

The Kind of Faith that Gets an Answer

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Introduction: Open your Bible to Mark 5. If you've ever been in soul shaking desperate situation, then you've asked yourself, "How do I get God to help me?" Have you ever asked yourself that question? Have you ever cried out to God and seemingly got no answer?

God is not so concerned about changing your situation, but in changing you. Yet God ordains impossible situations, in our lives to bring us to desperation and surrender to Him. It is then that God at times will change impossible situations.

Few of us doubt that God CAN help us. Hardly a person here would doubt that God CAN help us, the question is: WILL God help us? If God is willing, how can I let God know that I want Him to get involved in my life and help me?

The answer is one word: **FAITH**. What is faith? Faith is a full surrender to God. Faith is believing that God is actively moving in your life for your good and His glory.

Martin Luther defined faith this way. He said:

"Faith is a living, bold trust in God's grace, so certain of God's favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God's grace makes you happy, joyful and bold in your relationship to God and all creatures".¹

Desperate situations pry us from self-confidence and pride. Do you find yourself in a desperate situation? You cannot help yourself? No human solution is available? Thank God for it right now. God has brought you to a place where He's going to teach you how to walk with Him by FAITH.

Context: Mark chapter 4 and 5 are sometimes referred to as "the longest day". After a long day, the disciples go over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. They are caught in a terrible life threatening storm. They come to the other side and see a demon possessed man who Jesus heals. Apparently all this takes place in the early hours of the day, because once they get back to the other side of the Sea of Galilee back in Capernaum, Jesus meets two very needy, desperate people.

- One man is very well to do—an official in the synagogue in Capernaum has a 12 year old daughter near death.
- The other desperate person is a woman, who has been suffering with a disease for 12 years. She has a hemorrhage of blood that has made her unclean, and everything she sits on and any one who touches her is ceremonially unclean. She cannot worship in the

¹ Martin Luther. "An Introduction to St. Paul's Letter to the Romans," *Luther's German Bible of 1522, VERMISCHTE DEUTSCHE SCHRIFTEN*, Johann K. Irmischer, ed. Vol. 63 (Erlangen: Heyder and Zimmer, 1854) 124-125.

synagogue or temple.² Both of these people DO SOMETHING. Both these people come to Jesus BY FAITH.

I. The story of **Jairus and his dying daughter**.

Mark 5:21-22, "And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea. 22 And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet".

This is a real man with a daughter we find out later that is around 12 years of age. My daughter Kaite will be 11 this month, so this story touches me. This man has a genuine love for his daughter, and she is at the point of death. Imagine how this might impact you. Your daughter is sick. There is no hospital near by. There is no doctor that can help you. This man is desperate.

Jesus meets his need. Why did Jesus meet his need?

- A. Faith requires **action**. ***This man acts***. Jairus was a synagogue official. From what we know, he would have helped keep the synagogue grounds. He would have been like a deacon. So he came to Jesus and fell at his feet. He had plenty of reasons to stay home.
- His fellow Pharisees were plotting Jesus' death. He might lose his position.
 - He was a synagogue official, and he might have looked weak falling before Jesus.

Faith involves action. He got dressed, left his home, asked around, cut through the crowd on the beach, sees Jesus and falls at his feet. Do you have this kind of active, working, living faith? Faith is not passive—it is active. If I believe a train is coming down the track and I am lying down on the track, I'm going to move, because I believe! This man apparently knows that Jesus can do what no doctor can do. So he sets aside his trust in all others, and ACTIVELY seeks Jesus out and falls before Him.

Hebrews 4:16, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

- B. Faith requires **asking**. ***This man also asks***. Look at *verse 23*, "...he fell at his feet 23 And besought him greatly [or, implored him earnestly, ESV]..." James says, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (**James 5:16**).

This man "implored him earnestly". It means to beg someone for help. He literally "begged" Jesus. We learn how to ask in faith right here. This man "fell at his feet 23 and implored him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live". This is how to ask in faith!

1. We must ask in **brokenheartedness**. God hears the brokenhearted prayer. **Psalm 51:17**, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." He says, "My little daughter". We learn later she is 12 years old. She's not a little girl any more. Yet we see the tenderness. We see the

²Hughes, Robert B. ; Laney, J. Carl: *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House Publishers, 2001 (The Tyndale Reference Library), S. 430

desperation. In my experience, when the impossible comes, this is when the Holy Spirit works in us the ability to believe God to do the impossible. It is often not until we are utterly brokenhearted that we are prepared to pray the way God wants us to pray.

2. We must ask with **urgency**. James says, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (**James 5:16**). He says, “My little daughter lieth at the point of death”. The language here is intense. Literally he is saying “she is in the final stages of dying”. She doesn’t have months or weeks or days. She has **hours**. She’s barely breathing, and I’m begging you to come NOW and heal her.
3. We must ask with **a specific request**. **Verse 23**, “I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.”. I think sometimes we pray generic prayers because we are afraid God might not answer. We doubt because we lack faith!
4. We must ask with **confidence**. **Verse 23**, “Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live”. He believes!

Transition: So act in faith and ask in faith! You say, “I’ve done that!” But it hasn’t worked out. I’ve asked and not seen God move on my behalf. If that is you, I think it is because we give up too easily. Our faith is too weak. We can learn from Jairus that it’s not enough to act and ask in faith. We must overcome and be unrelenting. We must believe that God will do His will—and He can and will remove mountains on our behalf. I want you to see how Jairus and how we can overcome in faith.

C. Faith requires an **overcoming spirit**. ***This man overcomes***. True, living, vital faith overcomes and perseveres. True faith believes God despite impossibilities. The object of our faith is still omnipotent! He is still all wise and all loving, is He not?! So God is going to test your faith to see if it is authentic. We see how he tests Jairus’s faith in **verses 25-34**. ***This section gives us another person that Jesus deals with on the way to Jairus’s house***. We’ll come to that in just a moment. This woman with the hemorrhage of blood jumps in front of Jairus. Every second to this father must have felt like an eternity. This is a test for Jairus’s faith. There is always a test when you ask. Remember what Jairus told Jesus, “My little daughter is at the point of death” (**verse 23**).

Can you imagine what it would have been like in his shoes? Would you possibly have been angry? Anxious? Confused? Jesus come NOW! My daughter is at the “point of death” and you are taking valuable time to deal with this lady. She can wait! My daughter is dying. There is no time to delay!

1. We ought not to be surprised if **tragedy** occurs. And tragedy occurs with Jairus’s daughter. It’s devastating. We read in **verse 35**, “While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?”

Just imagine how Jairus’s heart must have sunk. “My daughter died while we were standing here. There was time! Valuable time’s been wasted!”

Application: You must expect hardships and tragedies in your life as a Christian. It must not come as a surprise to you. These are all tests to your faith. James says we are to “count it all joy”. You may be here today, and you have honored God. You have lived godly in Christ Jesus. Yet things are not turning out the way you’d planned. Things are confused and out of control. And you say, but Jesus I came to you, and all I hear is: “hope is gone”. Do you doubt when there is a delay with God? What do you do when God delays? What do you do when there is a “wrong turn” in your life? You might say, “Nothing good is going to come of this!” You are wrong.

You say “it didn’t go the way I planned”. When you look back from heaven, you are going to be glad it didn’t go the way YOU planned. Remember Joseph. Had he not gone to prison, but stayed with his family, do you know what would have happened? They all would have died of starvation! Joseph never would have planned it this way. God knows better than Joseph, and God knows better than all of us.

Faith not only *acts* and *asks*, but faith *overcomes* when tested with the impossible obstacles! Your faith has to overcome the impossible, immovable obstacles. Faith of a mustard seed moves mountains. The God who created the universe and raised Jesus Christ from the dead can and will change you through your faith in Him. He may change your situation. He will most likely not do it in the way you think He should. Aren’t you glad He’s God and you’re not?!

2. We ought to expect our faith to be **tested**. Look at the **test** of this man’s faith. Jairus too was put to the test. **verse 35**, “While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?”

Jairus must have felt that the Lord has forgotten him. Other’s poured salt in Jairus’s wounds. “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Master any further?” (**verse 35**).

I want you to remember that you are never forgotten or forsaken! The Lord says, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (**Hebrews 13:5**).

God wants us to trust in Him and overcome in faith when things look impossible. You say, can you give me a biblical example?

Remember Abraham? God promised him a son. He believed God. Yet when that boy was 13, he brought him up to Mount Moriah as God commanded him, that he might sacrifice him. What a change of plans! But we read in Hebrews of Abraham’s strong faith. **Hebrews 11:17**, “By faith Abraham, when he was tried [tested], offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead”.

1 John 5:4, “...this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

If you persevere through the testing, Jesus Christ will be right there with you. The only way you can persevere and grow in faith is through the Word of God. **Romans 10:17**, “Faith

comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God". Listen to the three words from Jesus to this man, Jairus.

3. Look how we can **triumph** through faith. We must listen to Jesus here. He tells us how. Here we see three statements from Jesus that grow our faith.

(1.) Jesus gives a word of **faith**. **Verse 36**, "As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe." Literally, Jesus says, "Do not fear, only *continue* believing." You believed me enough to ask me the first time you came. Continue believing! Though tragedy has come, continue trusting me!

Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (**Matthew 7:7-8**).

Apparently, Jairus did continue believing, because followed Jesus to where his daughter was. Verse 37, "And he suffered [allowed] no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. 38 And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult [uproar], and them that wept and wailed greatly." Now does this look or sound like anything good is going to happen? During this ancient time in Israel, when someone died, there would be screaming and wailing and people rending their clothes. In fact, it is much like this in the Middle East today when someone dies.

Now notice what happens. Jesus says a second thing.

(2.) Jesus gives a word of **hope**. **Verse 39**, "And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado [commotion], and weep? the damsel [girl] is not dead, but sleepeth" Jesus is the God of life and death, but this might be too great a test for Jairus.

If you are Jairus, you want to believe. You see all these people crying and screaming, and then Jesus says something outrageous. He says she's not dead. What? Are you kidding? The people stop crying and they start doing what? Yes, laughing. **Verse 40a**, "And they laughed him to scorn."

Application: When God gives you a word of hope from His Word about an impossible situation, you can expect opposition. People may even mock you. Have you ever heard people tell you to "get real" or "get your head out of the clouds"? If you are a person of faith, that faith is going to make some people uncomfortable. "Why are you waiting on God for that? It's so obvious He's not going to do anything!" Are you ready for opposition?

But when you are opposed, remember this—Jesus stands with you! Stop doubting. Don't be afraid, he says. "Keep believing". Now look what Jesus

does. It seems that He puts everyone out of the room that is doubting. When I get to heaven, I want to watch this on video tape!

D. Look how Jesus **answers** faith!

Verse 40b, “But when he had put them all out [outside], he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.”

Now here is a man who’s got faith that acts by going to Jesus, bowing before Jesus. Are you going to the throne of grace? This man not only **acts**, but he **asks**. He asks with a broken heart; he asks urgently; he asks specifically, and he asks without wavering—confidently.

And this man overcomes! He overcomes the waiting for this woman—meanwhile his daughter dies! He overcomes when his friends and family mock his faith in Jesus.

And so what happens when come to Jesus in faith, actively, asking, and persevering no matter what? Jesus answers! Look at **verse 41**, “And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel [Little girl], I say unto thee, arise. 42 And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment [amazement]. 43 And he charged them straitly [strictly] that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.”

Now we see the same thing with the woman with the issue of blood.

II. The story of **the woman who had a hemorrhage for 12 years**. Faith that acts, and asks, and overcomes gets answered!

- What does it mean that God answers our prayers? I do not mean to say in any way that God will do your bidding. We submit to God, He does not submit to us. Even Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity prayed, “Not my will but thine be done”.

Part of the transaction of prayer is submitting myself to God’s will. Nevertheless, let us not hold back from asking anything that we think to be God’s will. James tells us: “You have not because you ask not”. And so what does it mean for God to answer us?

It means: God will show up in the midst of your circumstance. Someone said, “We pray for easier paths when we ought to pray for stronger shoes.” Sometimes God removes the obstacle and heals the pain, and other times God decides to show His glory in the midst of pain and tragedy. But God shows up in your life! When I say God answers, I do not mean that we always get exactly what we want, because sometime our asking is not according to His will. Can you just thank God right now that you don’t always get what you want?!

But if you come to God in faith and you ask Him and continue asking Him, overcoming through the hardest of circumstances, you will find God!!!

- God said to Jeremiah: “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (**Jeremiah 29:13**). Do you just want God to remove the pain, or do you want God Himself?

Notice this second story. Remember Jairus runs up to Jesus and bows before Him and begs him to come and heal his daughter. And while Jesus is on His way to Jairus’s house a very special woman approaches Jesus from behind. Look back at **verse 25**, “And a certain woman, which had an issue [a discharge, hemorrhage] of blood twelve years,” What is meant by this disease is not completely known. It is thought that it was some kind of internal bleeding that perhaps was of the female sort. This went on for 12 years! How many times she must have prayed with seemingly no answer. Of course she had no idea that her prayers would be answered by the Messiah Himself.

Now noticed in **verse 26**, this is a woman... “had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse.”

Application: Some people have used this story to teach that we ought not go to doctors. People who believe that ought to read the rest of the Bible. Paul brought with him in all his travels Luke the beloved physician. Let’s remember that Jesus said that those who are well don’t need a physician, but those who are sick. God can heal through doctors or God can heal supernaturally. He does both, but either way, it is God who heals! God heals at the medical center. He heals at the church. If your body is returned to health and strength, you can attribute it to God alone.

Here’s a lady who did all that she could—but the best physicians could not help her. Someone here has done this. Probably all of us know someone like this.

Now watch what happens. She has faith. And faith is not passive, it is what? ACTIVE.

A. We see again that Faith produces **action**. She did something. **Verse 27**, “When she had heard of Jesus, [she] came in the press [crowd] behind, and touched his garment.” She did something. She thought if there was a possibility of getting rid of this disease through Jesus, she would go for it. It amazes me how so many people can be so indifferent about their own soul. If you are here today as a believer, it is because you saw the state of your soul. You saw you could not help yourself. You ran to Jesus, if only to touch the hem of His garment!

Application: Perhaps there is someone here today and you say, “I am a lost soul. But if a lost soul can be saved, I will be saved. I am guilty. But if guilt can be washed away, mine shall be washed away. I have a hard heart and I know it. But if a heart of stone can be turned into a heart of flesh, I long to have it so and I will never rest until this gracious work is worked in me” (Spurgeon quote).³

This woman takes action!

³ <http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols34-36/chs2018.pdf>

B. There is an **asking**. Here we might even say there is a longing, since this is not verbal. **Verse 28**, “For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole [well].” And so with a longing in her heart, and a reaching unto Jesus, she touches His garment. I love this because she didn’t even need to ask verbally. The Lord knew her heart because he later says, “your faith has made you well” (**verse 34**). It is not the eloquent language that gets the answer! It’s the heart of faith. Sometimes it is just the “groan” of faith (cf. **Rom. 8:26**). When we call on God in confidence, though our faith be weak, we will see God answer. We may say, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (**Mark 9:24**). God responds to this. But you might say, I could never have this kind of faith!

Illustration: Have you ever been to the circus? There is a really amazing sight I love at the circus. Not the lions or the acrobats, but the elephants. Have you ever noticed that the elephants are tied to a little tiny peg in the ground? Ever since he was a little baby elephant that peg has held him in the ground, and he just doesn’t try any more. That elephant if he wanted to could rip the whole circus tent apart!

Application: You may be here today, and you are afraid to trust God. You tried once and it didn’t work out. God wants to grow your faith, but you have to be willing to come to God in total surrender.

C. But remember, God is always going to **test** your faith! **Verse 28**, “For she said, “If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.” And what happened? **Verses 29-30**, “And straightway [immediately] the fountain [flow] of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague [disease]. 30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue [power] had gone out of him, turned him about in the press [crowd], and said, Who touched my clothes?”

Application: What would you have done? Imagine it was you. It took so long to build up the courage to just touch the hem of Jesus’ garment. You are healed, and now you want to go home and rejoice and all the sudden you hear, “Who touched Me?!” Wouldn’t you just want to find a hole to crawl into? You’d just want to say “I have no idea!” You’d want to go, “Who touched Him?!”

This woman was at a point of desperation.

And the disciples make it worse! **Verse 31**, “And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?” They say, “Are you kidding? Who’s touching You? Everybody’s touching you! We are all touching you! What do you mean ‘Who touched you?’”

Jesus knew who touched her. He wanted her to know that He knew! **Verse 32**, “And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. 33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.”

Do you see how her faith overcomes? Her faith is tested—Jesus calls her out, and he basically asks her to confess who had healed her. So she falls before Him in public and acknowledges His Lordship over her disease.

Application: There are people here, and Jesus Christ has saved your soul. He has healed your spirit and given you eternal life, and He calls on you to acknowledge Him as LORD of your life publically. You say how do we do that today? **Acts 2:41-42** says, “they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”. If you are saved and yet unbaptized, then you need to take the first step in overcoming faith. Let me test your faith right now. Do you acknowledge that God has saved your soul by the blood of Jesus Christ? Are you willing to confess Him publically before the whole world? You can and should do that as a first step of faith through baptism. If you are here today as an unbaptized believer, you ought to talk to me at the close of this service. Have you been baptized since you believed?

Now watch this. She comes to Jesus and acts and asks and overcomes. She falls before Him and confesses her faith in Him. And look at what Jesus says.

D. Look at how Jesus **answers** true faith. **Verse 34**, “And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague [disease].”

- “Daughter” – this is the only time in the Bible Jesus calls anyone “Daughter”.
- He says, “Your faith has made you whole” or literally, “Your faith has saved you”. It is a play on words in the Greek. Jesus is saying, not only are you physically healed of your disease, you are spiritually healed!

Perhaps you are spiritually desperate today. William Cowper wrote a hymn of desperation many years ago. He struggled with constant depression but found hope and light with Jesus!

He said: “I have tried, and tried in vain,
Many ways to ease my pain;
Now all other hope is past,
Only this is left at last:
Here before thy cross I lie;
Here I live or here I die.”⁴

Conclusion:

- (1.) Have you lost hope in God? You’re trusting God in a difficult marriage, or maybe you’re in a relational struggle, or perhaps you are trusting God for a job, or a lost loved one seems to listen for a while, and you get your hopes up, and then they take ten steps back. And you lose hope. I want you to know if you are in a desperate situation, you are wrong to lose hope. You need to have full faith in the One who loved you and gave Himself for you.
- (2.) Are you in need of a miracle today? Remember “With man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (**Matthew 19:26**).

⁴ Spence-Jones, H. D. M. (Hrsg.): *The Pulpit Commentary: St. Mark Vol. I*. Bellingham, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2004, S. 216.

- (3.) Are you willing to wait for that miracle so that God can test your faith and make you stronger spiritually?
- (4.) Perhaps you have not yet come to Christ and been born again. Is Christ the very center of your life? Have you trusted in Christ as your Lord and Savior? Think with me for a moment. He has done everything necessary to forgive you and save you. He wants to live in your life and take you to heaven when you die. Isn't that what you want also?
- (5.) Finally, you may be here, and you need to publically confess your faith in Christ. You've been saved, but you are in need of baptism. Or perhaps you have been saved and baptized, but you need to come for church membership and be in a place where you can be encouraged and admonished and loved and held accountable.

Closing Prayer: "Almighty God and Father, we are in your presence. We are here to ask you for a miracle. We confess we do not know your perfect will. But, Father God, if it be in your will to grant what we are requesting, we will give you praise and honor. Thank you for looking into our hearts. Thank you for hearing our cries for your help. Amen."