

OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

DUE DILIGENCE

THE INVESTMENT

NOVEMBER 15-21, 2015



MAIN POINT

Being changed by Jesus motivates us to compassionately and relentlessly invest in people who are outside the walls of the church.

THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

1. Would you say you have more relationships with people inside the church or outside the church? What circumstances (your job, family, neighborhood, friend groups, etc.) make this so?
2. In the sermon this weekend, we learned that when our values are shaped by the teachings of Jesus, we are compelled to get involved outside of the walls of the church, being salt and light in our community. Think through your weekly routine. What places and people immediately come to mind when you think about investing in non-believers? If nothing or no one comes to mind quickly, what does this tell you?

Leader: Deep relationships with other brothers and sisters in Christ are good, right, necessary, and helpful to have. Jesus modeled these relationships with His own disciples. However, Jesus also placed a strong emphasis on being with and investing in people who were outside the walls of the church. As Jesus put it, those who are well have no need of a physician, it is the sick who need the grace of the gospel (Mark 2:17). As followers of Christ, we must ask ourselves if our attitude toward the unchurched lines up with Jesus'. We have been given the gospel of grace to share that grace with others by continually and relentlessly investing in those who are outside the walls of the church.

DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 5:21-43.

3. As Jesus was getting off the boat He was approached by a ruler of a local synagogue, Jairus. What state was Jairus in when He met Jesus? What had happened to him? Share about a time when someone else's crisis gave you the opportunity to be salt and light in the world.
4. How did Jesus respond to Jairus? What does this communicate to us about the nature of Jesus' ministry?

Leader: People in crisis need to be comforted by the grace and love of God through His people. The phrase Jairus used in verse 23 to describe his daughter's condition literally means "on death's door" or "sinking fast," and he

clearly believed Jesus would be able to help him. By this time Jesus had amassed a large group of followers (vv. 21,24), yet Jairus was not one of them. That didn't matter to Jesus. At Jairus's request, Jesus took time away from the crowd to focus on the one. It is easy to spend time with people who are like us, who share our desires and values, but Jesus' mission is much larger than that and includes people who are very different than us. If we are to follow Jesus, we must make time to invest in others as He did.

5. Jesus went with Jairus immediately, yet on the way was interrupted by a woman from the crowd. Who was this woman, and what did she do to receive Jesus' healing?

6. Jesus made time to continuously invest in people who did not know Him. What are a few things that keep us from investing in the lives of people outside the walls of the church? How does Jesus' example speak to these barriers we keep up?

Leader: This woman's condition made her ritually unclean to the Jews and restricted her from entering the temple. What's more, anyone she touched would have been made unclean. It is likely this woman had not touched another person for 12 years. The fact that she touched Jesus should have made Him unclean, yet that is not what happened. Instead of making Jesus unclean, Jesus made the woman clean. This woman was in need of desperate help that she could only have received from Jesus, and she was healed by touching His garment. Jesus was on urgent business, walking to heal a child who was gravely ill, yet He took the time to minister to this woman. This scene highlights further the difference between the Pharisees (religious leaders who separated themselves from the world) and Jesus, who impacted the world by engaging in it.

7. Jesus did not let the death of Jairus's daughter stop Him from ministering to Jairus. How did Jesus show specific and intentional care for Jairus and His family? What are a few simple things we can do to show grace, love, and compassion to our non-believing friends?

Leader: When Jesus received the news Jairus's daughter had died, He dismissed the crowd and took only His closest friends and followers with Him. Mark emphasized Jesus' compassion toward Jairus and His family in these verses. Though the crowds laughed at Jesus, He invested in this family and raised their little girl from the dead. The term Jesus used to wake up Jairus's daughter is a term of endearment and further demonstrated Jesus' personal and specific care for people who were not yet His followers. Although both of the people Jesus interacted with in this scene from Mark 5 were in times of crisis, the same principles apply when we are interacting with people who need Jesus despite their successes, too. Sometimes all it takes for someone to see the goodness of Jesus is seeing His salt and light through His followers.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 4:2-6.

8. Paul challenged the church at Colossae to be mindful of their interactions with outsiders (v. 5). What does it mean to "walk in wisdom" and "be seasoned with salt" in regards to our relationships with non-Christians? What are some specific ways we do this in our daily lives?

9. These verses are part of the closing to Paul's letter to the believers in Colossae. What role does our community inside of the church play in our investing in people outside of the church? In other words, how can we help one another be salt and light in our community?

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

Leader: Our relationships with other believers should encourage us to spend time with people who are not yet believers so they may, by God's grace, enter into the same saving relationship we have with Jesus. Paul guided the church at Colossae to think about their relationships with outsiders and pay careful attention to their lives before them. Taking the time to invest in the lives of unbelievers in a genuine way is often all it takes to see those "outsiders" become "insiders" into the community of faith. Remind your group about the community Christmas meal and Phil Callaway's "Laugh Again Christmas," two upcoming events that give us great opportunities to bring people to church who might not otherwise come.

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

10. From the two texts we discussed today and the parables in the sermon this weekend, what have you learned about how to invest in the lives of people around you in an effort to help connect them to Jesus? How might you change to do this?

11. Share with the group the names of one or two of your unchurched friends. Spend the rest of your time together praying over these individuals and your interaction with these friends over the coming week. Use Paul's specific prayer request in Colossians 4:2-6 as a guide.

Leader: Lead your group in prayer using Colossians 4:2-6 as a guide. Ask God to open doors for you to share the gospel message with the specific people mentioned by your group members (v. 3). Pray for the ability to share the gospel clearly and for wisdom in the way you act toward outsiders (vv. 2-5). Pray that we would be people who make the most of every opportunity for sharing the gospel that comes our way (v. 5). Finally, ask God to make your conversations full of grace and seasoned with salt so that you can help point people to Jesus.

PRAYER

Close by praising God for His investment in you. Pray that your relationship with Jesus would cause you to continuously share His grace with others through your everyday interactions with people who do not know Him. Ask that your investment in these people and places would result in individuals coming to know Jesus.

FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following:

- ☐ Questions to consider as they continue to reflect on what they learned this week:
 - **Who is one unbelieving friend you can invest in this week?**
 - **Who can you pray for this week as they invest in a friend outside the faith?**
 - **What is one step you can take to build a relationship with someone outside of the church?**
- ☐ A note of encouragement, following up on any specific prayer requests mentioned during your group gathering.
- ☐ The challenge to memorize Colossians 4:5.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE**MARK 5:21-43.**

5:21. Jesus and His disciples crossed back across Lake Galilee, probably returning to Capernaum, Jesus' base of ministry. Note the contrast between two different shores of the lake. Crowds were gathered on both shores. One group urged Jesus to leave, while the other welcomed Him.

5:22-24. Jairus was a synagogue ruler. This was a respected and honored position in the community. He did not serve as a priest, but it was his responsibility to take care of the administrative details of the synagogue. This included making arrangements for public worship and inviting visitors to teach. Despite his high position, Jairus cast his dignity aside and bowed at the feet of Jesus. His twelve-year-old daughter was dying. Note Jairus's description of her as his little daughter. A twelve-year-old is not "little." However, this shows how precious she was to him. Jairus knew that if Jesus would come and touch his daughter, she would live. Jesus needed no convincing. He went with Jairus, and the crowds followed.

5:25-26. Among the people in the crowd was a woman who had a hemorrhage for 12 years. Mark included vivid details regarding the woman's suffering. She had endured much at the hands of many physicians. During those years of suffering, she had gone from doctor to doctor trying their remedies until finally she had spent all her assets. Luke, a doctor himself, commented regarding the woman that she "could not be healed by anyone" (Luke 8:43). Mark stated that not only was she not helped at all, but rather she had grown worse. Various doctors and treatments had been tried to no avail. Nothing had helped this woman. Her condition was deteriorating. Jesus' power, however, extends beyond human limitations.

5:27. The woman had heard reports about Jesus' ability to heal and believed He could help her. She pushed her way through the crowd and came up behind Him. Perhaps her ceremonial uncleanness caused her to approach Jesus in such a manner. Perhaps she was too embarrassed to come to Him and acknowledge the nature of her illness before a crowd. Since she did not want to attract attention, she touched lightly the fringe of His cloak, or outer garment (see Matt. 9:20; Luke 8:44).

5:28-29. The woman's faith seemed to be mixed with superstition. She apparently shared the idea, common in her day, that the power of a person extended to articles of clothing the person wore or carried (see Mark 6:56; Acts 19:11-12) or to the person's shadow (Acts 5:15-16). The climax that has been building since verse 25 is finally reached with touched. The woman fulfilled her intent to reach out and touch Jesus. His robe is clarified in Matt. 9:20 and Luke 8:44 as "the tassel." Many Jews wore tassels on the corners of their outer garments (Num. 15:38-39; Deut. 22:12).

5:30-33. Jesus rewarded the woman's faith by healing her immediately. The bleeding stopped, and she felt a wholeness in her body assuring her that she was healed. Jesus knew immediately that healing energy had gone out of Him for someone's benefit. He asked, "Who touched My garments?" (Mark 5:30). Because of the huge crowd pressing all about Jesus, the question seemed pointless to the disciples (v. 31). Jesus, however, kept looking around to find who had touched Him (v. 32). The woman realized "that she had not escaped notice" (Luke 8:47). Trembling with fear, she came forward, fell down before Jesus, and "told Him the whole truth" (Mark 5:33). She acted with courage. Jesus rewarded the woman graciously, calling her "daughter" to show His loving concern.

5:34. Jesus pronounced God's peace on this woman (v. 34). The biblical concept of peace is that of wholeness and well-being. Such peace does not indicate absence of war or other problems. Peace that comes as God's gift can be experienced even in the midst of conflict. God's gift of peace comes only when we have entered into a right relationship with Him. Only here did Jesus address someone as daughter. It reassured the trembling woman. Your faith has made you well recalls the healing of the paralytic in 2:5 and anticipates 10:52. Jesus used the word affliction (v. 29) to assure the woman that her cure was permanent.

5:35-36. We now return to Jairus and his daughter. Even while Jesus was speaking to the woman He had just healed, men came up to Jairus and told him his daughter had died. Jesus, who knew what he was about to do, comforted and encouraged Jairus. He told him to just believe. The Greek denotes continued action. Jesus was asking Jairus for more than a single act of belief. He was telling him to have a continuous, steady, ongoing

faith—a “no-matter-what” type of faith, the type all Christians are called to exhibit.

5:37. Jesus took with Him the inner circle of the twelve apostles to see Jairus’s daughter. These three—Peter, John, and James—are also mentioned at the Transfiguration and in Gethsemane. These were important events that revealed something of Jesus’ nature.

5:38. When Jesus arrived upon the scene, the professional mourners were already there. Mourning customs among the Jews included wailers, flute players, the rending of clothes, and the tearing of hair. Even the poorest person was required to hire at least one mourner and two flute players. Since Jairus was a synagogue ruler, there were probably several of these mourners on the scene when Jesus arrived.

5:39. The word asleep can sometimes mean “dead.” Jesus used the same word of Lazarus in John 11. We often speak euphemistically of death as “sleep,” “resting,” or “passing on.” These words point to a deeper spiritual meaning—that death is not permanent. Jesus, however, in His statement to those gathered, was clearly saying that the girl was asleep.

5:40. The mourners’ laughter at this point seems out of place. If they were truly grieving and expressing concern for the family, we would expect them to be angry or outraged over the hurt being done to the family. But they laughed. It was the laugh of unbelief, and this unbelief kept them from witnessing Jesus’ great miracle. He ordered them all out of the house. Jesus never performed for the unbelieving crowds. The only ones who would witness this miracle were three of His disciples, Jairus, and Jairus’s wife.

5:41. In another blow to the purity laws, Jesus took the dead girl’s hand. He was not concerned with ritual defilement. With his touch, all that defiles is gone. Mark’s Gospel is the only one that uses these Aramaic words. This is probably because this account of Jesus’ miracle came directly to Mark from the apostle Peter. Peter was impressed with Jesus’ tenderness, His lack of concern about the purity laws, and His power.

5:42-43. Jesus, who had already proved His authority over disease and demons, now proved His authority over death. Immediately, the girl’s life was restored. Jesus told those gathered not to tell anyone. He was again in Jewish territory where His messiahship could be easily misconstrued and misunderstood. He told the girl’s parents to give her something to eat. Jesus is concerned about the physical dimension of our lives.

COLOSSIANS 4:2-6.

Paul ended his epistle as he opened it, urging his readers to prayer. The structure of these verses resembles the opening prayers of the epistles. The only direct statement in these verses is, “Devote yourselves to prayer.” The command to pray concerned general watchfulness and Paul’s ministry. Paul hoped for an open door to be faithful to his calling and for clarity in communicating the message. In other epistles, Paul said, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17) or its equivalent. The same general tone occurs here. The specific word translated “devote yourselves” means “to persist in.” Though the word is different, the meaning is the same. Prayer was to characterize the Colossian church.

Paul requested that they pray for an open door for the gospel (4:3). Paul always sought ways to communicate the gospel. In these verses, Paul disclosed the reason for his success in witness as well as the reason he hoped to speak. His success was because he looked to the Lord to supply the wisdom for the opportunity. They were to pray that he would find an open door. The apostle lived for such opportunities that were often the redeeming virtues of his circumstances. He knew, however, that God provided these doors of ministry.

Paul asked for ability to walk through such doors as would open. Consistently in Colossians, the term “manifest” refers to revealing what is hidden (3:4). Paul looked for new situations in which he could make the gospel known. On the one hand, Paul did not pray specifically for a “preaching point,” as though that were the only approved means of spreading the gospel. On the other hand, v. 3 makes clear that Paul thought it imperative to speak the word. He hoped, therefore, for an oral ministry. He hoped further that he would do justice to the nature of the gospel so that the witness would be clear.

Having discussed a door of opportunity in ministry, Paul turned his thoughts to wise conduct. The verb used, which is translated “be wise in the way you act,” occurs frequently to identify proper conduct. Generally,

translators use some form of the word “walk.” Wisdom provides a proper environment for the Christian’s walk. The theme of wisdom occurs frequently in this epistle, and that probably reflects a major concern of the false teachers as well. Literally, Paul said, “In wisdom be walking.” Thus godly wisdom encompasses the life, as well as the words. At the beginning of the epistle, Paul prayed for the Colossians to know wisdom; here he prayed for them to live it. The phrase “making the most” comes from a verb meaning “to buy up,” as if finding a bargain. Here it conveys the idea of making the most of one’s time spent with unbelievers.

Wisdom was necessary because of their Christian testimony. The “ones outside” needed examples of God’s wisdom. Paul’s concern was the non-Christians’ response to the gospel and the attitude of Christians toward them. Divine wisdom results in a positive witness.