

## WHY TROUBLE THE TEACHER?

Mark 5:21-43

The documentary “Planet of the Humans” caused quite a stir because it seemed to expose the hypocrisies of the Green Movement. The film argues that electric cars and solar energy are unreliable and rely upon fossil fuels to function. It also attacks figures including Al Gore for bolstering corporations that push flawed technologies over real solutions to the climate crisis. What makes this remarkable is that the filmmaker was not a conservative, but Michael Moore, who is very far left. Some will point out that the real solution could be found in nuclear energy, but is it worth the risks that come with that? Some people are saying that despite all the improvements in technology, eventually we have to face the fact that there are only so many resources on planet earth and we have to learn to do with less.

That is certainly something we learn as we get older. We are taught to save up for the rainy days in our lives. But even if we do not have a limit now on our energy use or our financial resources, we do have limits with our time and our own physical ability to get things done. There are now apps to show us each day how much time we have left to get things done to motivate us to accomplish those things, but there is still only so much time. And as we get older we just don’t have the energy we used to have to get all those things done. So we learn to make do with less.

That affects how we relate to God. We do not want to ask too much from God because we figure there is only so much for Him to give. So if we ask Him for something small now, we may not get the bigger thing we need later. Many Christians, and I do not mean to challenge their piety, begin prayer by saying, “Lord, we just ask You.” I am not saying that they mean it this way, but it sounds like they are saying, “We do not want to ask too much from You. If we do that we may not get what we really need. We may get greedy.” There can be that tendency to ask for what we can make up for or compensate for later or what we think we may deserve a little because we haven’t asked for too much.

That is what we see with the people who are in the house of the synagogue ruler in our Gospel lesson. The man’s daughter has been gravely ill, so word is sent to Jesus to come and help. But before Jesus gets to the house the little girl is dead. The people say to the man, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?” There is still so much pain and suffering left in the world, things that they see that Jesus can do like heal the people like the woman who touched Jesus. Why bother Jesus with something that would only seem to distract from what He can actually accomplish?

Many of us know the story of the boy who cried wolf. He cried out several times that a wolf was attacking him, but was only messing with people. When the wolf actually attacked him and he really needed help, no one did. We encounter people that can drain us—who are unable to really be friends to us and who take our time and energy to be with. Our tendency can be to try to avoid them. We certainly don’t want to be perceived that way by others. So we are

Careful to respect other peoples' time and space. That way it won't be too much for us to ask for help from them when we really need it.

That is the way we can act with God. We end up using Him as a 911 number. We don't want to bother Him with our petty concerns; we save it up for those rainy days when the doctor says it's malignant or when our children grow up alienated from us or when we stand by the graveside. We don't want to "trouble the Teacher."

Popular board games make use of "commodities" that you save up to be able to build enough points to win the game. As a player we can feel that it is so amazing that we keep picking commodities that we already have and not the ones we need. It is like saving up for retirement—no matter how much we have, there can always be ways we can see that we need more considering inflation and the uncertainty of the future.

That is the way we honestly have to look at life as humans. There is only so much and we have to do with what we have. And what really brings that to light is knowing there is only so much time before we die. No matter how many years of life we have, the gravestone is still going to show a final date.

But it is not just anyone who is going to the house of that leader of the synagogue. It is Jesus. When He hears them say, "Why trouble the Teacher?" He replies, "Do not fear; only believe." He goes on to the house, enters in with only Peter, James, and John. He then sends out all the people inside the house who were mourning the dead girl except her parents. He takes the girl by the hand and says, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." And then the girl gets up and walks! She's alive!

Jesus did what no one expected Him to do because they were humans, but He is God!

That might have been fine for people like that girl who encountered Jesus in person. But what about us today? Jesus doesn't make house calls on us when we are sick. He doesn't come into our homes or hospitals and say, "Talitha cumi."

The woman who touches Jesus and is healed certainly has had a great health problem. Her bleeding was not just any kind of bleeding, it was feminine. According to the Old Testament law a woman under those circumstances was unclean. That could be manageable because it only took place at certain times. But this woman was continually unclean. She was seen as unclean and separated from God. Jesus doesn't just heal her from her illness; far more by taking the effort to find out who she is He is able to say to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace." She is restored to a living relationship with God!

Jesus may not say to us, "Talitha cumi," but He does say, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." He wants to give us far more than healing from an illness, reduction from stress at work, or stable finances. He wants to give us nothing less than eternal life with Him.

Paul said in Romans 8, “God did not spare His only Son, but freely gave Him up for us all. How will not also with this freely give us all things?” We don’t have to worry about “troubling” God. The woman who touched Jesus was not just risking bothering Jesus, she was in danger of making Him unclean. She could have been stoned to death for what she did. But she put her faith in Jesus, not anything she had to bring to the table. And not even death was too much to handle for Jesus. He healed the girl even after everyone said she was dead.

We don’t have to “just ask” God for this or that. On our own we have no right to bother Him. But in the name of Jesus we can ask for “the moon”--nothing less than eternal life.