

JESUS: THE SERVANT AT WORK

VOLUME ONE

STUDY SEVENTEEN

Raising a Daughter from Death

Mark 5:21–24, 35–43

You're waiting. I'm waiting. The situation is getting impossible. Now it's getting exciting. Because, remember, impossibilities are God's specialty.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

FEW distresses in life can compare to the anguish of seeing one of our children on a sickbed. Our concerns rapidly give way to desperation when vital signs become unstable, and our precious one's health condition turns critical. We'll go anywhere, talk to anyone, try any remedy, and give up anything for our child to *be well again*.

Facing impossible situations like this one feels like groping in a dark room. We hope for relief, but no relief comes. We try every cure. We pray for a miracle. But every door is bolted shut. Even for us who believe and proclaim God's power, when circumstances deteriorate and we run out of options, we cry out in fear. The candle of our faith begins to flicker as panic and hopelessness settle in our hearts.

In the passage for this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll feel the heartbeat of a dad when his one and only daughter faced an enemy that no human being has conquered: death. We'll let the Holy Spirit teach us that impossibilities are never an annoyance to our Lord, but rather *they are platforms on which He does His best work*.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

*"I will answer them before they even call to me.
While they are still talking about their needs,
I will go ahead and answer their prayers!" (Isaiah 65:24)*



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Chuck's message.



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

Raising a Daughter from Death

Mark 5:21–24, 35–43

Recognize God’s readiness to hear your voice. Seize His willingness to work on your behalf even before you express any of your concerns. Engage in a dialogue of faith and praise as you seek His help for this Bible study exploring Jesus’ power over death.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Everyone knows about death’s inexorable pull and dreads its dark unknown. In his commentary, *Insights on Mark*, Pastor Chuck explains that death wasn’t in God’s design for humanity:

Death is Satan’s ultimate affront to God’s original creative act. Our Creator didn’t make us in His image only to have us endure diseases, fall victim to disasters, suffer death, and then rot in the ground. . . . The world fell victim to evil—disease, disasters, death and decay—when Satan enticed the first humans to sin (Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12).¹

Death means separation. Physical death occurs when the spirit and soul separate from the body. This scene from Mark’s gospel depicts a couple’s desperation as their only child became deathly ill and they feared losing her.

Jairus, the girl’s father, was a man of high position as a synagogue official. But death is no respecter of persons or position. His good standing, his success, and his money were all powerless to stem the tide of darkness that was slowly creeping over his only daughter. Jairus was desperate to find help for his daughter, and when Jesus arrived, he knew what he must do.



Observation: Jesus Raises a Daughter from Death

Observe [Mark 5:21–24, 35–43](#) by reading it a few times in different versions.² Feel the urgency of the father to reach Jesus before it was too late. Put yourself in his place as his heart beat wildly in his chest when he frantically approached Jesus. Let’s see what this distressed father did and how Jesus compassionately responded.

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The Setting of Two Stories—Mark 5:21

Jesus had just returned to the Capernaum shore from the Decapolis—where He had healed the raging demoniac after calming the tempestuous sea. What details does Mark 5:21 provide regarding this setting?

And in that crowd was that father who had watched Jesus but no doubt never met Him. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The Response of a Desperate Father—Mark 5:22–24

Having left his very sick child at home, Jairus inched his way through the crowd to see Jesus. How did Mark describe Jairus' posture, words, and desperation in Mark 5:22–24? What did Jesus do? What did He not do?

He didn't make the man promise anything. He didn't bargain with him. He didn't ask for or expect any remuneration. He didn't ask the father to bring her there. No, no, none of that. Jesus, without a word, put His hand on the man's shoulder and they walked away into the crowd, making their way to the little home where the daughter was. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The News of a Daughter's Death—Mark 5:35–36

On their way, Jesus stopped to address the faith of a sick woman—we'll look closer at this encounter in our next study. Suddenly, the unthinkable happened in Mark 5:35–36! Jairus turned and saw messengers. What news did they bring him, and what was their tone? What did Jesus say to Jairus when He overheard Jairus' news?

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The Miracle of the Master's Touch—Mark 5:37–43

What did Jesus do when He came to Jairus' house? What happened as He touched the cold, limp hand of the dead little girl and spoke to her in her native Aramaic language, “*Talitha koum!*” which means, “Little girl, get up!”

Mark doesn't mention this, but Dr. Luke does in his account in chapter 8. He says, “The spirit returned to her.” The eyes open and the light flashes and the skin color changes. And she stands up. Can you imagine the mother and the daddy at that moment? Phew! Wow! —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Jesus' Power over Death

We see Jairus' desperation as his only daughter's health deteriorates. Luke the physician emphasizes that she was his “one and only” child by using the Greek term *monogenes* (Luke 8:42). Read [Mark 5:21–24](#) in the MSG and J. B. Phillips translations. Now reimagine the interruption in 5:25. Read this article at gotquestions.org titled “Why Is Waiting on God So Difficult?” How does this unexpected delay increase Jairus' desperation?

Jairus is scared. “Don't keep talking to this woman while my daughter is dying. Come on! Come on!” And He stays with the woman until this issue of blood is healed and resolved. Obviously, the Lord is never late. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

When Jesus overheard them telling Jairus that his daughter was dead, He said to him, “Don't be afraid. Just have faith” (Mark 5:36). Knowing that people don't recover from death, explain the significance of these words from the lips of Jesus, God in the flesh.

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“Get rid of what they’re telling you. Put it out of your mind. I am the great ‘I AM.’ I was there when there was nothing.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Jesus touched the lifeless hand of the little girl, which should have rendered Him ritually unclean but did not, and He raised her. Explore Jesus’ power in the article “*Omnipotence*” in the *Encyclopedia of the Bible* at biblegateway.com. How does this article deepen your understanding of Jesus’ omnipotence, particularly His power over death?

Jairus, you’re standing by the Giver of life. No fear, only believe.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Trusting the God Who Has Power over Death

Imagine an opportunity to interview Abraham and Sarah as well as Jairus (*Genesis 15:1–6; 16:1–6; 18:10–15; Mark 5:21–24, 35–43*). What would their life stories teach us about God’s timing and delays, and about waiting and trusting Him? What other accounts in Scripture demonstrate that God is trustworthy and His timing perfect?

I realize He’s not on our timetable. I’ve noticed that He never cares what the time is on my wrist. He just doesn’t care. I remind Him on occasion. But He doesn’t listen to the chime of the grandfather clock in our entrance at our home. He has His own timepiece. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Compare our passage with *John 1:1–5, 14–18; 11:13–40; Colossians 1:15–18*. What do all these passages teach about Jesus’ omnipotence? How do they help believers replace their fears of death’s dark room with faith in Jesus, whose life brought light to us?

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During His earthly ministry, Jesus raised people from death. But ultimately, they died physically again. Passages such as [John 5:24–25](#); [1 Corinthians 15:54–57](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:16–17](#) teach us that believers have passed from spiritual death to eternal life and promise us victory over physical death one day by the resurrection of our bodies. How can these eternal truths encourage our hearts during grief?

All things were made by Him. That's Jesus. That's God in the flesh.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Trust the God Who Has Power over Death!

Pastor Chuck shares with us three practical ways we can tie this story to our lives. First, *for humility to displace skepticism, we often must reach the point of desperation*. What past or current situations challenged your faith in God's power? How did desperation breed humility?

Many college professors strut around their rooms spouting all kinds of skeptical comments regarding the faith because they've not reached a point of desperation in their own lives. When they do, it's amazing how many of them are humbled.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Second, *for trust to eclipse our panic, we must learn the value of delay*. In the process of waiting and waiting and waiting, what or whom has the Lord asked you to relinquish to Him? Why not take time to do that in prayer?

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Are you worried over one of your children? Over time, you will learn not to worry. You'll find, bit by bit, year by year, ultimately God is in charge, even if that child is now grown. Are you worried about your friends who are still lost? Not to worry. God sets the hounds of heaven after them. God is at work. You just live your life. Trust God. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Third, *for faith to replace our fears, we must steer clear of the naysayers.* Think of the way God has used some friendships in your life to strengthen your faith. How can you use the timeless truths from this Bible passage to encourage a friend who feels Jairus' desperation?



A FINAL PRAYER

Don't think that you have to voice every need in a special, carefully worded prayer. He knows your need. Just the simple four-letter word, *help*, is all that's necessary. "Help, Lord. Help me." Or "Father, it's come to the point of impossibility. I've not only run out of can-do, I've begun to run out of want-to. I leave it with You."

ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Mark*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary, vol. 2 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 133.
2. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](https://www.insight.org/how-does-pastor-chuck-swindoll-study-the-bible)" at [insight.org](https://www.insight.org).

For the 2026 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2010, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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