

THE PERSONAL & INFINITE GOD
Mark 5:21-43

For those of you who are just joining us this morning we are currently working our way through this incredible, action-packed gospel of Mark. What Mark is doing, his purpose behind writing to begin with, is to prove that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (1:1) by retelling His good news of His life – the miracles that He did, the teachings He taught, and the death He died for our sins, just like the other gospel records. The thing that differentiates Mark though, from Matthew or Luke or John, is his focus on what Jesus did – it's actually less about His teachings and more on His actions as **the Servant of God** – a major description of the Messiah from the OT was that He would be the Servant. We keep studying all of the things that Jesus did as a Servant, and the signs He performed – these *real, observable, historical, space-time proofs* that He did that prove He is not just another man but God Himself, God the Son, and He is a Personal & Infinite God. And we too, are learning to be “Servants like our Savior” – “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mk. 10:41-45).

But before we open up to our passage in Mark 5:21, I want to take the time to explain a bit why a Personal & Infinite God is necessary to the Greek culture we're living in. What I mean by that is a little easier to understand if you contrast it with a Jewish culture. In the book of Galatians that we went through last year, you would agree that it was clearly written to a Jewish, religious audience or culture that for the most part had a clear grasp of the Judeo-Christian truths from the Bible about **the nature of God** (what God is like) **and man and the universe**. But to speak to a *Greek* culture is like speaking to an audience who doesn't understand the ABC's of the Bible about God and man and the universe. When Paul was addressing the people of Athens, Greece in Acts 17:16-34, because they had so many false ideas floating around, **he first had to convince them of the true, Personal & Infinite nature of God before he could make Christ known to them.**ⁱ And because our culture is becoming increasingly “Greek” in that sense, we need to have a similar method in our ministries.

I was sitting around a table the other day listening to a sweet, older couple in our congregation discuss what marriage has been like for the many years of their marriage. And one of the things that came up was how back when they first got married, they went to church because that's what people did. They didn't really know the Lord but it was normal to go to church. Well, back when people just went to church like that it was easier to share the gospel with people. They had some form of church background and Biblical accounts in their mind and had a basic grasp of what Christianity is. But that's not the culture we live in anymore, is it? Less and less people are growing up going to church, being raised in Bible believing, God-fearing homes. The word “God” has become taboo. People don't understand the ABC's of the Bible anymore. And “Consequently,” as one man said, “it is absolutely essential that with the majority of people we meet, to begin at the beginning.” What He means is that we often need to start reaching people by giving them **logical and reasonable proofs for the existence of God and truth** in the first place – being ready to give an intelligent defense of the faith. That is a birthright of every believer by the way (1 Peter 3:15).

Many of our youths have grown up only to leave the church because no one gave them any real answers or took their questions seriously. The Early Church, it seems, understood that people need a knowledge of truth before they can accept truth. Knowledge of truth comes before their faith-conversion. Biblical faith is not a leap in the dark but a decision based on knowledge of truth.ⁱⁱ To say that is not to say that men and

women only need academics – we know that prayer is involved and dependence on the work of the Spirit for someone to be saved.

But knowledge of the truth is the most practical thing in your life. Truth is in essence that which corresponds to reality – the way things really are – and we are in constant contact with reality every second of every day so if our idea of what reality is doesn't line up with the reality that really exists, we will experience all sort of problems. Life is going to be tough. If you sow actions that don't correspond with reality, you'll reap consequences – and the opposite is true as well. So there is nothing more practical than knowing truth because if you know the truth, you'll know how to live according to the reality that is really there.

And unless you understand truth, you'll never be able to answer life's deepest questions that all of us, especially in our early teen years and college years, are plagued with: **“Who am I and is there any ultimate meaning to my life?”** Essentially, we're asking the question, **“Why does this world even exist and why do I exist in it?”** If we don't receive any answers to those questions as we get older, for whatever reason, we may give up on church like many youths have or become cynical about those questions as we grow older like Pontius Pilate. Jesus told him, “for this reason I came into the world, to testify to the truth.” And Pilate said, “What is truth?” and then turned on his heel and walked away (Jn. 18:37-38). Or because we don't have any answers, we try to drown our anxious thoughts in alcohol, drugs, promiscuous activities, and hopping from one career to another trying to find what Francis Schaeffer calls “personal peace and affluence”. But here's the thing – and you know if you've been there, as I have – that you will never find the meaning of life or that personal peace & affluence that you are so desperately and secretly searching for without Christianity because **Christianity is the glove that reality fits into.**ⁱⁱⁱ No other worldview other than Christianity can really answer all the questions. Every other worldview glove is missing finger for the hand of reality but with Christianity, the glove is perfect.

That being said, if we go back to the beginning for our Greek culture like Paul did in Athens, men must first know that **there is a God and that He is a Personal & Infinite God.** A Personal & Infinite God is required to answer the **question of existence**, “Who am I? Why do I exist?”. It's a question historical question isn't it? Because if we could just answer the question of how the world began then we could answer who we are as beings who exist in a real spacial place in real time (as conscious men living in a complex universe). And there's only a few options: **1) You can believe it came from nothing, 2) from something impersonal that always existed, or 3) someone personal & infinite created it all.** Everything that we see around us and everything we experience, our being, our existence – it had to come from somewhere.

And siding with first answer, the “scientific” Discover magazine from April 2002 said, “The universe burst into something from absolutely nothing. Zero. Nada. And as it got bigger, it became filled with even more stuff that came from absolutely nowhere.” That's fine if we're talking about a Personal God creating something from nothing (that's biblical to say that God created by fiat – His spoken Word) but **they're saying that nothing created something from nothing – not an infinitely powerful God created something from nothing.** But even if the universe came from a Big Bang like that, something had to have caused it and it wasn't nothing. The Law of Cause & Effect proves that. Something causes every effect.

Many though, say that what we see – the natural, physical universe – always existed and that can life came from something that is impersonal, like the forces of nature. This uniformitarian view presupposes that the universe didn't have a beginning. That it always was. Evolution for example, teaches that impersonal forces such as the natural laws and processes over time... and more time... and millions or billions of times...

brought about things that exist today. Every living thing is the product of mindless natural causes and that man is kind of a convenient accident whose ancestor is just much the plant as the animal. But again, it's never been demonstrated how time plus chance can produce the complexity of the present form of the universe. The present form of the world and beings living in it are far too complex and stable to exist in any lesser form. The evidence is not in the fossil record. And it can't account for the metaphysical world – that complexities beyond the physical world – the spirit and soul and personality of man with mind, emotion and will, love and communication.

That being said, the only answer is that in the beginning was someone Personal and Infinite that created all of it. **Someone unlimited in power and wisdom with a mind, emotion and will created men with mind, emotion and will. Someone who has always existed in love and fellowship and communication (Trinity) created men and women who love and fellowship and communicate.** And if that's the case then mankind, the jewel of all of creation, that is distinct from the rest of creation (having been made in God's image for a relationship with Him like Genesis 1 tells us) has meaning and is not meaningless. You were created for a purpose. That would be reality. If you want to really answer that question of "Who am I? And is there any meaning to life?" you must understand that in the beginning and right now, there is a Personal-Infinite God who is and always has been at work in the world He created and is always revealing Himself through creation (Rom. 1:18-23) and His Word. In fact, He has been so active and personal in this world that He even became a man to reveal Himself to show us His Personal and Infinite self. Hebrews says God has spoken to us many times in many portions and in many ways, but in these last days He has spoken to through His Son, through whom He also created the world (Heb. 1:1-2). That's the biblical testimony about Jesus Christ – He is not just a good teacher, but He is Lord of all creation. I think Mark 5:21-43 proves that Jesus is that Personal & Infinite God.

"When Jesus crossed over again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around Him; and so He stayed by the seashore. One of the synagogue officials named Jairus came up, and on seeing Him, fell at His feet and implored Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death; please come and lay your hands on her, so that she will get well and live." And He went off with him; and a large crowd was following Him and pressing in on Him.

A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and had endured much at the hands of the physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse – after hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak. For she thought, "If I just touch His garments, I will get well." Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. Immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that the power proceeding from Him had gone forth, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My garments?" And His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, "Who touched Me?" And He looked around to see the woman who had done this. But the woman fearing and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction."

While He was still speaking, they came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?" But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, said to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid any longer, only believe." And He allowed no one to accompany Him, except Peter and James and John the brother of James. They came to the house of the synagogue official; and He saw a commotion, and people loudly weeping and wailing. And entering in, He said to them, "Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep." They began laughing at

Him. But putting them all out, He took along the child's father and mother and His own companions, and entered the room where the child was. Taking the child by the hand, He said to her, "Talitha kum!" (which translated means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl got up and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely astounded. And He gave them strict orders that no one should know about this, and He said that something should be given her to eat."^{iv}

So, last week in Mark we were on the eastern shore of Galilee where Jesus restored the demoniac, but now we're back on the northwest side in **Capernaum**, which is sort of His ministry headquarters during this time in the area of Galilee. He has been there for quite some time doing ministry and He drew large crowds because He was doing all sorts of miracles. As you'll notice in verse 21, He often stayed close to the shore because at least that way He wouldn't be crushed from every side but that doesn't mean He wasn't available to go elsewhere. Notice how personal Jesus is with people – how He interacts with them.

I. **JESUS IS PERSONAL. HE MEETS THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE PERSONALLY.**

A. **Personal response to Jairus. (vv. 22-24)**

This man named Jairus comes up to Jesus and falls at His feet and begs Jesus to come and heal his 12-year-old daughter who was so sick that she was at the point of death. She is so sick that she could die any minute now. "Please come and lay Your hands on her, so that she will get well and live." And Jesus, busy as He is, is still willing to walk all the way to his house to heal her. Jesus was genuinely concerned for people. It reminds me of how Paul spoke of Timothy, saying, "I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare." Timothy was a man who wasn't seeking after his own interests but Christ's and was genuinely concerned for people. We need to ask the question, "Are we genuinely concerned for others' interests?"

? **Do we let people become a part of our day?**

Or are we too busy with our tasks to stop and even listen to them? Because Jesus cared enough to let people become part of His busy day. He was available to anyone. **There were no little people with Jesus.** He treated everyone the same way, regardless of position or status because He's the one who created them in His image for a relationship with Himself. And that fact that all men are made in God's image should change the way we interact with people – it should change the way we shake peoples' hands. Everyone is important and everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and compassion. God becoming a man, by the way, really elevates the dignity & nobility of man.

But there is a neat principle though that we find by just reflecting on this man Jairus. Jairus is a synagogue official/administrator. Basically, he's a leader and caretaker of the synagogue in Capernaum and responsible for many tasks and here he is prostrate before Jesus. And this a big deal because as we've been going through the book of Mark, we keep running into these Jewish religious leaders called the scribes and Pharisees who are blaspheming Jesus, telling people that the miracles He performs is by the power of Satan. They hate Jesus because He won't accept their manmade religious system (they were no longer practicing OT Law/Judaism, but what we could call Pharisaical Judaism), so they were plotting to kill Him. So by doing this, Jairus is risking it all. He is risking his reputation and position, maybe even his life. And if bowing before Jesus means losing our reputation or position or life, as it has for millions of believers, so be it. Don't let anything stop you from worshiping Jesus. That's what you do when come to really know God. You don't care what others think of you or say about you or do to you... You have Christ. And not even severe persecution, like Mark's original Roman audience was undergoing, can change your mind. J. I. Packer said, "When people know God, losses and crosses cease to matter to them."^v That's a strong statement, but the point is, for Christ, losses and crosses are worth it.

But while they're on their way to Jairus' house, another personal miracle happens. It's not a "sign in the sky miracle" but a personal miracle.

B. Personal miracle with the hemorrhagic woman. (vv. 25-34)

A story within a story. The story shifts from a 12-year-old who needs help, to a woman who has been sick for 12 years. For the entire lifespan of the little girl, this woman has been suffering. Mark says this woman has been through the wringer on doctors and physicians and treatments. She has spent all of her money trying to get her bleeding problem fixed and it hasn't helped one bit. In fact, she's only grown worse verse 26 says and she's out of options. She's reached her limits financially and the doctors have reached their limits in finding her a treatment that will work. Maybe you can relate to being in a situation where you've reached your limits. What do you do? This woman turns to the Lord for help – she turns to the One with **unlimited power and personal pity** for her.

She decides she's going to sneak up behind Jesus and just wants to touch the edge of His cloak. And she doesn't want some public healing spectacle because she knows she is unclean according to the Law because of her bleeding and anyone she touches in this crowd is unclean for 7 days. The woman probably doesn't know personal touch anymore. She is forced to social distance – in the Law it's a picture of sin by the way – sin separates us from God. But she's sneaking her way through the crowd and probably with her head covered so that no one knows it's her.

But I love her faith to pursue Jesus until she finds Him. That's a biblical principle. The Lord Himself says, "You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart." And Paul says to the crowds in Athens that God made all men from one man and determines their appointed times and boundaries of their habitation so that they would seek God and grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. God wants us to **seek Him until we can say we really know Him and not just know of Him**. That's what we're here on this earth to do: to seek and know God.

❖ **Seek Him until you know Him personally.**

John 17:3 says, "This is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." And for us who have found Him, we need to keep seeking Him – to be like Him. Because **we too, can get to a point where we're just going through the motions instead of passionately pursuing Jesus every day**.

She pursues Jesus with this thought continually rolling around in her mind, "If I just touch His garments, I will get well." And her efforts aren't in vain because as soon as she touches Jesus, she is healed... but, her cover is blown. Jesus recognizes instantly that power Has gone forth from Him behind Him because He turns around and asks, "Who touched My garments?" Since we're talking about some deep things today already, we could ask, "If Jesus is God then why does He have to ask who touched His garments? Is it that He didn't know?" I think He did know but He wanted her to reveal herself on her own. But at the same time, we know He could have been operating on His fully human side. **Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man** and sometimes you'll notice in the gospels that He is perfectly content operating in His humanity but sometimes the Father's will meant that He draws on His divine side divine side. We call this, according to Philippians 2:8-11, **the kenosis**. Christ, though God, took on the limitations of man though He was not totally limited of His divine attributes. It doesn't mean His deity was reduced but that it was in a sense contently restrained. We see that obviously by the way He heals her of her sickness & resurrects the dead.

When she comes back to admit it was her, notice she's trembling. She's trembling because she knows she's done something unlawful but listen to the personal and loving words of Jesus:

“Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction.” First, He calls her daughter. He recognizes her as His daughter. Because of her faith in Him, she has not only been healed physically but spiritually. We need to remember that about the miracles of Jesus – **the physical miracles teach us a spiritual lesson – and being healed spiritually is the greatest miracle.** So we should take this home, that if we want to be healed spiritually of your sin sickness and your uncleanness, we have to go to the Lord Jesus being open and honest about our moral guilt and only then can our moral guilt be done away.

❖ **To be healed of your sin sickness, be honest about it and look to Christ.**

To be healed of your sin problem you must admit openly and honestly that you’re a sinner and put your faith in Jesus Christ, the God who became the perfectly sinless man to pay for your sins on the cross and rose from the grave in His unlimited power to prove it. Only then will you be completely forgiven forever and be His son or daughter.

But while they’re still standing around talking, some of the folks from Jairus’s house come and give him some heart-wrenching news that his daughter has died and it’s too late - “why bother the Teacher anymore?” they say. But their lack of faith sets up the story for a big surprise. Jesus is not even limited by death, because like I said, Jesus is also the Infinite One. He reassures Jairus that faith in the power of God is enough, “Don’t be afraid any longer, only believe.”

II. JESUS IS INFINITE. HE IS ABLE TO MEET PEOPLES’ GREATEST NEED. (VV. 35-43)

Remember, infinite means He’s **unlimited**. It’s hard for us limited beings to grasp an unlimited Being, but in everything that He is, He is unlimited. He knows no bounds.^{vi} **He is without measure – measureless.** If you can measure something, you can describe its limitations. But God is not measurable. There is not a tape measure out there that can measure God. There is not a scale that can weigh Him. If His love is an ocean, there is no fathoming rope, no sounding line/lead that can reach the bottom of it. There’s no where you can go to escape His presence. The entire universe is like the span of His hand. If He is wise, He is perfect in wisdom. If He is powerful, He is all-powerful. There is no limit to who He is.

This was the problem with all of the Roman and Greek gods and all idols to ever exist. They were limited. They weren’t totally in control of everything, let alone themselves totally. They had weaknesses and couldn’t meet everyone’s needs. But Jesus can. He is able to our greatest problem of death. In fact upon entering Jairus house, He says with confidence, “Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep.” And it’s not that the child isn’t dead. She really is deceased. He is suggesting that you’d better consider her condition as only temporary because He’s going to raise her back to life! And that’s exactly what He does. He *personally* takes her hand by the hand and says to her with a commanding statement, “Little girl, get up!”. And just like that she gets up and begins to walk, proving His unlimited power.

The question we need to ask now is this:

? What does His infinitude mean to us? How does it apply to our lives?

Well, for one, it’s a good reminder to us that when we face those frustrating limitations imposed upon us, from within or without, **how satisfying is it to our souls to know that we have a Personal God to turn to who has zero limitations on Him.** It quiets our spirits and rests our souls^{vii} even if He doesn’t grant us our miracle we’re praying for because it means He has something better in mind – like developing Christlike character through that limiting circumstance.

We can also rest assured knowing that when you put your faith in Christ, **His limitless attributes are extended to you.** His love for you will never cease because He is love. His grace on you will only increase. His mercy will never fail you. They're all limitless, just like the *eternal* life He gives us. We know because He is eternal.

Sadly, many I'm afraid, will not experience God's infinite grace and mercy in their lives or the sure hope and joy of eternal life because they wait until they reach their life's limits to come to God. Many miss out of on the blessing of knowing God because their whole lives they resist God until a crisis comes along – where they're sick beyond help or death is knocking at their door. It's funny how we can deny and resist God until crisis mode, when we finally cry out to the Lord for help. Praise the Lord for those limit-revealing moments that turn us to the Unlimited One, but it's a tragedy when we live our whole lives without experiencing the Personal & Infinite God of grace and mercy that gives us purpose and meaning and joy. If you're here today and you can't say that you really know God or this life, just come to Him being open and honest before God about your sin – you're a sinner like everyone else, like the rest of us – and you want trust in Christ alone to save you, **the One who died for your sins in a display of unlimited love and rose again in a display of unlimited power.**

ⁱ Francis Schaeffer, Jerram Barr, *He Is There and He Is Not Silent* (Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1972), xxii-xxiii.

ⁱⁱ Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1998), 174.

ⁱⁱⁱ Barr, *He Is There and He Is Not Silent*, xv.

^{iv} Scripture Quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible* © 1995 by The Lockman Foundation.

^v J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1973, 1993), 27.

^{vi} A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (New York, NY: Harper One, 1961), 45.

^{vii} *Ibid*, 47.

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