

Faith that Overcomes

Matthew 9:18-26

Halifax: 13 February 2005

Introduction

Why is it that so few come to Jesus Christ?

- What great folly it is!
 - Here we are, a sinful, dying world with a perfect Saviour...
 - A Saviour who is perfectly suited to meet our every need...
 - A Saviour full of compassion and power who is ready to save...
 - A Saviour who is not hidden, but who has been revealed in our world and who has demonstrated His power over death.
 - A Saviour who has publicly borne the curse of God on the cross for sinners and promises salvation to all who come to Him.
- What greater folly than to refuse to come to Him!
 - What folly to be desperately and terminally sick and yet to refuse the one who has the cure.
 - What madness this!

Perhaps you yourself have never truly come to Him in faith!

- You may be a member of the church, but perhaps you are one who has never truly believed...
- It is madness!
 - I want to address this madness today...

And you who have come to Him and who are trusting in Him this day...

- There is something in this message for you also...
 - I am sure that in you also there is still to be found some of this madness...
 - Do you not find a certain reluctance or a hesitation to come to Him with all your needs?
 - Yes, you are trusting in Him for your salvation—you have truly found eternal life in Him...
 - But you are still not as free as you ought to be about coming to Him to deal with that remaining corruption of sin that continues to mar your life...
 - Your madness is in one sense even greater than that of the unbeliever!
 - Here you have found Him and experienced His mercy—

- You know His tender mercies and grace—
- And yet, there is this hesitation and reluctance to draw near in your time of need.

In Matthew 9:18-26, we are presented with two miracles performed by our Lord—one inside another...

- And it seems that they are presented in such a way by Matthew that they highlight the faith of the ones who come to Jesus for salvation.
 - Here we see two persons who each had to overcome barriers that have so often held others back, even to their own destruction.
 - No doubt, the Holy Spirit has given us these words in Matthew to encourage us to trample over all barriers that nothing might keep us from Jesus Christ.

I. Which of these two persons can you identify with?

- Let me tell you about each of them...

A. First, there is this ruler of the synagogue...

- He is an example one who might have been hindered by **personal greatness** or by **pride of position**.

1. Matthew calls him a ruler.

a. We learn from Mark that his name was Jairus and that he was a ruler of the synagogue.

- As such, he ordered the affairs of the synagogue and the interpretation of the law was said to belong to him.
- In a city the size of Capernaum in which the Jewish religion was one of the most important features, this was a very high and influential position!
- Jairus would have enjoyed his place as one of the most esteemed men in the city!

b. Now we have just seen how opposition was rising against Jesus in Capernaum.

- In Matthew 9:3,
 - the religious leaders had thought it blasphemous for Jesus to claim that He had authority to forgive sins...
- And in 9:11,
 - they had taken issue with Him for eating with tax collectors and sinners.
- No doubt,

- they were surely displeased that Jesus had passed by the important religious leaders and chose lowly fisherman to be His disciples—
 - and now even this tax collector!
- c. Now you can see how it would have been difficult for Jairus to come to Jesus for help.
- 1) The apostle tells us in 1 Cor. that there are not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble who are called.
 - 2) When the Pharisees wanted to ridicule the officers who refused to arrest Jesus because of the remarkable words He spoke, they asked:
 - John 7:48: Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him?
 - And of course, the expected answer was “no.”
 - There were very few that believed.
 - Pride of place was a great barrier for these religious leaders.

TRANS> And so it is in this that you must examine yourself.

2. Does pride of place keep you from coming to Jesus?
 - I believe there are two questions you need to ask yourself about this...
 - a. First you must ask yourself,
 - **“Is there in me the problem of self-sufficiency?”**
 - 1) Oh I believe this is a much bigger problem than we realise!
 - Too often, we look for answers in ourselves first!
 - We are in many ways a successful society—for God has richly blessed us with material wealth and prosperity...
 - But too often we think we know more than God!
 - How many there are in our society that sneer at the word of God!
 - There is the biologist—he knows how the world came to be!
 - There is the psychologist—he knows what is wrong with man—not sin—that is only superstition!
 - There is the politician—He knows what is good for the country and certainly it has nothing to do with God’s word. He will keep his religion separate from all his political decisions!
 - There is the educator—she knows how to produce good citizens and of course, it has nothing to do with Jesus Christ.
 - 2) Do you not find too much of this self-sufficiency in yourself?

- That you rely on your own wisdom and your own ideas and look to everything else to solve your problems before you look to Jesus?
 - “I know what I need to be happy and fulfilled”
 - That is what you do when you go your own way instead of humbly looking to God’s word to guide you.
 - “I know that Bible says... but I...”

TRANS> And after you have examined yourself for self-sufficiency,

b. Then you must also ask yourself:

- **“Is there in me a reluctance to be associated with the faithful followers of Christ?”**

1) You can understand the difficulty for Jairus, can’t you?

- He was among his esteemed associates...
 - How could he go to this carpenter’s son who hung out with fisherman and tax collectors for help?
 - Would he want to be found in their company, seeking help?
 - What all his family and friends and associates think?

2) The problem for most people is not with religion, but with faithful religion—with true religion.

- It is fine to be religious and to go to church and even to be a leader in the church as long as that church is thought to be with it...
- The difficulty comes when you must associate with a people who actually believe the Bible to be the word of God...
 - a people who actually believe that faith in Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation...
 - and that unless a person is born again he will not see the kingdom of heaven...
 - a people who believe that there really is a Hell...
 - a people who actually try to keep God’s commandments about things like sexual purity and sabbath keeping when sabbath keeping is not popular and sexual purity are not accepted by anyone who is enlightened.

3) The question is, are you ashamed to be identified with Jesus Christ and with those who follow His word?

- That is the pressure that Jairus surely had to contend with!
 - That is the pressure you have to face in this world.

- The higher your position, the harder it is!
- This pressure often comes even from your own family—
 - What will my mother think if I chastise my children biblically?
 - What will my father say if I refuse to go to mass?
 - What will my husband do if I refuse to lie for him?
 - What will happen if I refuse to go to the family reunion on Sunday Morning.

TRANS> Be sure that you do not let self-sufficiency or shame of association keep you from Jesus Christ!

3. I think Esau is a tragic example of someone who did.
 - a. Like everyone else in the world, Esau wanted to be blessed.
 - And, like many people, he even wanted to be blessed by God!
 - b. But his problem was that he did not want to be blessed through God's mediator, Jesus Christ...
 - No, Esau wanted to come directly to God himself and be blessed.
 - His problem was self-sufficiency.
 - But God did not promise the blessing directly to him—
 - He promised it through Jacob, Esau's younger brother...
 - Esau refused to have the blessing by submitting to Jacob.
 - He would have it directly or not at all.
 - Now you understand that Jacob is a type of Jesus Christ who intercedes for us and offered Himself for us and who prevailed with God for us...
 - He is our Israel, our prince with God who prevailed and no one can obtain the blessing apart from Him.
 - If you do not come through Him because of self-sufficiency or because you don't want to be identified with one so lowly, you will miss the blessing...
 - And let me say that when I speak of coming to Him, I am not talking about coming to one that the world **calls** Jesus, a Jesus that has been redefined by human pride and prejudice...
 - I am talking about coming to Jesus as He is revealed in God's word and identifying yourself with His people.

- c. If Jairus had been like Esau,
 - He would have prayed for his daughter's recovery and gathered his friends to pray and gathered the best physicians to attend to her,
 - but he would have refused to humble himself and come to Jesus for help!
 - And, like Esau, he would not have obtained the blessing...
 - though he would have kept the reward of his position and esteem in this world—he would have lost the true blessing of God.
 - Death would have remained.
 - Like Esau, he would have gained the world and lost his own soul for all eternity!
 - That is the tragedy of giving way to pride of place instead of giving way to Jesus Christ.

TRANS> So let us learn from Jairus lest we give in to the pride of place.

- That is the first example Matthew gives of one who overcomes a barrier to faith.

B. Secondly, we have the woman with the flow of blood.

- She is an example of one who was in danger of being kept from Jesus because of lowliness of place...
- She might have felt that she was too lowly and impure to associate with Jesus or to come to Him for blessing.

1. This woman is introduced to us in v. 20.

a. Matthew tells us that she had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years!

1) The other gospels explain that she had spent all that she had on physicians, but had only become worse...

- Luke, himself a physician, describes her condition as incurable.

2) As one living under Old Testament law, her condition was all the more difficult to bare...

- God in His law had declared:

- Lev 15:25-27 'If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her *customary* impurity, or if it runs beyond her *usual time of impurity*, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her *customary* impurity. She *shall be* unclean. Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her impurity; and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity. Whoever touches those things shall be

unclean; he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

- The stigma that was associated with her condition was second only to that of leprosy.
 - She had been living in a state of ceremonial uncleanness for twelve years.
 - God, in His wise purposes,
 - gave this law to His people until the Messiah came to remind them that they were all unclean and needed to be cleansed...
 - In other ceremonies, He taught them that everyone is unclean until He Himself has cleansed them.
 - And this cleansing required the blood of the covenant—
 - signified in the OT sacrifices...
 - and embodied in the blood of Jesus Christ.
 - Whenever we come to the Lord's table, we are also reminded again that we are all unclean unless Jesus' blood cleanses us.
- b. You can see how this woman might have hesitated because of her lowly place to come to Jesus.
- 1) Notice how she says,
 - v. 21: "If only I may touch his garment, I shall be made well."
 - The difficulty in her mind was this:
 - "How could an unclean woman like me approach this holy prophet?"
 - "How could I ever get to Him and gain an audience with Him?"
 - It was a little bit like the problem of trying to get a job when all the jobs require experience...
 - How can you get started?
 - How could she get cleansed in order that she might come to Jesus?
 - 2) But she resolved that she would try to secretly touch him from behind—only the hem of his garment...
 - The Law prescribed that the men wear a tassel on all four corners of their garment,

- and all she wanted to do was touch one of those tassels from behind as Jesus walked along...
 - she was sure that would be enough to heal her...
 - She would not even have to bother Him and face rejection.
2. What about you? Does shame keep you from approaching Jesus?
- a. Oh what a problem this has been in the church through the ages!
- 1) This is the very reason that people have so often relied on saints and images and formulas...
- A person who fears he or she is too lowly to approach Jesus will try to get a blessing from these other things...
 - “I cannot pray to Jesus, but I will get St. Christopher or the Virgin Mary to pray for me.”
 - “I cannot approach Him directly, but I will connect with him by touching kissing this cross.”
 - “I cannot come to Him, but I will let the priest approach Him for me.”
- 2) Surely this woman was of that mind...
- She did not want to come to Jesus directly,
 - She would receive a blessing by touching His garment.
- b. But the use of saints and mediators is not the only way this problem is seen...
- 1) There are those who know better than to use these things, but who feel that they are not fit to come to Jesus for help...
- One says, “I don’t have a deep enough conviction of my sin.”
 - I’m sure you don’t—but that’s why you need to come to Jesus for grace.
 - Don’t wait for some special experience or feeling of conviction...
 - Can you not see that your life is draining away into vanity?
 - You are bleeding and only Jesus can heal you.
 - He is the Saviour and He will help you to see your sins that He came to save you from!
 - But the only way you will see them is by coming to Him!
 - If you wait to come till you see them clearly, you will never come.
- 2) And another thinks...

- “I will clean up my life and then I will come to Him.”
- “I am not fit to come to Him now.”
- “There is too much wrong in my life—my selfishness, my laziness, my lust...”
 - “Look at all the adulterous thoughts, the greedy thoughts, the drunkenness that flows out of me.”
 - Jesus would surely send me away if I were to approach Him now.

3) Listen to me!

- a) Do you feel that you are too unworthy to come to Jesus?
 - If there is something in your life that is keeping you from Him, that is the very thing that ought to drive you to Him!
 - Bring that thing to Him and plead with Him to take it away!
- b) Do you realise that this humility on your part is really quite insulting to Him?
 - I’ll tell you why...
 - It’s insulting to Jesus because it assumes that He regards other people because they are somehow good enough!
 - That makes a mockery of His death on the cross for His saints...
 - It makes a mockery of His whole reason for coming which was to save sinners!
 - It insults Him because it makes it appear that He who is so full of compassion is in fact hard and exacting!
 - The tragic example of one who let this hindrance keep him from the Saviour forever is the man in the parable of the talents...
 - Do you remember what He said?
 - Matthew 25:24-30: Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is yours*.’ But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance;

but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

- c) Yes, the Lord has cause to be highly offended with you!
 - But He is compassionate!
 - He will gladly accept you if you will come to Him...
 - even if you come with weak and faltering faith...
 - He will accept you graciously...

TRANS> My friends, do not let either pride of place or shame of place keep you from coming to Jesus Christ!

II. I urge you to learn from the example of this woman and this ruler who overcame these hindrances and came to Jesus!

A. Consider first how the woman overcame her shame of place...

1. I submit to you that it was by the grace of God, working in her life that she overcame it!
 - a. It is evident that this woman had somehow mustered up enough courage to come to Jesus...
 - She comes, hesitantly, as one who had thought long about this matter.
 - She had thought it through with herself and had finally come to the conclusion that if she could at least touch the edge of His garment, she would be healed...
 - The language of verse 21 indicates that she **kept** saying to herself:
 - "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well."
 - The imperfect tense indicates that was repeating this to herself.
 - She couldn't get it out of her mind that this is what she needed to do.
 - Perhaps it is in your mind that you need to come to Jesus about something as well!
 - b. But how was it that she came to this conclusion?
 - 1) Consider what she had just learned, being in the multitude that was following Jesus on this day!
 - Jesus had just come from a meal with tax collectors and other unclean persons—unclean persons like herself!
 - He was being criticised for eating with such persons...

- And just now, He had been defending Himself to the Pharisees...
 - declaring: “I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”
 - and also: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.”
- 2) The Holy Spirit had graciously shown this woman something about Jesus that she needed to see!
- And now she saw that He had just been called to go heal the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue!
 - Jesus was busy and occupied—
 - Now would be the time that she would approach Him from behind, unnoticed, and touch His garment.
 - She had seen enough of His virtue to believe that such a touch would be sufficient to cure her...
 - That was all she needed!
 - If He could heal the paralytic and cleanse a tax collector, perhaps He could her if she could only touch his garment.
- c. Like the prodigal son, she had come to see that Jesus’ grace was so abundant that even the servants were better off than those who were without Him.
- And so she comes, very meekly: “I am not worthy to be called your son, but let me be as one of your hired servants.”
 - She realises that just a little of His grace will be plenty for her!
 - He is full of grace and mercy!
 - She realised that it was impossible for her to clean herself up before coming to Jesus...
 - but that cleaning her up was what He had come to do!
2. Now what about you?
- a. Do you see Jesus as a hard, exacting one? or do you see Him as a merciful saviour who welcomes sinners?
- How tragic if this woman had never understood that and never come to Jesus!
 - How tragic if the prodigal son had not considered his father’s mercy and continued to feed pigs!
 - How tragic for you if you should never learn that He is merciful and should stay away from Him all your life!

- If on the day of judgement you should say, “I knew that you were a hard man...”
- b. God’s Spirit shows you that Jesus is merciful just the way He showed this woman that Jesus is merciful!
- 1) He shows you how He welcomes other sinners and saves them,
 - and in His word, He calls you to come...
 - a) Clearly, you are invited to come....
 - Re 22:17: And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.
 - b) And not just invited, but entreated...
 - 2 Cor 5:20: Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.
 - The Lord asks, “Why will you die when I have come to save?”
 - c) and not just entreated, but commanded...
 - 1Jo 3:23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.
 - 2) Now this is a great encouragement!
 - When you are **invited** and **entreated** and **commanded** to come to Jesus, you need not wonder if you are **permitted** to come!
 - When a king calls you to come, you don’t ask,
 - “But may I come?”
 - Of course you can come—
 - you have been invited, you have been begged, you have been commanded!
 - To refuse to come is to disobey.
- c. Oh that you would all see how pleased the Lord Jesus is be merciful to you!
- He did not leave the glories of heaven for any other reason!
 - It is the Father’s good pleasure to save you and to give you the kingdom.

TRANS> The woman say this, though it was ever so faintly—she saw it enough to come.

B. But what about the ruler—how did he overcome his pride of place?

- Once again it was the grace of God.
1. God, in His gracious working, brought this man to an end of his own resources!
 - There is no room for self-sufficiency when you realise that you are utterly helpless!
 - a. Surely he had heard and probably seen much about Jesus... likely Jesus had even preached and healed in his own synagogue!
 - But because of Jairus's position, he had likely kept at a safe distance from Him...
 - just watching, and refraining from any open commitment to Him...
 - Men in his position are usually quite cautious...
 - Sometimes so much so that they miss what God has for them...
 - But all the same, God had graciously brought Jesus to his attention.
 - He knew about Jesus' power to heal and save!
 - b. But now, in God's gracious providence,
 - 1) this self-sufficient man was given something that he could not solve...
 - his daughter had died and there was no way he could raise her up.
 - He was at the end of his resources.
 - 2) But it occurred to him that surely Jesus could give life to her!
 - He had done many great miracles, could He not also give life to his poor little daughter?
 - Blessed affliction!
 - It brought this man to an end of all his self-reliance!
 - He had no choice now but to go to Jesus if he was going to gain his daughter again...
 - Jesus was his only hope!
2. Let every soul be confronted with death!
 - a. There is nothing to humble your human pride more than the helpless finality of death!
 - It doesn't matter how much power or wealth or honour you have in this world...
 - There is nothing you can do about death!
 - b. Mahatma Gandhi is a man who was the image of tranquillity.

- Fifteen years before he died, he wrote,
 - “I must tell you in all humility that Hinduism as I know it entirely satisfies my soul. It fills my whole being and I find a solace in the Bha-ga-vad and U-pan-i-shed that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount.”
 - But just before his death he wrote,
 - “My days are numbered. I am not likely to live very long, perhaps a year or a little more. For the first time in fifty years I find myself in the slew of despond.”
 - Death was something for which he had no answer!
- c. My friends, you are all going to die!
- I tell you that Jesus Christ is the only one who has the solution to death.
 - Mohammed is still in his tomb, Buddha is still in his tomb, Confucius is still in his tomb...
 - But Jesus’ tomb is empty!
 - He has overcome death and He tells all who trust in Him,
 - “Because I live, you will live also.”
 - If you would have eternal life, you must give up your pride and come to Christ!

3. Learn from this highly esteemed ruler!

- a. Come and worship Jesus as He did!
- See how this ruler, now aware of his desperate need, publicly approaches Jesus and bows down to worship Him with great reverence!
 - He comes before Him and kisses His feet!
 - If you would be blessed, you must humble yourself and confess your own need of Jesus Christ.
 - You cannot be saved until you do.

TRANS> That is the first thing to learn from the ruler...

- b. Secondly, you must welcome Jesus to come into your house to bring life there, as He did!
- 1) Moments ago, some of this ruler’s friends had accused Jesus of becoming defiled by eating with tax collectors and sinners...
- Jesus has just come out of the house of defilement...

- and was Himself considered unclean by the traditions of the day...
 - But this ruler invites him to come from Matthew's house into his own house!
 - Just as it was a display of wonderful humility for the centurion to say "I am not worthy for you to come under my roof..."
 - so now it was a display for this synagogue ruler to say, "Come and lay your hand on my daughter and she shall live."
- 2) You see what a levelling affect death has!
- For a dead body is also considered unclean, and anyone who touches it likewise becomes unclean!
 - Everyone's day would come—all would die, all would become unclean.
 - The Pharisees who were so proud of how they kept themselves from defilement should have considered that God did not make these laws to foster pride...
 - He made them to show His people their need of salvation!
 - Everyone is unclean at the end!
 - There is no room for pride, only a need for salvation!
 - Jesus alone is able to cleanse us from all defilement.
- 3) If you would be saved, you must be willing to associate yourself with the lowly and despised Jesus too.
- Not the Jesus of hypocrites who is cleaned up after the world's ways to please the world...
 - But the true Jesus who walked on this earth and who is revealed in the unchanging word of God.

TRANS> Learn from this ruler! Learn from this woman!

- Let neither pride nor lowliness keep you from Jesus.
 - Surely He is higher than highest, for He is the King of Glory...
 - And surely again, He is the lowest of lowest, for He has become sin for us and humbled Himself to the point of death, even death on the cross!
 - You cannot be too high for Him, nor can you be too low for Him!
 - Learn from the ruler—learn from the bleeding woman!

III. And finally, I want you to look at what happened to them!

A. Look first at the woman!

1. She came and she touched Jesus' garment from behind and she was healed immediately.
 - a. But Jesus was not let her suppose that she had been healed apart from His personal mercy and grace!
 - Salvation is not the result of something mechanical—
 - Saying the sinners prayer,
 - Getting baptised,
 - touching a cross...
 - No, no, no—it is the personal response of Jesus to each individual that comes, looking to Him for mercy!
 - b. Jesus surprises this woman by letting her know that!
 - There is nothing mechanical to save us that is somehow disconnected from Jesus and that operates apart from Him!
 - Jesus speaks gracious words to her to assure her of His own personal love and grace to her!
 - vs. 22: But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour.
 - It was not His garment, it was He that saved her in response to her faith, weak and imperfect as it was!
 - What good reason there was for her to be cheerful!
1. When you come to Jesus, expecting a little, He does not take offence by the smallness of your faith (though He has good reason be offended)...
 - a. But instead of chiding you, He always gives you far more than you ask for!
 - He is so glad that you have come!
 - You come expecting Him to be stingy and narrow,
 - but you find that He has an abundance of grace that exceeds your grandest expectations!
 - That is the way He is!
 - There is no need for chiding—His gracious response is enough to cause you to think about Him differently.
 - b. The prodigal son hoped that he might be made a servant in his father's house—that would have been enough for him...
 - but instead he got a banquet and a brand new inheritance!

- Our expectations are so small, but Christ's gifts are so great!

A. And now the ruler, what was the outcome for Him?

1. At His request, Jesus indeed came to bring mercy and salvation to his house.
 - a. The first thing He does is clear away that which hinders His blessing...
 - 1) This ruler's friends were there, carrying on in all the wailing and lamentation that was the custom of the day.
 - The pipe players made shrill dissonant sounds in an effort to stir up greater lamentation and sorrow...
 - It was thought to be a way to honour the dead.
 - Professional wailers were also hired to lead the way in shedding tears and making shrill cries.
 - 2) Now this assembly of mourners were from Capernaum.
 - They should surely have recognised Jesus.
 - a) Yet, the ruler's friends had not been humbled the way the ruler had.
 - They still held Jesus with contempt...
 - And so, when He said,
 - "Make room, the girl is not dead, but sleeping,"
 - They all began to ridicule Him with derisive laughter.
 - So much for their sorrow!
 - But knowing something of Jesus, they should have respectfully waited to see what He would do instead of mocking!
 - b) But as they were mockers, Jesus had them put outside...
 - The word used here is actually cast out—the same word that is used for casting out demons!
 - The ruler's friends were unfit to see what Jesus was going to do!
 - They would know about it soon enough, but for now they were in the way.
- 3) And so it is that when we come to Jesus,
 - He graciously puts enmity between you and the serpent's seed.
 - This is the sense in which Jesus does not bring peace, but a sword...
 - The ruler, having joined Himself to Jesus, would no longer be welcome and respected by his old friends...

- While this is difficult, it is nevertheless God's blessing to all the disciples of Jesus—
 - It is a mark that you have changed sides:
 - Therefore Jesus said:
 - Matthew 5:10-12: Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
- b. The second thing Jesus does is come to the girl...
- 1) And by His almighty power, He reaches over as if she were merely sleeping and gently wakes her up by taking her hand,
 - and, as the other gospels declare, calling her to get up...
 - Just like you do to awaken a sleeping person.
 - But Matthew highlights the touch of Jesus once again!
 - Here He touches another unclean person and, as is always the case, the unclean person is no longer unclean!
 - This girl was unclean on account of death, but now she is alive and well!
 - Jesus takes her death upon Himself with a touch of His hand.
 - 2) What power and grace is in our Lord!
 - a) There is no one else that can do this!
 - He alone has the power of life and death!
 - Tell all the proud and self-sufficient ones to step aside!
 - This is the LORD who is come to save.
 - b) How kind He is to come to this world that He might lift us out of our sin misery.
2. How foolish it is to let hard thoughts of His mercy or your own pride keep you from this Saviour.
- Surely you can see that you need Him and that without Him you will perish...
 - Give up on yourself and come to Him...
 - Do not be ashamed of Him.

- Surely you can see that He is full of kindness and mercy...
 - He is a welcoming Saviour...
 - Do not dream of fitness, come to Him as you are and He will gladly and joyfully receive you.
 - It is His good pleasure to give you the kingdom.
 - It is sheer madness to keep yourself apart from Him.