleeding.

So she was continually unclean. She'd been separated from the family all this time since and it's been 12 years. Her little girl's 12 now.

She's been bleeding for 12 years. And Jesus fixes everything, fixes the little girl, fixes the mommy. But that's all just speculation.

And there's not really anything that would suggest that there was any relationship, except that the number 12 is the same in both cases. It kind of is intriguing, but it's not necessarily significant. And the Bible makes no connection.

So I think if it was connected, probably that would be something worthy of mention. And none of the gospel writers who and all of them do record the story, none of them tie this together. That is, they don't tie the woman and the little girl together in any way.

But they do tie the stories together in every case, because this healing of this woman took place on the way to Jairus's house. Jairus was the synagogue ruler's name, as it said in verse 22. Now, it says that this woman, that she had suffered many things from physicians.

And she had spent all that she had, and it was no better, but rather grew worse. It's kind of interesting, Luke, who was a physician when he recorded this, he mentioned that she had spent all her money on physicians, but they weren't able to help her. Perhaps as a matter of professional courtesy to his trade, he didn't mention that she actually got worse under their care.

Because that's not very flattering. Their care apparently aggravated the situation. But when she heard about Jesus, she came behind him in the crowd and touched his garment.

In both Matthew and Luke, it says she touched the hem of his garment, or the border of his garment, respectively. And this hem or this border was probably not as, you know, the hem of the robe at the bottom where his feet were. More likely, it's because he, as a Jew, was wearing the typical Jewish garment, which is there's a square shawl kind of thing that Jews wore thrown over their shoulder.

And it had a blue tassel on it, which the law required them to wear. And it was probably that blue hem, that blue tassel that she touched, and it would be more at arm's level. She wouldn't be crawling through the crowd to reach the bottom hem of his garment.

But rather, it was probably the border or the hem of this other garment that was not his robe, but was more reachable from the vantage point of a person standing up. She obviously intended to keep hidden. Why? Well, because she probably wasn't sure that Jesus would appreciate her touching him since she was unclean.

Now, we know that Jesus had no qualms about coming into contact with unclean people like lepers and so forth. She was unclean just like a leper was under the law for similar reasons. She didn't have leprosy, but she had another condition that made her unclean.

So for her to touch Jesus was really something that if it was known that she had done it, she probably thought that Jesus would have to suffer the consequences of being unclean for a week. And she didn't want to interrupt his ministry in his life like that by making him go off and be alone for a week somewhere. So she just wanted to get something, wanted to get her healing and have no one know.

After all, you know, it's not as if he became unclean, that that's some kind of objective reality. Being unclean is just something that's a legal fiction under the law. If you touch certain things, you're unclean.

It's kind of a, you're not really objectively unclean. And if no one knew you touched it, including you, well, it would have no effect. Because uncleanness was in the mind.

Uncleanness was something that it's only there if you know it's there. And if other people know it's there, because it was not like germs or some objective phenomenon. So if she had touched him and no one had known, she alone would know that she had made him unclean.

And if she didn't tell anyone, then he could conduct his life as usual. So she snuck up and thought she could just touch the edge of his garment. She thought that would work, and it did.

Immediately, the fountain of her blood was dried up and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. Now, Jesus felt something in his body, too. She didn't count on.

He felt power go out of him. Now, we don't read very often about this phenomenon when Jesus healed people. We don't read about power going out of him.

Sometimes we do, but it's not really something that the New Testament writers talk about very often. And it raises questions. It's mysterious to us.

You know, power went out of Jesus. He could feel it going out. Does that mean he just kind of felt like a drain in his energy level and thought, wow, I just really, you know, I just lost a charge in my battery.

Or does it mean that he felt something flowing through him, out of him, into her? We don't know. And of course, does it mean then after power went out of him that he had less power than he had before? Or did he draw power continuously from God so that power went out of him when he ministered, but it was instantly replaced by the influx of what God was providing for him? We don't know. It's a mysterious thing to say he felt power go out of him.

But we do know that Jesus, sometimes after a long season of ministry, was exhausted. And sometimes he had to go out alone to pray. Now, he might have been exhausted for the same reasons any man would be exhausted, who didn't get a lot of sleep and who worked long hours.

But he would sometimes, after getting exhausted, he'd rise a long time before day and go out to spend hours in prayer as if that's how he got recharged. So it is possible that as a man in his human nature, Jesus had limits to his energy levels and that he had to draw consciously new strength and new energy from the Father whenever he ministered, because the power of the Spirit went through him, went out of him. He had to go get in touch with God again, and I mean, not that he ever lost touch, but he had to go out and find some time alone to be replenished, perhaps.

I'm not saying the Bible says what I just said in so many words. That's simply a possible explanation of this strange phenomenon. So Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that power had gone out of him, turned around in the crowd and said, who touched my clothes? Now, for all she knew, he was going to be angry because she had just made him unclean ceremonially.

Although, as with the leper, when he touched the leper, it didn't make Jesus unclean. It made the leper clean. And if someone said, well, Jesus, you have to stay out of the tabernacle out of the temple now for a week because you touched the leper.

He could say, what leper? I don't see a leper around here. You know, I only see this clean individual. And, you know, there'd be no way, no way to argue that Jesus was unclean when the leper was now clean from that touch.

And same thing in this instance. But she still had done it without his permission. Most people came to Jesus and asked him like this, like this gyarus had come to ask him to heal his daughter.

People usually came requesting things from him. She didn't even ask. She just took it.

And she wasn't sure that Jesus wouldn't be mad. He turned around and he didn't let it go.

He said, somebody touched me.

Who touched my clothes? And the disciples did not see her and did not know that anything had happened. And so they thought, well, that's kind of a weird question. There's crowds here.

You know, we're in these tight, narrow streets with people jostling us on every side. Everybody's touching you. What do you mean who touched you? And he looked around to see who had done this thing.

But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. And he said to her, daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your affliction.

Now, there were many people who touched Jesus in that street as he walked. But as far as we know, only one person drew power out of Jesus. There are many people jostling him.

You know, incidental and accidental touches of Jesus were going on by probably all everyone within reach of him. They're probably all reaching out and touching him or bumping him. And just because not acting on purpose, but just as a crowded street.

And that's what the disciples said, everyone's touching you. What do you mean who touched me? But you see, one person touched him differently and drew supernatural results, drew power out of him. And it was because, as Jesus put it, your faith has healed you.

Now, she believed that touching Jesus would heal her, and she was right. And that belief, he said, healed you. Now, when Jesus says your faith has healed you, that really raises issues we need to consider about miracles and healing and so forth, because, well, everyone's probably heard the term faith healing.

Do you believe in faith healing? Well, it depends on what we mean. I believe in supernatural healing. I believe that God heals supernaturally.

And I do believe that it is through faith. So if that's what I mean by faith healing, then, yes, I believe in faith healing. But also, I know that God sometimes supernaturally heals people who don't have faith.

I think I mentioned that in the only Catherine Kuhlman meetings I ever went to when she was alive and people gave up to give their testimonies about how they got healed there. It seemed like in every testimony they said, I wasn't expecting anything. I didn't even want to come here.

My daughter brought me here because I had cancer. And I thought, well, what would it

hurt? But she said, I wasn't expecting anything. I just sat there and I thought I saw my tumor disappear or something, you know.

And people, one after another, would get up on the stage and give testimonies of that type. And they weren't expecting it. They weren't believing.

Was that a faith healing? We're going to say, well, it was Catherine Kuhlman's faith. Well, maybe. I don't know if I ever told you guys the story about this lady named Jane in Santa Cruz back in 1978.

I've told it to many people, so I don't know if I told it to you or not. But it certainly is an example of healing without faith. Because she, when I was running a discipleship school in Santa Cruz in 1978 in the summertime, and one of the students on Sunday morning had attended a church across the street, a little Baptist church across the street from us, from the school, and had met some people there, including this young woman, a young mother, probably in her late 20s, certainly no older than her early 30s.

And the church, everyone in the church knew she was dying of cancer. And she had said, testified that the Lord told her that she's going to die. And had told her the date that she would die.

And she had announced it to the church. She said, the Lord showed me that I'm going to die on this day. Well, she was bedridden much of the time because the cancer was through her whole body.

And it seemed tragic for us to think of her dying because she had two little daughters who were like five and six years old or something, really small daughters. And a wonderful marriage, had a wonderful, godly, handsome husband. You know, they were a beautiful couple, beautiful family, young, vibrant.

They loved the Lord. They, you know, they were always smiling, always happy. She was dying.

And we asked for permission to go over to her house as a group from the school to sort of just worship and sing around her bed and stuff like that, because she was in bed most of the day. And they let us come. And we said we wanted to pray for her.

And she said, well, you can pray for me, but don't pray that I'll be healed. And we said, but we'd like to pray for you to be healed. She said, well, no, I'm ready to go see Jesus.

God has told me I'm not going to be healed. I'm going to die. And I know what day I'm going to die.

She told us again the date that it was that God had told her. And she said, I'm going to die that day. And don't pray for me to be healed.

But we did anyway, not with her knowledge. I wasn't so sure the Lord had told her. But she certainly seemed willing to go.

For a young woman with little children and a happy marriage, it just seemed so strange for a woman to love Jesus that much. You know, and she really did. That's great.

But we still thought it'd be nice if she could stay around for the kids and then go see Jesus later. And we visited her a couple of different times during the summer. And then the school ended and everyone went their own way.

And then I contacted her and her husband shortly afterwards and found out that on the day that she said God had told her she was going to die, she had gone to the hospital and they couldn't find any cancer. She was completely healed. And then I met them again five years later after I moved to Oregon.

I went down and visited Santa Cruz again and met with her and her husband. They now had some kind of a ministry to Roman Catholics because they both had Catholic background. But she was just as healthy as could be, had no relapse, no return to the cancer.

She'd just been healed suddenly and miraculously, apparently on the day that she thought God had told her she was going to die. Well, I think she heard God wrong, but she got the date right. But I mean, was she healed by faith? She had faith that she was going to die and she got healed instead.

See, to talk about faith healing doesn't tell the whole story. A lot of people say, well, you'll have what you believe. Jesus did say to this woman, your faith has healed you.

But it wasn't her faith alone. Because she had faith before she touched him and she wasn't healed. She had faith that if she would touch him, she'd be healed.

And she wasn't well until she touched him. There still had to be the power that would go out of her, him to her, to heal her. But see, her faith was certainly what made her touching him different than other people touching him.

Other people were jostling and touching him, but they weren't getting healed. No power is going out of them. She touched him in faith.

And obviously, it was a miracle that he would have done anyway. I mean, he was doing that kind of thing for people all over. And I'm sure if she had come and asked, he would have healed her.

And so it obviously was his will. And he was there and she touched him and she had faith. And all these things conspiring together did bring about her healing.

But you have to have those things. You can't just have faith without it being the will of

God. Certainly, it was God's will to heal this woman in this case.

And it was her faith that drew that power out of that touch. Her touching Jesus was different than other people touching Jesus because she had faith. But if she had faith and it hadn't been God's will, then I don't know.

I don't think Jesus would say that she could have her healing anyway, even if God didn't want her to be healed. Of course, a lot of people say God always wants people to be healed. And that just doesn't appear to be true in the Bible.

Nor in the life of the people. You know, there are there are Christians who believe in healing. There's Christians who don't seem to believe in healing for today.

And they all die about the same numbers. They get sick about as much as each other. They get, you know, healing doesn't happen all the time among people who believe in healing.

But healing does happen. There is supernatural healing and God does heal. And he heals people who have faith.

But he doesn't heal everyone just because they have faith. Because you have to have faith in what God wants to do. And there are times when God, it's not his will for them to be healed.

And so there are people who died sick when Jesus was on the planet Earth, though he could have healed everyone if he wanted to. And he clearly wanted to heal this woman. God did, I'll say, because I don't think Jesus knew about her.

I don't think Jesus knew who touched him. I don't think he knew her situation until she came forward and told it. All he knew is he felt something go out of him.

But the father knew her healing was definitely the will of the father. And when you got the will of the father and you've got Jesus and you've got faith in the recipient, those things together are what brings the miracle, apparently. And he mentioned to her that it was her faith because that pointed out why her touch got results and other people's touch did not.

She touched him with the expectation of receiving something from him that obviously she knew he would give her, that God wanted to have. But the doctors had been unable to deliver. So he said to her daughter, which is, by the way, I think she's the only adult woman that he ever called daughter.

Daughter, which was an affectionate term. Your faith has made you well, go in peace, be healed of your affliction. And while he was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue house who said, your daughter is dead.

Why trouble the teacher any further? And I've always loved this verse and the one after it, where it says, as soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he said to the ruler of the synagogue, don't be afraid, only believe. See, these people, I mean, think of this guy had left his daughter on the verge of death. I don't know how far he had to come across town, apparently, because that's Jesus had to take some time to get there.

And this other miracle happened in the way there. The man had to fight crowds to get there if she was really on the verge of death. And obviously she was because she died while he was gone.

If he had sensed how near death she was, he must have been desperate to get to Jesus in time and just just desperately hoping that the time would not run out, that he could get to Jesus and get Jesus back there before she died. And he just didn't know if it would happen. And it didn't.

And he found out as soon as he found out that all his efforts to get Jesus to come and heal her were in vain because he hadn't gotten back in time. No doubt the man's heart just sank. I mean, the people who brought the message, they had lost hope.

They said, don't bother the master anymore. Your daughter's dead. It's like their attitude was, well, if he had gotten there while she was alive, no doubt he could have done something.

But of course, now she's dead. That's sort of like what Lazarus sisters were saying. If you've been here while my brother was alive, he wouldn't have died.

We're sure you could have done something for him if you'd been here on time. You're too late. And a lot of times I think God orchestrates things to be too late.

I don't know that Jesus did on this occasion. He did in Lazarus's case, because when he was told that Lazarus was sick, which came with an implicit request, come and heal him. He just stayed where he was for two days and waited for Lazarus to die.

And then he went down to Bethany and took care of things. He actually wanted to do something different than just a healing. In Jesus ministry, healings, I mean, if I could say it were kind of ordinary.

He was doing them everywhere. Just another healing. Well, it's always wonderful to see a healing, but it's even more wonderful to see something that builds your faith more.

When Jesus told the disciples Lazarus is dead, he said, I'm glad I wasn't there that you might believe. In other words, I'm glad I'm going to raise him from the dead instead of healing, because you'll have more faith as a result of seeing someone rise from the dead. And so will others.

And so will this man. This man, I'm sure when he heard that his daughter had died, I'm sure his hope was kind of drained. And he was just despondent.

But Jesus, not even waiting for the man's reaction, just he knows how the man feels. He turns to him and says, listen, don't be afraid. She's going to be OK.

Just believe. In Luke 8:50, he actually adds, don't be afraid, only believe and she will be made well. That part is not mentioned here that he actually told Jairus that she's going to be fixed.

She's going to be well. And Jesus, when he got to the house, he permitted no one to follow him into the house, except Peter, James and John, the brother of James. These three were what we usually call the inner circle.

This is the first time I believe that he singled them out to have special privileges that the other disciples didn't share. He invited these same three up onto the mountain of transfiguration when he met with Moses and Elijah. These same three were there with him and the other nine were at the foot of the mountain struggling with a demon possessed boy.

And when Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, he took these same three men in to pray with him and the other disciples were left outside the gate. It's clear that Jesus, although he loves all people, he doesn't have equal. Closeness to all people.

And we don't know why we don't know that Peter, James and John were better men, had more faith, were more devout than the others. They might have been. They certainly all three of them became the major leaders of the apostolic group after Jesus was gone, and that could be because of their own spiritual interest or or dedication that might have exceeded the others.

But I doubt that the others lack if God chose them to be apostles. But these men, for whatever reason, were given special treatment. They were given special opportunity to see things, to hear things that the other disciples were not even allowed to see.

It's possible that just bringing all the disciples into the room was impossible. It might have been a very small room. So he just took the three that he wanted to train to be the leaders of the apostles.

Really, you know, it's funny, because back in Chapter three, it was. When he selected the twelve apostles in Chapter three, verse 14, says many appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons. These twelve were selected out of a larger number of disciples.

To be with Jesus more, to see more, to hear more, to receive more training, to be able to

be sent out. But even among them, there were some that were given the privilege of seeing more than the others and being with him more because they were apparently chosen to be the leaders of the apostolic group. That's at least the way they functioned in the Book of Acts.

So these three men were taken into the room. And when they came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly, he came in and said, you know, why do you make this commotion and weep the child not dead, but sleeping? In Matthew, Chapter nine, it tells us that these mourners who were there were flute players and noisy crowd wailing. Now, these people were professionals.

They were professional mourners. They didn't even know the deceased. The Jews always had professional mourners at every funeral.

There might be real mourners, too. I mean, certainly family members would be there and every morning. But it was a matter of showing respect to the family of the dead and showing respect to the dead to have people wailing and mourning.

Also, it was considered that you should have at least enough mourners there wailing loudly enough so that the widow or the bereaved party could cry loudly and not be heard above the crowd so that she wouldn't have to be embarrassed by causing a scene. Everyone else was causing the scene. And in fact, the rabbis said that every every Jew, even even a beggar at his funeral should have at least two mourners there.

And so they had professional mourners, just like we, you know, you just you'd look in the Yellow Pages and under mourning and you'd have all these options for people who could come and hire more. And these guys were already there. Apparently, they've been brought in before the girl even was dead because it was considered to be so sure that she would die.

So they were there. She just died like a few minutes earlier. She was alive when her dad left to come get Jesus.

That can't have been, you know, more than what, a half hour earlier. And now she's dead and they're already there mourning. It's like they were like vultures hanging around, just waiting for her to die so they could go to work.

And now they were going to work. And Jesus said, you don't have to make all this commotion. She's only sleeping.

And in verse 40, it says they laughed him to scorn. Luke 8, 53 adds, they laughed him to scorn knowing that she was dead. Luke affirms that she was dead.

But notice how they changed from wailing to laughing in a moment. They were easily amused if they had been truly bereaved, if they'd been truly sad, if they didn't like what

you said, they would have found it to be distasteful. They might have been disgusted or something like that, but they actually found it funny.

Now, if you're really mourning one second, you're not likely to find something laughable and laugh out loud about it the next second. And so you can see that these people were not sincere mourners. They were just the professionals.

But Jesus said she's only sleeping, but she was dead. He had said the same thing about Lazarus to his disciples. He said, our friend Lazarus is asleep.

I'm going to wake him up. And they said, oh, if he's asleep, then he'll be OK. He'll be fine.

And Jesus said, well, no, he's dead, actually. But I just said he was sleeping because that's the way I want to talk about death. Jesus talked about death as if it was sleep.

And so did the Apostle Paul when Paul's talking in First Thessalonians 4 about the rapture and the resurrection of the dead. He says, I don't want you to mourn over those who are sleeping like those who have no hope. And he says that those who sleep in Christ, he will bring with him sleeping means dead.

In First Corinthians 15, Paul says, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. I saw a sign on a church nursery that had that verse on it.

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. But I thought that was a cute sign. I thought it was very clever.

It's not always you can find a Bible verse that fits so well in a church setting. Although I found a good Bible verse when I was a window cleaner. And of course, it only works with the King James, but that's all that anyone read back then.

When I was a teenager, I used to make my living window cleaner. I put on my business card. For now, we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.

It's great to be able to find a Bible verse that says just what you need to say for the occasion. But Paul said we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed. Now, he means we're not all going to die.

Now, why, then, is it so common for Jesus and Paul to speak of death as sleep? And there are two opinions about that. It certainly is something of a trend in the New Testament to speak of death as sleep. One opinion about this is what's called soul sleep, the doctrine of soul sleep.

And that is the view that when a person dies, they they go into a non conscious state. They go to sleep, their soul goes to sleep. And they don't wake up again until the resurrection at the end of the world.

So if you died today and were resurrected, let's say, a hundred years from now, that's when Jesus came back and he resurrected the dead. Then your soul would be asleep and unaware of anything for that whole hundred years. If it's about, you know, people have been dead for thousands of years.

Well, they're sleeping for thousands of years. And when Jesus comes back, they wake up again. After all, Jesus did say, our friend Lazarus is asleep.

I'm going to wake him up. And so one of the explanations, perhaps the most often that we hear, is the doctrine of soul sleep. And on this view, of course, if you die, you do not go immediately into the presence of God, but you don't know the difference anyway, because you go into total oblivion.

You go into total non awareness of anything. And the next thing you do know is the resurrection. So it's all the same.

I mean, as far as you go, your experience goes. If you're dying, you close your eyes and you open them again. Like when you close them the last time you're alive, you're dead.

When you open them again in the resurrection, it's just like a blink. It's like in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. So if that's true, if that doctrine is true, then our loved ones who died aren't really with the Lord in the sense that we sometimes think about it.

And there are Christians who believe that when people die, they just go into non consciousness. And it's a mistake to think of them as rejoicing in heaven right now. But that's OK.

They don't know they're not rejoicing in heaven right now. They don't know anything. Because in Ecclesiastes 9, it says the dead know nothing at all.

It says the living know that they shall die, but the dead know nothing at all. Now, that's one view. And of course, the fact that Jesus and Paul used the term sleep as they did is seen as one of the best evidences that it is that that's what happens when people die.

They go into a soul sleep. However, there's other material in the Scripture that seems to indicate that when you die, you leave your body and you go somewhere else and you are present in that other place. And that's a place that you are glad to be at the time.

Paul talked about it as being absent from the body, but being present with the Lord. And he said he was eager for that to happen. He was eager for himself to die so that he could depart and be with the Lord.

Now, when you think about it, if Paul thought that he could just sleep until the resurrection, then dying now wouldn't get him in the presence of the Lord any sooner than if he died 10 or 20 years later. Whenever Jesus comes back, that's when everyone

will be in the presence of the Lord and no one will be there sooner. But in Philippians chapter one, Paul said in verse 21 and following, For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit for my labor. Yet what I shall choose, I cannot tell, for I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless, to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.

It certainly sounds like what he's saying is, you know, next year I could either be here in my body or gone from my body. If I'm gone, I will have departed to be with Christ. If I'm here, I'll still be here to minister among you.

There's kind of two options. I can be here or there. I can be present with Christ or present with you, but not both.

At the same time, now, in Second Corinthians chapter five, we have the other place that Paul speaks like this. In Second Corinthians five, and he says in verses six through eight, Therefore, we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, for we walk by faith and not by sight. We are confident, yes, well, please, rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Now, when he talks about being absent from the body and present with the Lord, he's not talking about the resurrection, because in the resurrection, you won't be absent from the body. Your body resurrects. So when would you possibly be absent from your body, but at that same moment present with the Lord? It would be after you die, but not but have not yet resurrected, because the resurrection is when the life comes back into the body that has left when it died.

So what it sounds like Paul is saying is that when you die, you leave your body. There's something called you that is either in or out of your body, is either present or absent from your body, is either present or absent from the Lord. Your body is not you.

There's something that is you that is either in your body or is not in your body, has a has a an existence of its own. Usually we call this the soul or the spirit. And therefore, traditional Christianity has taught not the doctrine of soul sleep, but rather the doctrine that when someone dies, their soul or the spirit, which is their personality, their conscious part, leaves their body and goes to be in the presence of the Lord until the resurrection, in which case, at which time at the resurrection, their spirit comes back to be in their body again and is no longer absent from the body.

And that seems to be confirmed by some of the visions in Revelation, because, for example, in Revelation chapter six, and I wouldn't want to build much on what's found only in Revelation, but it's just that this vision sounds like it agrees with what Paul stated. His expectation was in Revelation six, verse nine, says when he opened the fifth

seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony that they held. And they cried with a loud voice saying, how long, O Lord, holy and true until you judge and avenge our blood on those that dwell on the earth.

And white robe was given to each of them. And it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who would be killed as they were was completed. Now, they are resting there and they're supposed to rest a little longer, but they're not resting unconsciously.

These are the souls of those who have been beheaded. Well, if they've been beheaded, then their heads are gone. They're not in their bodies anymore.

They're dead. Right. So their bodies are dead, but they aren't.

They are in heaven talking to God. He's talking back to them. And they're saying, Lord, aren't you going to avenge our blood someday? He says, yeah, a little while more.

Just rest a little longer. Be patient. Here's a robe to wear while you're waiting.

If that makes you happy, go shopping. Here's a voucher for the mall. Go get yourself some new clothes.

That'll be consolation until until all these other people get killed like you were. But obviously, this is before this is before the resurrection, because they're in heaven. They're in there.

They're not in their bodies. It might seem like they're because they wear robes. But this is, of course, very symbolic.

That's why I said I wouldn't really I wouldn't really want to build a doctrine based on just a vision and revelation, because those visions can be interpreted a lot of different ways. But it sounds like they're absent from the body and present with the Lord. And yet they're resting.

Now, if all this is true, what will we do then with the statements that Jesus made about people sleeping and Paul saying that people are sleeping when they're dead? Well, maybe he's not describing their state of mind. After all, if we say that people sleep and therefore they are unconscious, therefore, their minds are not aware of anything because they're asleep. Well, is that really the way sleep is for you? Not for me.

I have rapid eye movements that tell you if you're watching, you can tell when I'm dreaming. My mind is not unconscious. It's doing things.

It's seeing things. It's aware of things. It's not aware of the researcher who's watching the rapid eye movement while I'm sleeping.

It's not aware of what's going on in the room because my mind is elsewhere. It's in a different world somewhere. Now, I'm figuratively speaking.

I'm not saying that when you sleep, your mind actually goes somewhere else. But obviously, you're conscious of a different reality when you're asleep, but you're not unconscious. You're dreaming.

And so if Jesus wished to say death is an unconscious state, sleep would not be a good choice of metaphors because sleep is not an unconscious state. And so why does he speak of it as sleep then? Well, one thing that sleep and death do have in common, and we know this regardless of what the conscious state of the dead is, whether they are in fact in a state of soul sleep, that is unconsciousness, or whether they are conscious in the presence of God awaiting the end of the world when they'll be resurrected. Whatever those doctrines is true, we do know this about death and sleep.

They are both temporary states from which people who have lined down eventually get back up. When a person lays down at night, they fully expect to get up in the morning. Now, when a person lies down in death, they don't usually... No one expects them to get up again unless people believe in the resurrection.

In fact, it's the resurrection that makes death like sleep because if there was no resurrection, death would not be like sleep because sleep is temporary and death is permanent. The comparison of death to sleep occurs in the Bible in those contexts where resurrection is being discussed. When Paul says, we shall not all sleep, we shall be changed.

He's talking about the resurrection. When he says that those who sleep in Jesus will not precede those who are alive or those who are alive in Jesus will not precede those who are asleep because the dead in Christ shall rise first, he says. When Jesus said, Lazarus is asleep, I'm going to go get him up.

I'm going to raise him. And likewise here, he's not saying this girl is not literally dead. She is literally dead.

He's not telling us anything about her conscious state in the state of death. He's saying, she's asleep. I'll go wake her up.

I'll prove it. You know, this is temporary. Now, of course, Jesus never did explain to the mourners that he was using the word sleep figuratively.

That's why they laughed in discord because they knew she was dead and they thought, what? He hasn't even examined the body yet and he's saying she's asleep. What is this, some kind of a, you know, a psychic physician here? He thinks he knows the patient's condition. We were hired here because she's dead.

She's dead. Who's this guy who just walked in and tells us? He hasn't even seen her yet. He says she's asleep.

Well, they laughed at him and he never explained himself. Even when the girl came out of the room, he told the parents, don't tell anyone about this. Apparently, he wanted his disciples and the parents to know that he had raised the dead, but he wanted those mourners to think that she had just been asleep and that he just woke her up.

I mean, they certainly would not have any reason to believe that he'd raised the dead. That doesn't happen very often, even in the ministry of Jesus. And they'd never seen it happen before.

In fact, this is the first time that Jesus raised a dead person. This set a precedent for a couple other times that we have record of. But it seems like Jesus, as so often was the case, wanted to more or less obscure his miracle.

And so he didn't even want them to know that he was going to raise her from the dead. He said she's asleep. After all, he didn't have to say anything to them.

He could have just gone in and raised her. But if he'd done that, they would have thought, whoa, she was dead a minute ago. Now she's alive.

But in saying she's asleep and then bring her out alive, they might say, well, maybe she was just sleeping. Maybe we're wrong. Maybe we diagnosed her death too hastily.

Anyway, he took the father and the mother of the child and those who were with him, which was the three disciples that are mentioned by name, and entered where the child was lying. Verse 41. Then he took the child by the hand and said to her, Talitha Kumi.

Now, this is one of the few places where the Aramaic of Jesus is preserved without translation. Now, in all likelihood, all the things that Jesus had said in this entire story were said in Aramaic. And Mark and the other Gospels have translated them for us into Greek.

But for some reason, some of the things that Jesus said in Aramaic, they chose not to translate into Greek. They decided to just leave it in those words. Why? I don't know.

My assumption is they considered these words to be so special that they just wanted to leave them as they heard them. They wanted to. They wanted even the very sound of the words themselves to be preserved.

One of the other few places was when he said, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? But all the other things that he said from the cross have been translated for us into Greek. But that that isn't.

Well, actually, they give it Aramaic. Then they tell what the translation is. I really can't

get behind the thinking of the apostles in choosing to translate most of the Aramaic, but not all of it.

But the phrases they left in Aramaic, they apparently just they liked the way they sounded. Perhaps they remembered what it sounded like and the impression it made. And they just wanted to say it the way he said it.

But then they translated. And immediately the girl arose in Luke's version, Luke 8, 55, it says her spirit returned. Now, that almost sounds like it had gone somewhere else and came back.

Her spirit returns the way it reads in Luke, though a person who didn't believe such things as that might say, well, the word spirit and breath are the same in the Greek. So Luke is just saying her breath returned. She started breathing again.

And that is possible. But it's also possible that he said her spirit returned to her. And the girl arose and walked.

For she was 12 years of age. Now, what's the connection? She walked because she was 12 years of age. Apparently, Mark realizes that he is not prior to this mentioned her age and that the reader might think she was an infant or something.

And therefore, that she would get up and walk would seem strange. But it's not strange because she's older. She's 12.

You know, she's not a baby. He hadn't told us earlier her age. So he felt at this point, apparently, that to clarify that it better be better mentioned her age, because otherwise you might picture this infant who died and got up and started walking.

And they were overcome with great amazement. But he commanded strictly that no one should know it. And so this was a case where it would, in fact, be possible, I suppose, to keep it a secret, because, you know, the parents.

Had the mourners, the witnesses had heard Jesus say she's only asleep, so people could have assumed that she just got healed of her sickness and he had wakened her from her sleep. But the other gospels follow Mark here also in saying that Jesus said to give her something to eat. Now, this Jesus just being practical here, a great miracle has been performed.

Everyone is astonished with their overcome with great amazement. They're just their jaws drop because their daughter was risen from the dead. And she said, hey, she's hungry.

Give her something to eat. You know, I mean, she probably having if she had a fever for a long time, she might have had no appetite. She might have been nauseous for days.

Her stomach was empty. And she said, OK, she's back. Put some food in her.

Just something real mundane, something real down to earth like that, that Jesus pays attention to that need because no one else is thinking about it. Everyone else is just astonished. And so he attends, he points out to them, there's some some practical needs that she has.

Interesting that Jesus raised her from the dead, but he didn't miraculously fill her stomach, too. He left some things for people to do. He does the part that he can do alone.

But he didn't feed her. He can multiply loaves. He didn't he didn't multiply the scraps of food that may be in her stomach.

He just he did the part that only he can do. The rest people can do. They should do.

We're not supposed to just depend on miracles to do everything. And just read a little more here and then we'll be done. Or maybe we shouldn't.

I guess it's late if we should probably stop there. It's a chapter division, a natural stopping point. So we will stop with that.

But we see then two miracles, the woman and the child that Jesus that Jesus healed and raised. And these ones are recorded in all three of the Synoptic Gospels. So they're considered to be some of the important ones.

Jesus did a lot of miracles that were probably relatively routine after a while. When you see enough of them, it was not really much to report. But these ones had interesting features.

The woman who touched the hem of his garment, a situation where a girl died and Jesus raised her. And as I say, there's not very many records of Jesus raising the dead. He may have done it much more than we know about.

But we only know of three cases. This one was the first. Later, there was another one where a young boy had died and left his mother a widow.

And Jesus happened to show up in town. The town was named. And just as the funeral procession was leaving town to bury him.

Good thing Jesus hadn't slept in that morning or something. Got there an hour later because the kid would have been buried. But they were carrying him out to bury him.

And Jesus intercepts the funeral procession and he touches the boy and he gets raised. And he returns him to his mother. And then, of course, we have Lazarus, the most famous of the stories.

But those three are the only ones we have. And on the occasion of raising Lazarus, Jesus gives us something of an understanding of what his raising the dead means. Remember, I've said to you that when Jesus did miracles, they not only accomplished something of value in the natural realm, but they also were symbolic.

They also had some kind of spiritual message behind them. And, of course, we know that on the occasion that Jesus raised Lazarus, that he made a statement about himself. He said, I am the resurrection and the life.

He that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever lives and believes in me will never die. And that's in John 11, 25 and 26.

So in raising people from the dead individually, he said that anyone who believes in me, though he was dead, he will live, meaning spiritually. A person who has died doesn't start believing in Jesus, but people who are spiritually dead do. Though he was spiritually dead, if he believes in me, he'll come to life.

And so there's a spiritual resurrection. There's a rebirth, a passing from death into life that is spiritual, that the physical resurrections, no doubt, were there to advertise that Jesus was the one that spiritually dead people could look to to have life. And he said that, of course, also in John chapter five.

Another instance in John 5, 24, he said, most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes in him who sent me has everlasting life and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death unto life. So a person who hears him and believes him has passed from death and life. He's not talking about physical resurrection here.

He saw people who were dead before spiritually, but now they have passed into life. Paul said in Ephesians two and also in Colossians two, that we were dead in trespasses and sins and we who were dead. Christ is made alive with himself in him.

So in raising the dead, Jesus was illustrating something spiritual. He didn't go around raising every dead person. He could have, it would appear.

If he could raise three, he could raise more, presumably. But why didn't he just go around and raise all the dead people? He's going to do that someday. Someday all the dead will be raised.

He just had to raise a few of them as an emblem of the point he wanted to make. And that is that he is the bringer of spiritual life to people who are spiritually dead. And he shows that in the instances of raising physical dead people to life.

So like all the other miracles of Jesus, they do have a spiritual lesson that they're intended to teach, not just not just a practical value. Of course, the miracle has practical value in itself. In fact, Jesus never did a miracle that didn't have practical value with the

exception of cursing the fig tree.

That was entirely symbolic. But when he did miracles that involved other people, he always did something that was of value to them. Fed them, healed them, raised the dead, cast demons out of them.

But even though there was practical value to his miracles, they also were there to teach spiritual lessons. And so this one also.