

July 26, 2026

Pursuing the Kingdom: When Faith Meets the Impossible

Matthew 9:18-26

Vernon Advent Christian Church

It doesn't take us long to discover that life has a way of bringing us into situations we simply cannot fix by ourselves. There are moments when all of our resources, all of our experience, our education and determination suddenly are not enough. A doctor gives an unexpected diagnosis. A relationship that seemed strong begins to unravel. A child makes choices that break your heart. A financial crisis leaves us wondering how we will make it through another month. Every one of us eventually experiences circumstances that remind us that our human strength is finite.

And most of us don't like to admit this reality. We live in a culture that celebrates self-sufficiency. We're taught from an early age that if we simply work harder, think smarter, or try longer, we can overcome almost anything. Now, there is certainly value in diligence and perseverance, but eventually every one of us reaches a point where determination alone is not enough to get us through. And it's in these moments when we begin to look around us for answers that are outside of ourselves. Because there are burdens we cannot carry, wounds we cannot heal and problems we simply cannot solve ourselves.

Enter the God of the Bible. Again and again throughout scripture, God meets people precisely at the point where they recognize their own helplessness. Abraham could not produce the promised son on his own (even though he tried!). Moses could not deliver Israel in his own strength. David could not defeat Goliath by his own abilities. The disciples could not feed the multitude. And time after time, God meets the need and works in ways that leave no doubt that the power belongs to Him and not to us.

The truth is, God often brings us to the end of ourselves so that we will finally discover that He is enough. We naturally resist those moments because they expose our weakness. Yet those moments often become the places where our faith grows the most. You see, as long as we believe we can manage life on our own, we rarely experience the sufficiency of God's grace. It is often only when our own strength fails that we learn to depend completely upon Christ.

Perhaps you have come this morning carrying a burden that is too heavy for you to carry. Maybe you have exhausted every resource you have. Maybe you have reached the end of your own strength. If so, I have good news for you today. Our greatest need often becomes the way we discover the greatness of our God. For, you see, when faith meets the impossible, it also meets the One for whom nothing is impossible. If you're able, please stand with me as I read the Word of God this morning from Matthew's gospel 9:18-26.

[Read Passage]

The first thing we see in this passage is that faith comes to Jesus in desperation. We begin right where we left off last week, still during the dinner party at Matthew's house where he invited his friends, who were also tax collectors, to meet Jesus. Matthew continues in vs. 18, [Read vs. 18] Both Mark and Luke tell us, in their parallel accounts, that

this man's name was Jairus and that he was one of the rulers of the local synagogue. And so, immediately, we are introduced to a man who was well known and respected.

As a leader in the synagogue, he would have overseen the worship services, cared for the sacred scrolls and ensured that everything was done properly according to the Law of Moses. Yet none of his position, reputation, or his influence could solve the crisis that had entered his home.

It's amazing how suffering has a way of leveling the playing field. You see, when everything is going well it is easy to notice the differences between people. But when tragedy enters our lives, those distinctions quickly fade into the background. That's because suffering does not care about social status and death does not discriminate between rich and poor. Every one of us eventually experiences situations that remind us how fragile life really is.

Imagine Jairus during those final hours before he came to Jesus. Mark tells us that his little girl was about twelve years old. Perhaps only days before she had been laughing, playing and filling the house with life. As a father, can you imagine the helplessness he must have felt? Every parent knows the instinct to protect their child. We would gladly take their place if we could. Yet there are moments when love is powerless to stop suffering. Jairus had undoubtedly exhausted every option available to him. Friends could offer sympathy, physicians could offer treatment, but no one could bring his daughter back to life.

Now, one of the most shocking details in Matthew's account of this event is that Jairus kneels before Jesus. That may not seem extraordinary until we remember who he is. As a synagogue ruler, Jairus belonged to the very religious establishment that was becoming increasingly hostile toward Jesus. Many of the scribes and Pharisees were questioning Christ's authority, criticizing His actions and looking for reasons to oppose Him. Yet Jairus is no longer concerned about appearances. He is not worried about what anyone else thinks. He falls at the feet of Jesus because when your daughter is dying, pride suddenly doesn't matter anymore.

There is a lesson here for every one of us. Pride often keeps people from coming to Jesus. Some refuse to admit they need Him because they are afraid of appearing weak. Others convince themselves that they can solve their own problems or earn God's approval through their own efforts. But faith begins where our pride ends. As Jesus has already said, the kingdom of God belongs to the meek and those who are willing to humble themselves before the King.

Now, notice the remarkable confidence Jairus expresses here. He says to Jesus at the end of vs. 18, "Come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." What an extraordinary statement of faith. Mark and Luke tell us that when Jairus first approached Jesus, his daughter was still alive but dying. By the time Matthew summarizes the account, his emphasis is on the certainty of her death. And Jairus has come to believe that Jesus is his only hope.

And where did such confidence come from? Perhaps Jairus had witnessed some of the miracles Matthew has already recorded as happening in Capernaum. Maybe he had heard about the miracles from others because word had spread throughout Galilee about

what Jesus was doing, namely the centurion's servant. Whatever the reason, Jairus had become convinced that Jesus was the only one he could turn to.

And that is always where genuine faith begins. Faith is not positive thinking. Its not blind optimism or even wishful thinking. Biblical faith is confidence placed in the character and authority of Jesus. Jairus did not have faith in faith itself. He did not take a "blind leap of faith." He had full confidence in Jesus.

There's a common saying that goes something like this, "Faith is only as strong as the object in which it rests." Meaning a small amount of trust in a strong, safe thing is much better than a huge amount of trust in a weak or false thing.

You see, a person can have enormous faith in a weak bridge and still have that bridge collapse and fall into the river. On the other hand, someone may cross a sturdy bridge with trembling knees, yet they arrive safely on the other side because their confidence rests on something reliable. The strength of our faith ultimately depends upon the strength of the One in whom we trust, in God Himself.

And that should encourage us. Because sometimes we worry because our faith feels small. We wonder whether we have enough faith for God to work. But Jesus repeatedly teaches that even a small faith can accomplish great things. Not because faith itself is powerful, but because Christ, himself, is powerful. And so, the focus of this passage, and don't miss this, the focus of this passage is not the greatness of Jairus's faith, but the greatness of Jesus.

Now next, Matthew tells us simply in vs. 19 that, "... Jesus rose and followed him, with his disciples." Those words are easy to overlook, but they reveal something beautiful about the heart of Christ. Jesus does not hesitate. He does not criticize Jairus. He does not require him to prove himself first. He simply goes with him.

And once again, we see the consistent pattern we find throughout the Gospels. Jesus moves toward those who recognize their need. Whether it is a leper, a Roman centurion, a paralytic, a tax collector, or now a desperate father, Christ continually responds with compassion to those who come to Him in genuine faith.

And isn't that the story of the gospel itself? Humanity could not climb its way to God, so God came to us. We could not rescue ourselves from sin, so Jesus entered our broken world to seek and save that which was lost. And as we have seen throughout Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is constantly moving toward the hurting, the helpless and the hopeless.

And perhaps that is exactly where some of you find yourselves today. You may not be standing beside the bed of a dying child, but you know what it feels like to carry burdens too heavy to bear. Some are carrying grief. Others are burdened by anxiety, broken relationships, financial uncertainty or physical illness. Some are quietly battling guilt or shame that no one else knows about. Whatever your burden may be, the invitation of this passage is wonderfully simple, bring it to Jesus.

You don't have to pretend that you have everything together. In fact, the opposite is true. The people who experience the grace of Jesus in a deeper way are often those who have reached the end of themselves. Because when we finally acknowledge that we cannot save ourselves, we discover the One who can.

Now, as Jesus follows Jairus toward his home, we see the second aspect of faith in this passage and that is that faith trusts the sufficiency of Christ. Matthew suddenly interrupts the story with another desperate situation. Jairus' daughter is dying and every moment matters. Yet as Jesus makes His way through the crowd, a woman quietly approaches Him from behind.

Matthew tells us that she "had suffered from a discharge of blood for twelve years." And, again, Mark and Luke add that she had spent everything she had on physicians, yet instead of improving, her condition had only grown worse. Imagine the disappointment she must have felt. Twelve years of hoping the next treatment would work. Twelve years of spending money she could never recover. Twelve years of waking up every morning with the same problem she went to bed with the night before.

Now, we don't know for sure what this "issue" was but many suspect it was a condition known as menorrhagia which is excessive and prolonged uterine bleeding that can last for long periods of time.

And its important that we remember that her suffering was more than just physical. You may remember, similar to leprosy, according to the ceremonial laws in Leviticus, her condition made her continually unclean. That meant she was banned from normal worship, separated from many social interactions and constantly reminded that she was not welcome.

For twelve years she had likely lived as an outcast, on the outside looking in. While others enjoyed fellowship with family and friends, she carried the burden of isolation, shame and loneliness. It is difficult to imagine the emotional and spiritual anguish that accompanied her physical pain.

Yet despite all of that, she hadn't lost hope. Just like Jairus, she too had either likely seen or heard about the miracles of Jesus and Matthew tells us she said to herself in vs. 21, "If I only touch His garment, I will be made well." And, again, what remarkable faith. She simply believes that being near Him is enough.

And as soon as she touches the fringe of His garment, Jesus stops and turns toward her. Mark tells us that she had hoped to remain unnoticed most likely because she knows that by touching Him, that act alone would make Him unclean as well and would bring punishment on her.

But Jesus would not allow her to leave anonymously. Not because He wanted to embarrass her, but because He wanted to encourage her. And looking at her, He says in vs. 22, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well."

What beautiful words. Do you know that this is the only recorded occasion in the Gospels where Jesus addresses someone as "daughter." You see, and don't miss this either, before He heals her body, He restores her identity. For years she had been defined by her disease, but Jesus reminds her that she is far more than her suffering. She is seen, known and loved. And in that moment, she is made completely whole and is given a new identity in Christ, that of a daughter of the King. Instead of her impurity making Jesus unclean, His holiness overcomes her uncleanness. That is the power of the gospel.

You see, every one of us suffers from the uncleanness of sin. Left to ourselves, we cannot cure it. We cannot earn our way back to God or remove our own guilt. Without Christ, we are helpless and hopeless.

But when we come to Jesus in faith, He does what no one else can do. He forgives our sin, restores our relationship with the Father and gives us a new identity as sons and daughters of the one true God.

Perhaps you have carried a burden for years that no one else fully understands. Like this woman, you may have tried every solution the world has to offer and still find yourself longing for healing. This passage reminds us that Jesus is still enough. He still sees those who feel invisible. He still welcomes those who feel unworthy and He still restores those who come to Him in humble faith. No one who reaches out to Jesus is beyond the reach of His grace.

And that brings us to our third, and final, aspect of faith we see in this passage and that is that faith rest in the authority of the king. Now, by the time Jesus arrives at Jairus' house in vs. 23, the arrival of Jesus appears to have become a moot point. Mark and Luke tell us in their accounts that on the way some people from Jairus' house come to inform him that his daughter has died. And Matthew tells us here that the flute players and mourning crowd have already gathered.

You see, in Jewish culture, professional mourners were often hired to lament the death of a loved one and their presence signaled that everyone believed the situation was beyond hope. From a human perspective, there was nothing more that could be done. Death had won.

Yet Jesus walks into this hopeless situation and says something that must have sounded unbelievable to those who were there in vs. 24, "Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping." Now, understandably, the crowd immediately laughs at Him. They know she has died. They have seen death before and they assume Jesus either misunderstands the situation or is speaking foolishly.

But Jesus is not denying the reality of death. Rather, He is declaring that death does not have the final word. Just as someone can be awakened from sleep, Jesus has the authority to awaken this little girl from even death itself.

And after the mourners are sent outside, Jesus quietly enters the room, takes the girl by the hand, and immediately she begins to breathe again and wakes up. With a simple touch Jesus has brought this little girl from death to life.

And Matthew wants us to see that the King who has authority over every disease, over every demonic power, over every sin and uncleanness also has absolute authority over even death itself. What no physician, religious leader, or grieving parent could accomplish, Jesus does.

And this miracle is a beautiful preview of the greater victory Jesus would accomplish through His own death and resurrection. Before long, Jesus Himself would be taken to a cross and laid in a tomb, dead and buried. To many, it would appear that death had finally won. But on the third day, Jesus rose victorious, proving once and for all that death is a defeated enemy.

And because Christ lives, everyone who places their faith in His finished work on the cross has the promise of eternal life. For the Christian, death is no longer an enemy to fear but an enemy that has been defeated.

And this same Jesus who called this little girl to rise still lives and reigns today. He is able to bring hope where there is despair, peace where there is fear and life where

everything seems lost. Pursuing the kingdom of God means learning to trust the King even when our circumstances tell us there is no reason to hope, because what is impossible with man is always possible with God.

Now, as we step back and look at this passage, one truth stands above all the others, and that is that faith is only as strong as the One in whom it is placed. Matthew is not inviting us to admire the faith of Jairus or that of the woman. He is inviting us to marvel at the greatness of Jesus. Throughout this account, every person's hope ultimately rests in Him. Jairus could not save his daughter. The woman could not heal herself. The mourners could not reverse death. But Jesus could.

Faith does not mean we always understand God's ways. Faith means we trust His character even when we cannot see what He is doing.

And so, the question is not whether Jesus is able. The question is whether we will trust Him. Will we bring Him our fears, our disappointments, our unanswered questions and our impossible situations? Will we believe that His power is greater than our weakness and His grace is greater than our failures?

One day, every disease will be healed, every tear will be wiped away and death itself will be swallowed up in victory. The miracles in this passage are wonderful, but they are ultimately signs pointing us toward that coming day when Jesus will make all things new. Until then, we continue to pursue the kingdom of God by walking in faith. Not because life is always easy, but because He is always faithful. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus, our compassionate Savior and mighty King. Thank You that nothing is beyond Your power and no burden is too great for Your care.

Give us the faith to trust You completely. Help us to bring every fear, every need and every impossible situation to You, resting in Your perfect timing and unfailing love.

Father, strengthen our faith, deepen our trust and help us to pursue Your kingdom each day with our eyes fixed on Jesus. And in His name we pray. Amen.

Benediction:

May you go forth trusting in the King who sees your burdens, strengthens your faith, and holds authority over every circumstance. May you rest in the compassion of Christ, knowing that He is faithful in every season and powerful beyond every impossibility. Pursue His kingdom with confidence, for the One who gives life and hope is with you always. Amen.