

Mr Clean

Mark 5:21-43, 7:1-23

Sometimes, there's more going on than meets the eye. And that's often the case with what Jesus says and does. The miracles he does are always amazing - but they're more than that. They confront the whole value system of the Jewish leadership; they overturn ideas of what's right and wrong. And beneath the obvious outside level of amazement at what Jesus does, if you understand the background of what's happening, there's a second level of amazement beneath the surface...

Read Mark 5:21-43. Notice the two stories that are interwoven.

Observations

1. Who is the man who seeks help from Jesus? Why is this notable?
2. What does he ask Jesus to do in verse 23?
3. What comments indicate the helpless situation of the woman in the crowd?
4. What link is there between this comment and something we observed at the start of the account of the man with the legion of demons earlier in this chapter?
5. What does the woman think is necessary for her healing? (Compare this with Jairus, above.)
6. What does Jesus say has healed the woman? What did it involve?
7. The men who come from the house of Jairus obviously think there is a boundary on the amount of help Jesus can give. Where do they draw the line?
8. What does Jesus call for from Jairus?
9. Mark often notes the connection Jesus makes between fear and faith. How are they linked?
10. Tears turn to derisive laughter when Jesus comes. Why?
11. What does the laughter turn into, and why?
12. This is a great PR opportunity for Jesus. What does he do with it?



Under the Surface...

Read through the whole passage again. What similarities can you see between the accounts of the sick woman and the dead girl? List as many as you can...

Some old testament background highlights a similarity that isn't quite so obvious...

Read Leviticus 15:25-29. What does this tell you about the woman who touched Jesus, and the expected consequences? (What SHOULD have happened?)

What happens instead?

Read Numbers 19:11-13. What should have happened when Jesus touched the body of the dead girl?

What happens instead?

Have you noticed? The Old Testament law was full of regulations about what was clean and what was unclean. Touch something unclean, and you were polluted yourself - uncleanness was catching! But with Jesus, the opposite is true. Whoever he touches becomes clean - in a way that overturns what everyone expected. He is Mr Clean!

Leprosy was the clearest example of the stigma that came with being unclean. Remember back in Mark 1:40-42...

40 A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

But Jesus is interested in a clean-ness that goes far deeper than the outward sort of "clean" and "unclean" the Pharisees and teachers of the law were so concerned about.

Read Mark 7:1-23. What sort of uncleanness matters most to Jesus?

What label does he use for those who are worried about outward cleanness, but not about the dirt that matters most?

From what you've seen of the cleaning activities of Jesus in this study, who should you turn to if you're not clean on the inside?

From what you know of the rest of Mark's gospel, how can he help?