

Can You Hear Me Now?

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Mark 5:21-24

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Like the television commercials, we sometime will look heavenward and wonder if God can really hear us; is He really listening. “Can You hear me now?” we ask. And we ask that question because sometimes when we need God the most it seems like He’s off helping someone else, or He doesn’t see our sense of urgency. For example, listen to what happens to a father who came looking for Jesus one day.

²¹Jesus got into the boat again and went back to the other side of the lake, where a large crowd gathered around him on the shore. ²²Then a leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet, ²³pleading fervently with him. “My little daughter is dying,” he said. “Please come and lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live.” ²⁴Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him. ¹ (Mark 5:21-24)

After healing the man in Gerasene, Jesus and His disciples head back across the lake to Capernaum. When they landed ashore, a very large crowd met Him on the beach. While standing along the seashore, out steps Jairus, who apparently had been hoping and praying Jesus would show up soon. He was an official in the local Synagogue (which was sort of like a church for Jews) and was turning to Jesus for help because his daughter was very sick.

As Jesus leaves the seashore, the crowd was making travel difficult. And you can almost image the anxiousness in Jairus. His daughter is on the verge of death and the one Man who can help is being sidetracked by this crowd. To make matters worse, a woman who had a bleeding problem stops Him just long enough to keep Jesus from getting to his daughter on time (While he was still speaking to her, messengers arrived from the home of Jairus, the leader of the synagogue. They told him, “Your daughter is dead. There’s no use troubling the Teacher now.” ² Mark 5:35).

¹Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

²Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

Three times in this section of the Bible, we see people come to Jesus in the middle of a crisis. The Disciples asked for help while a storm raged out on the sea. This woman reached out to Jesus after suffering for 12 years. And Jairus has a loved one dying. All three faced a crisis in their lives and they all turned to Jesus. The disciples have their storm calmed, this lady has her body healed, and Jairus' daughter has to die before being raised to life. Notice that the disciples had their request answered quickly, but who knows how long this woman waited for Jesus to show up, and why was Jairus made to wait. From what I've seen in life, most of us can identify with this woman or with Jairus.

If only, if only, we lament. If only God would have answered my prayers, life would have been so much easier. And why is it that He seems to answer the prayers of others but not our own? Why does one person walk away healed while another is not. We want to cry out heavenward and ask, "Aren't you listening? Can't you hear me?" "Why the crowd", Jairus must have wondered. "Why did this lady have to come now? Couldn't it have waited five minutes?"

From our own voices come the same questions. Why did my mother end up in a comma the day before my family would move to Iowa? Great timing, Lord. And why did He not answer my prayer that day for her healing as He for so many others. Like me, perhaps you wonder sometimes if God is listening at all.

To be a Christian is to surrender ourselves to God's timing; to let God reign and to let Him care for us according to His timing and His will. But most of us would rather He work according to our will and our timing. We tell God to answer our prayer this Thursday between 9 a.m. and noon. But in doing so, we diminish God and Jesus to nothing more than a genie in a bottle. When a crisis hits, we pull out our faith and wave it before Him like some kind of contract that states if we do our part He must do His; Jesus becomes nothing more than a Rent-a-god.

But how else are we supposed to feel? We come to God with our prayers just as we've been told, but sometimes it sure feels like He can't hear us at all. Sometimes it feels as if He cares more for others than He does for us. We pray just as fervently; our faith is just as strong. And it's at these points in our lives when our

faith in Christ is really put to the test. If we have become a follower of Jesus simply because He does all that we ask we really are not a follower at all; we are trying to lead Him.

I think one of the most difficult things we are asked to do as Christians is to surrender our lives to God's timing; to give Him the authority to answer our prayers according to His own will. In the months before our move to Iowa, we needed to sell our house in Shippensburg. There was no way we could pay the mortgage with the salary I would be paid by the church. God had five months to provide a buyer, and I felt sure He would. But we ended up moving with a "For Sale" sign still in the yard. I remember thinking that God had let me down. I was doing my part in following Him according to His leading in my life; the least He could do is take care of getting my house sold. But we moved anyway, which was a major step in trusting God to work according to His timing.

That was a tremendous faith building experience for me because less than a month later the house was sold before the next mortgage payment was due. According to God's timing, I needed to learn a lesson on faith and trust in Him; to learn to be surrendered to His will and leading in my life. And that would not have happened had He answered my prayer for a buyer while we still lived in Pennsylvania. Jairus too has his faith and trust strengthened when Jesus raises his daughter back from the dead (**And the girl, who was twelve years old, immediately stood up and walked around! They were overwhelmed and totally amazed.**³ Mark 5:42). And Jairus would not have learned the lesson of faith and trust had He healed the child the moment Jairus had asked.

Please don't get me wrong. I'm not trying to tell you that once you learn the lesson God is trying to teach you that He will then answer your prayer. That's not the point. The point is to let Jesus be Lord in your life and to let God be God. To be a Christian is to move from the point in your life when you look heavenward and wonder if God can hear you and instead look heavenward and finally hear that God has all along been calling toward the earth asking "Can you hear ME now".

³Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.