

**SERMON NOTES**  
**Mark 5:21-43**  
**“New Life for the Vulnerable”**

**Intro:**

- You’re going to be hearing the word “*vulnerable*” a lot in the coming months because *vulnerable* is in the Vision Statement that we’ll soon be introducing to the congregation
- *Most of the people Jesus ministered to were vulnerable in one way or another – and the same kinds of people Jesus ministered to are the same kinds of people God is calling us to minister to*
- **Dictionary definition: *capable or susceptible to being wounded or hurt***
- *Vulnerable people include people living in poverty // the homeless // minorities // the disabled // the depressed // single parents // children living with single parents // the elderly // those lacking extended families // at-risk students // the lonely and friendless // immigrants and refugees // ex-convicts // children with an incarcerated parent // fatherless children // the jobless or under-employed // addicts and those living with addicts // pregnant teens // grandparents raising grandchildren // social misfits and outcasts // those with HIV – AIDS // families going through a divorce // individuals or families grieving the death of a loved one // those suffering from chronic pain or health problems // people who don’t know Jesus*
- *Many of us have been vulnerable at one time or another in our lives – some here today are among those who are feeling vulnerable, wounded and hurt right now*
- **Vulnerable people sometimes get stuck in desperate situations – and have a hard time getting unstuck**
- *When that happens – sometimes stuck people come to believe that they do not deserve any better // or they begin to rationalize their stuck situation and look for reasons not to change // or they become paralyzed by a sense of dread or despair or helplessness // or they refuse the help of others – insisting on dealing with their situation alone // or they just become so depressed that they lose the resolve or energy to take any steps of action to change or improve the situation*
- **Mark 5: we meet a couple of very different vulnerable people who have in common only the fact that they both desperately need Jesus’ help**
- ***Jesus focused his ministry on the vulnerable and made a significant impact in their lives***

## I. DIFFERENT NEEDS OF THE VULNERABLE

- Other than both being desperate, the two people involved in this story could hardly be more different
- The woman is nameless – and her malady – some kind of female problem -- perhaps a bleeding uterus or unceasing menstrual flow – renders her ritually unclean
- *She is not allowed to enter the synagogue or the Temple*
- **Her social status is about the same as a leper**
- Besides the shame of the constant bleeding for 12 years – she also bears the burden of its stigma – she is religiously **unclean**
- *No doubt the result of some personal sin – the religious people would have thought -- probably a sexual sin of some kind – was the most common gossip*
- **She was very likely poor // depressed // lonely and friendless**
- *Just the kind of person to whom Jesus regularly extended mercy and compassion*
- Jairus, on the other hand, would not have appeared to be vulnerable at all
- *Jairus was President of the local synagogue: rich, powerful, religiously and socially prominent*
- But for all of his resources and connections – Jairus was as helpless and vulnerable as the nameless woman
- *Jairus was a vulnerable parent – his beloved daughter was seriously ill*
- For all of his prestige and influence and wealth – there was nothing Jairus could do for his sick and dying daughter
- *The rich and powerful are as vulnerable in the face of death as the poor and outcast*
- *It is amazing the amount of misery some people will go through – and subject their families to – before they will humble themselves enough to ask for help*
- But to his credit – Jairus loved his daughter enough that he was willing to humble himself and fall at the feet of this Galilean teacher and plead for his help even though in the religious and social circles to which Jairus belonged – *Jesus was looked down upon with arrogant contempt, suspicion and prejudice*
- ***The healing power of Jesus was the only hope for saving Jairus' daughter***
- Likewise for the hemorrhaging woman
- *This woman had been to many doctors and had depleted all her money seeking a cure – yet instead of getting better, she only grew worse*

- The bleeding continued – and with it – the shame // the stigma // the isolation // the innuendos // the gossip // the judgment // the shunning
- **She was sick, impoverished – and untouchable**

## II. DESPERATE MEASURES OF THE VULNERABLE

- *Desperate times call for desperate measures*
- *Jairus acted contrary to the norms of his social and religious circles by pleading with a much-maligned itinerant Rabbi to come and heal his daughter*
- In response to the urgent request of a desperate father, Jesus headed off with Jairus to bring healing to the daughter
- *As they walked along, a crowd began to gather around Jesus – eager to see him display his healing power*
- In the crowd was the hemorrhaging woman
- *Of course, she knew better than to mix with respectable folk in her unclean state*
- But she was desperate – and desperate people sometimes do desperate things without regard for social norms
- *She was anemic, pale and tired after losing blood steadily for 12 years*
- She was tired of the bleeding // tired of the shame // tired of the rejection // tired of the charlatans
- Was she also tired of praying – and praying – and praying -- only to have her prayers go unanswered?
- *She believed in God's healing power – but God had not intervened on her behalf*
- Perhaps she was supposed to regard the bleeding as some kind of blessing in disguise sent by God to shape and develop her character
- *Perhaps it was just God's will for her to live indefinitely – and eventually die – from this affliction*
- *But she had heard reports of a Rabbi from Galilee who had miraculous powers to make sick people well again*
- He charged no fees – and he did not treat the poor and downtrodden with contempt – and he was reputed to have a heart of compassion for vulnerable people like her
- *She had heard reports that he had healed a leper – that he did not shrink back from society's untouchables*
- **Jesus of Nazareth was her only hope – and he was in the area**

- **Desperate people sometimes take desperate measures that most people would disapprove of**
- So in violation of all the rules governing social interaction between the clean and the unclean – this unclean woman ventured forth into the crowd
- She dared not approach Jesus directly and ask for healing face-to-face as Jairus had done
- *Jesus was on an important mission to heal the daughter of an important man*
- The woman did not want to interrupt or interfere or draw any attention to herself
- *She just wanted to get well*
- *She began moving stealthily toward Jesus -- looking for tiny seams between the people crowded around him*
- As some people in the crowd recognized her – they quickly stepped aside in contempt, fear and disgust in order to avoid any contact with her defiled and defiling body
- Eventually her eyes spotted the back of Jesus’ cloak
- *“If only I can touch the edge of his cloak”* – she repeated to herself as she sliced through a seam in the crowd
- *Finally, she was close enough that she could reach out and touch a piece of the back of Jesus’ cloak* – and then run for cover
- For a fleeting moment – she touches the corner of his garment in faith -- and healing power surges through the body of the bleeding woman – *and immediately she feels the rush of her youthful health and strength returning*
- The bleeding is stopped – and the woman is healed – **and she is frightened**
- Frightened of the reaction of the crowd if they find out // *and frightened by the strange power she just felt surging through her body*
- She must escape quickly lest she be found out and exposed
- *But Jesus doesn’t let her get away*
- **Though he did not see her – Jesus felt the healing power leave his body**
- And so Jesus turns and asks: *“Who touched me?”*

### III. A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT THROUGH A LIFE-CHANGING ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS

- *Who touched me?* -- What kind of question is that?! -- the disciples wondered

- People were pressing in upon him from all angles – dozens of people had touched him
- What does Jesus mean: *Who touched my clothes?*
- *But Jesus knew a touch of faith when he felt it*

**Mark 5:30 (NIV)** <sup>30</sup>At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, **“Who touched my clothes?”**

- *Someone had touched him in faith // someone had appropriated his healing power by faith – Who was it? **Who touched my clothes? Who drew healing power from me?***
- Just when the woman was rejoicing that she had been healed without being noticed, her worst fears were being realized
- *Shy, ashamed, fearful of being publicly exposed and shamed – the woman hoped against hope that Jesus would give up his search*
- But Jesus’ eyes continued to search the crowd for that one special face
- Then his eyes met the woman’s – and He knew that it was she who had touched him in faith and drawn the healing power from him
- *So the woman comes – trembling // embarrassed // self-conscious // fearful*
- **Why couldn’t he just leave me alone?**, the woman wondered as she came forward
- *Some of you tremble at the thought of coming forward during an altar call – imagine the sense of terror and dread with which this woman came to Jesus to be exposed publicly and to explain what had happened to her -- before a judgmental crowd*
- **Why didn’t Jesus just leave her be?**
- Why not just let her go home alone – secretly healed of her malady?
- **Because this woman was not yet made whole -- and Jesus wanted to do more than stop a bleeding problem – Jesus wanted to give her new life – Jesus wanted to give her His Shalom – His peace – His wholeness**
- *Had she gone home alone – she would have been healed but not whole – she still would have been burdened with shame and loneliness and loss of dignity*

- **Jesus brought her into public view – not to rebuke her or humiliate her or condemn her – but rather to affirm her faith and her worth so that she might be accepted into the religious community**
- *Jesus’ public affirmation of her restored her dignity and self-respect as well as lifting her up publicly in the estimation of the people of the community*
- **Jesus released her from her shame with his words: “*Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.*”**
- *Instead of sneaking home with her head still bowed down – now this woman could walk home confidently with her head lifted up by Jesus*
- Notice that this healing takes place because of an exercise of the woman’s faith – not because of any initiative on Jesus’ part
- *It was not Jesus’ sovereign will or initiative that chose her for healing – the woman’s faith drew healing power from Jesus*
- ***Daughter, your faith has healed you*** – was how Jesus explained the miracle
- Now, of course, there are potential pitfalls in placing too much emphasis on faith to bring about healing – certainly God’s Sovereign Will is also a key factor as to when He intervenes with healing and when he does not
- *But the Scriptures do not encourage a passive, pessimistic, fatalistic attitude when it comes to prayer – or healing*
- **Again and again and again the Scriptures teach that faith opens the door to the power of God and stimulates the activity of God**

**Luke 18:40 - 43 (NIV)** <sup>40</sup>Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, <sup>41</sup>**“What do you want me to do for you?”** “Lord, I want to see,” he replied. <sup>42</sup>Jesus said to him, **“Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.”** <sup>43</sup>Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

**Matthew 13:58 (NIV)** <sup>58</sup>And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

**Acts 3:16 (NIV)** <sup>16</sup>By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

**Acts 14:8 - 10 (NIV)** <sup>8</sup>In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. <sup>9</sup>He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed <sup>10</sup>and called out, “Stand up on your feet!” At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

- **Faith does not change the Will of God – but faith does influence the activity of God**
- *Again and again the Bible encourages us to pray in faith – and does not caution us against boldly engaging in believing prayer*
- We are often timid in our prayers and in our faith because we assume that healing is rarely the will of God

**Mark 1:40 - 42 (NIV)** <sup>40</sup>A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” <sup>41</sup>Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. **“I am willing,”** he said. **“Be clean!”** <sup>42</sup>Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

- *There is no biblical basis for assuming that God is normally unwilling to heal*
- **Jesus revealed God to be a Healer – much of Jesus’ ministry was devoted to healing the sick – and He commissioned and empowered His followers to continue His healing ministry**

**Matthew 4:24 (NIV)** <sup>24</sup>News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

**Matthew 14:14 (NIV)** <sup>14</sup>When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

**Luke 4:40 (NIV)** <sup>40</sup>When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them.

**Luke 9:1 – 2, 6 (NIV)** <sup>1</sup>When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, <sup>2</sup>and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick... <sup>6</sup>So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere.

- *Is the lesson we are to glean from these Scriptures that most of the time God is unwilling to answer prayers for healing – so when we pray, we should pray timidly?*
- *Do we believe that the NT is an ancient history textbook – and that was then – but this is now – and Jesus Christ is no longer able or willing to heal the sick ??*
- *If you pray in faith for God to heal the sick, will you sometimes be disappointed because no healing miracle occurs?*
- *Of course – we have all experienced the disappointment of praying and not seeing the answers we desired*

- Our faith does not trump the fallenness of this world, the curse of sin and death, nor the Sovereign Will of God
- **But again and again the Bible teaches that there is a connection between praying in faith and God's supernatural activity**
- *And Faith need not be doctrinally perfect in order for God to honor it*
- This woman's faith was quite unsophisticated and yet it effectively laid hold of the healing power of Jesus – *we might even call her faith primitive and superstitious – believing that a touch of Jesus' cloak would bring healing*
- But before you call that mere superstition, consider these verses:

**Matthew 14:35 - 36 (NIV)** <sup>35</sup>And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him <sup>36</sup>and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

**Acts 19:11 - 12 (NIV)** <sup>11</sup>God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, <sup>12</sup>so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

- *Some of us American Christians take pride in our doctrinal soundness and spiritual maturity and biblical knowledge – but do we know how to appropriate the healing power of Jesus the way these simple people did – and the way many believers with a simple faith all over the world today are able to do?*
- Again, that is NOT to say that strong faith guarantees healing NOR that if someone prays for healing and God does not intervene with healing that lack of faith is to blame
- *But the Bible clearly teaches that faith connects us with the power of God*

**Ephesians 1:19** <sup>19</sup>I pray that you will begin to understand the incredible greatness of his power for us who believe him.

- *There was yet another reason why Jesus brought this woman out of hiding into the open: **Jesus wanted to establish a personal relationship with her***
- Touching a cloak and being healed of a bleeding problem and then disappearing into the crowd does not constitute a personal relationship
- ***The greatest gift Jesus offers us is not His healing power – but Himself***
- This woman was about to leave the presence of Jesus – healed, but not knowing Jesus

- *Jesus called her to himself to initiate a personal relationship with her*
- She may have thought herself to be unworthy -- **Jesus believed otherwise**
- *The essence of Christianity is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ – who is alive to be encountered today*
- **Whoever you are – whatever your social status – whatever your past – whatever mess you may be in right now -- Jesus loves you and values you and desires a personal relationship with you**
- This scene with Jesus and the nameless woman is all the more remarkable when you remember the context
- *Do you remember what Jesus was doing when he was interrupted by this woman's touch?*
- **Jesus was responding to a 9-1-1 call from a VIP**
- *There was no time to lose – time was of the essence if Jairus' daughter was to be healed*
- We can imagine Jairus' impatience – thinking of his daughter's critical condition while Jesus converses with this insignificant woman: *“If much more time is wasted on this woman – it may be too late to help my daughter”*
- Indeed, just then a messenger from home came up to Jairus with the worst possible news for any parent: *Your daughter is dead.*
- While Jesus stopped to speak with this outcast woman – the only daughter of the synagogue ruler died
- *Not a very savvy politician was Jesus – focusing his attention on a poor, insignificant, vulnerable woman while neglecting the urgent need of an influential community leader*
- *Thus the situation for Jairus had changed from desperate to hopeless*
- ***Your daughter is dead -- So why bother the teacher any more – Nothing can be done now***

#### **IV. HOPE FOR THE HOPELESS**

- *Jesus may have been able to heal a sick girl – but what can any man do in the face of death?*
- As long as the girl was still alive – there was hope of healing and recovery
- *But now that she was dead – there was nothing that anyone could do about that*
- **The situation was hopeless**

- Jairus had just lost his 12-year-old girl
- *Death had cut short her life and robbed her of her future*
- All of Jairus' hopes and dreams for his little girl were crushed
  
- Yet – upon hearing the grim news – Jesus said to Jairus in his despair: ***“Don't be afraid – Just believe”***
- Just believe **what ? – that a dead girl could come back to life?**
  
- When they arrived at Jairus' home – the mourners were already gathered and wailing loudly
- Jesus said to them: *“Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.”*
  
- The crowd laughed at Jesus – they knew a dead person when they saw one
- *And they knew that death was final*
- The only appropriate response to death is to weep and wail -- and plan the funeral
  
- But Jesus dismissed the crowd of mourners and took the inner circle of disciples who were with him – along with Jairus and the mother – and entered the room where the dead body was
  
- **Resurrections were not commonplace in the 1<sup>st</sup> century any more than they are today**
- *Then – as now – when people died – they stayed dead*
- Even people who believe in the healing power of Jesus recognize that dead people stay dead and there is no more hope of seeing that person alive again
  
- As many of you know – in 2005 God woke Jill up and restored her to life and health after she had been knocked unconscious for over 3 hours by gas poisoning from a defective gas heater in a shower room in a lodge on the way down from mountain climbing in the Himalayas when she was on a mission trip in Nepal
- *Jill was not dead – she was asleep and unconscious – but it was a miracle that she suffered no ill effects from the gas poisoning*
- Emily and Mo have also experienced God's miraculous power in healing Emily's heart and Mo's shoulder
  
- Does God still heal people supernaturally and miraculously today?
- *Yes, I know for a fact He does*

- *But if I had received a phone call that my daughter was dead – rather than unconscious – I don't think I would have had the faith – or the theological convictions -- to believe that God would bring her back from the dead*
- Miraculous healing is one thing – raising the dead is quite another
- *“Your daughter is dead. Why bother the Teacher any more?”*
- We all understand that thinking
- **What can even a powerful healer do in the face of death?**
- *But no situation – no matter how desperate – no matter how hopeless – is beyond hope when Jesus is present*
- Taking the inner circle of disciples and the girl's parents with him – and brushing aside the ridicule and laughter and mocking of the skeptics and mourners – Jesus entered the room where the girl's dead body was – and took her by the hand – and said in Aramaic: *“Talitha koum”* – meaning – **“Little girl – get up!”**
- *And the girl's spirit returned to her body – and she stood up at once*
- **And they were all completely astonished!**
- Indeed!
- **Wherever the Lord Jesus Christ is present – there is hope**
- *Jesus is Lord over nature // Lord over demonic powers // Lord over sickness and disease // Lord over death itself*
- **Jesus has the power to make the dead live again**
- I do not speak those words casually
- *This is not something to be believed or disbelieved without serious thought*
- **Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life**
- *He proved it by His own resurrection from the dead*
- **Jesus utterly vanquished the power of death by rising from the dead in an immortal body that would never die again – the first of its kind – but not the last of its kind**
- You see, that is the kind of resurrection that every believer in Jesus Christ will experience one day – *the resurrection unto eternal life in an immortal resurrection body just like Jesus' resurrection body*
- **The Resurrection of Jesus Christ changes everything**
- *Death no longer has the final word*
- Sickness and disease and fatal accidents are no longer a permanent threat to our well-being or to our loved ones in Christ

- *Though we pray in faith to lay hold of the healing power of Jesus – and some people are miraculously healed today – prolonging life in this mortal body is not our ultimate hope – **rather eternal life in a resurrection body is our hope***
- ***All who believe in Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life will live forever, and one day – when Jesus returns – we will be given immortal resurrection bodies that will never die***
- ***The Resurrection of Jesus Christ makes all the difference in the world***
- ***No sickness // no disease / not even death itself can harm the one who belongs to Jesus – not even death itself can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus – not even death itself can permanently separate us from our loved ones in Christ***
- ***For death lost its sting when God raised Jesus from the dead***
- ***Everything is different because Jesus is alive from the dead***
- *Wherever the risen Christ is present – there is Hope*
- ***NO situation is hopeless because Jesus lives and reigns as Lord and Victor over every evil power that seeks to harm us or destroy us***
- *Wherever the risen Christ is present – there is hope – hope of change // hope of new beginnings // hope of new life // hope of restored relationships // hope of spiritual victory & freedom // hope of life everlasting*

## V. ACCESSING JESUS' HEALING AND LIFE-GIVING POWER

- How about you?
- *Do you feel stuck in a desperate – even hopeless – situation?*
- Would you like to get unstuck -- make a new beginning in life?
- ***Jesus is alive and present among us today – the same Jesus that healed the sick and raised the dead is in the house today -- and He specializes in giving new life and hope to vulnerable and hurting people today***
- *Have you invited the Lord Jesus Christ to take control of your situation and to release His healing / liberating / reconciling / life-changing power into your life?*
- ***Have you laid hold of His healing // life-changing // life-giving power by faith?***
- *Do you believe the Good News that wherever the risen Christ is present – there is hope of new life?*

- *This morning will you take a step toward getting well and beginning a new life?*
- Admit your need and ask for help and for prayer
- **Invite Jesus Christ into your life and into your situation to bring His grace and His power to make a significant impact**
- *Turn your life and your will over to Jesus Christ and ask Him to set you free and make whatever changes within you that are needed*
- **Come forward during the altar call to ask for prayer for healing and new life**
- *Reach out to Jesus in faith today*

**Mark 11:24 (NIV) <sup>24</sup>Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.**

**John 14:12 (NIV) <sup>12</sup>I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.**

**James 5:14 - 16 (NIV) <sup>14</sup>Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup>And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup>Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.**

**Deacons // Deaconesses // IPT**

**Prayer for Healing – James 5**

**Going to the Altar for any reason – raising hand for prayer (IPT)**

**Prayer for Outpouring of Holy Spirit**

**“Come, Just As You Are”**