

Jesus teaching on responding to need

Shepherds old and new

Jesus told the story of the "good Samaritan" and highlighted the pathetic want of burden sharing practiced by current teachers and leaders of Judaism Matthew 23.4 & Luke 11.46. This passage tells us that the Lord arose and followed Jairus and his party. Was he still at table in Matthew's house in or near Tabgha or in nearby Capernaum or in his own house? He and the disciples may have risen from a meal to meet that need-the Lord was certainly willing peremptorily to end his teaching session. What a contrast to the Priest and Levite of the story-parable just noted.

A singular moment to teach pro-active response

Should it be that Jesus was still with Matthew this response to need would have occurred in the context of a visit from the Pharisees and maybe even from John's disciples and before the eyes of many Roman officials. It would then have been a most memorable event for Matthew the writer himself. However this timing is not certain notwithstanding it had a profound effect because the news of it went out v.26 leaked out to all the above groups- indeed to the whole land. In fact the word used for the intelligence is "fame" (Greek φημι is used in expressions of astonishment such as "You don't say" or "what you say is astonishing"-it is akin to the Latin root "fama"-and suggests people were threading the facts together to get the picture much as the press does today.)

Jairus -a changed leader

There can be no doubt but this man's life was never the same again-nor that of his wife -nor his girl. Already he had effective faith in Jesus. The word αρτι in Greek is used for the death of his daughter. It had just happened. The delay that occurred through dealing with the lady with the issue of blood who was diffident to go public for obvious reasons-this delay meant the ruler's girl was certainly considered by her father to have finished her life τελευταω but for Jesus it was not so. She was not "departed" or "away from" Him αποθνεσκω but καθευδω (laid down in deep sleep) "sleeping" much like Lazarus (Greek κοιμαω "in quiet rest") who had been dead 3 days. To the Lord this young life like that of the lady with the blood condition of 14 years was not yet complete any more than His ministry until the cross.

The response to the woman's need

It would seem an impertinent act of the lady in question to tug gently at Jesus' robe as He passed in the crowd. However clamant the woman's need, because of the urgency, it is understandable that Jesus should continue His journey. But again he was teaching a lesson-that where "faith calls" He has plenty of time to spare. The lovely moment when He stopped and called the woman to respond by open confession of her healing is not just a contrast to the privy counsel given in the bedroom of Jairus' daughter-it is a further lesson on giving proper attention to those in need-and especially to completing the task of preparing the woman to be a disciple and a witness. Jesus Himself said, "Be like a soldier-my daughter!" In this the Lord was promoting the deeper relationship of faith by which this woman was encouraged to live out her relationship in likeness to Him.

The crowd is thrown out

Arriving at the home of Jairus Jesus was greeted by a loud crowd chanting and with the flute players. He first asked them to leave and then they were thrown out-maybe even by Jairus- after they scorned Jesus for his statement about the child sleeping. Jairus still held to his faith in the power of the hand of the Lord.v18. Scripture says Jesus "held her by the hand". It means "he held her powerfully κρατεω. He has the "whole world" in His sovereign power. He confirmed Jairus' faith that the hand of Jesus was a mighty hand. How near the ruler had come to understanding that it was the "very hand of God" is not clear. Perhaps that would follow when the Lord "finished" the work of redemption on the cross and the fame of it again touched this home in Capernaum.

From paper to practice

This passage teaches us that the Master was prompt to help those in perceived need. While others would scarce lift a little finger he troubled Himself and hastened to the relief of those in need. He "made them whole"-doing all things well and completing the task in hand to the pleasure of the Father. Even when on holiday in the desert he deferred to the call of the multitude

