

Luke 8:41

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

Analysis

And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house. The name Jairus (Iairos, Ἰάϊρος) derives from Hebrew Ya'ir (יָאִיר), meaning "he will enlighten" or "he gives light"—profoundly ironic given that this man would encounter the Light of the World in his darkest hour. As archisunagōgos (ἀρχισυνάγωγος, "ruler of the synagogue"), Jairus held significant religious authority, overseeing worship services, maintaining the building, and selecting teachers—including deciding whether itinerant rabbis could address the congregation.

His act of falling at Jesus' feet (pesōn para tous podas Iēsou, πεσὼν παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Ἰησοῦ) demonstrates desperate humility. For a synagogue ruler to publicly prostrate before Jesus—whose orthodoxy many religious leaders questioned—required setting aside pride, reputation, and position. The verb parekalei (παρεκάλει, "besought") uses imperfect tense, indicating persistent, urgent pleading. Jairus wasn't making a casual request but desperately begging Jesus to come.

His invitation "that he would come into his house" (eiselthein eis ton oikon autou, εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ) carries profound significance. Inviting Jesus home meant public association with a controversial figure, potentially jeopardizing Jairus' position. Yet paternal love overcame all other considerations. Desperate

need drives us to Jesus regardless of cost—a pattern seen throughout the Gospels where crisis births authentic faith.

Historical Context

Synagogue rulers occupied positions of high respect in first-century Jewish communities. They weren't necessarily scholars or rabbis but administrative leaders responsible for synagogue operations, service order, and speaker selection. The position typically went to wealthy, influential community members. Jairus' status made his public plea before Jesus especially remarkable and costly.

By this point in Jesus' ministry, tensions with religious leadership were escalating. Pharisees and scribes accused Jesus of blasphemy (Luke 5:21), associating with sinners (Luke 5:30), and violating Sabbath traditions (Luke 6:2, 7). For a synagogue ruler to publicly seek Jesus' help risked professional censure and social alienation. Jairus' willingness to humble himself demonstrates how parental love for a dying child transcends all other concerns.

The synagogue system represented the center of Jewish community life in towns lacking temple access. Rulers wielded considerable influence over religious education, community gatherings, and social standing. Jairus' desperate faith would soon be tested further when news arrived that his daughter had died (v. 49), requiring him to trust Jesus beyond what seemed possible.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does Jairus' willingness to risk his reputation and position reveal about the nature of desperate, authentic faith?

2. How does pride or concern about others' opinions prevent us from coming to Jesus in our moments of greatest need?
3. What does this synagogue ruler's humble approach to Jesus teach about the relationship between religious position and genuine faith?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἰδοῦ,	ἦλθεν	ἄνθρωπος	ὃς	ὄνομα	Ἰάειρος,	καὶ	αὐτοῦ
And	behold	there came	a man	named		Jairus	And	he
G2532	G2400	G2064	G435	G3739	G3686	G2383	G2532	G846
ἄρχων	τῆς	συναγωγῆς	ὑπῆρχεν	καὶ	πεσὼν	παρὰ	τοὺς	
a ruler		of the synagogue	was	And	he fell down	at		
G758	G3588	G4864	G5225	G2532	G4098	G3844	G3588	
πόδας	τοῦ	Ἰησοῦ	παρεκάλει	αὐτοῦ	εἰσελθεῖν	εἰς		
feet		Jesus	and besought	he	that he would come	into		
G4228	G3588	G2424	G3870	G846	G1525	G1519		
τὸν	οἶκον	αὐτοῦ						
	house	he						
G3588	G3624	G846						

Additional Cross-References

Acts 13:15 (Parallel theme): And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

Acts 18:8 (Parallel theme): And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

Luke 13:14 (References Jesus): And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

Luke 8:49 (Parallel theme): While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

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