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## Suffering Many Things

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And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years,  
and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent  
all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,  
. . . (Mark 5:25–26).

[The following paper was a plenary address at the Jerusalem Bible Conference.]

You may have read about the experience of Ellen Dipenaar, a dedicated Christian who lived in South Africa several years ago, who came down with leprosy and was sent to a leprosarium. While she was receiving treatment, her only son died of polio, her husband succumbed to cancer, and her sister died in a car accident. As if this was not enough, she discovered that growths on her legs were gangrenous, a condition that led to amputation. Saddest of all, when her doctor prescribed eye-drops, the nurse who administered the medication made a serious mistake: instead of eye-drops, she administered acid—a mistake that led to Ellen’s blindness!

**Crucial Questions.** I think of many faithful Seventh-day Adventists around the world who are “suffering many things” on account of their faith. *Why is it that sometimes when one makes a commitment to be faithful to Christ, one’s situation goes from bad to worse?*

I think of Adventists who are in prison, or who have lost their jobs because they would not compromise their biblical convictions through Sabbath work, lying, or fighting in their tribes’ or nations’ wars. I think of Adventist refugees who are starving to death in troubled regions of the world because they will not eat unclean foods, sometimes the only available provision to keep themselves alive. I think of Adventists who have been disowned by their families, divorced by their spouses, and killed by their neighbors because of their religious convictions.

*Where is God when His children “suffer many things”? What should Christians do when, after taking a stand for God, things go from bad to worse? A par-*

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tial answer to these perplexing questions may be found in Mark 5. This chapter in the gospel of Mark may well be described as a chapter of sorrows.

**Mark 5: A Chapter of Sorrows**

Mark 5 begins with the painful account of a man living in a tomb, possessed by evil spirits. Another man emerges from his house broken-hearted because his only daughter is seriously ill. Then we are told of a woman who, for twelve years, has been slowly bleeding to death. Finally, we are taken into a home where a young girl lies dead.

Mark 5 is a chapter of sorrows, describing individuals who are “suffering many things”—demon possession; sudden, acute illness; chronic, incurable illness; poverty; ridicule and scorn; and death.

We will focus on verses 21 to 43. In this passage, the account of the woman with an issue of blood is intricately woven together with Jairus’s experience.

**Structure of Mark 5:21-43.** The passage divides into three distinct parts:

Part I (vs. 21-24) begins on a note of urgency, with an emergency in the house of Jairus, who comes to Jesus, asking Him to heal his dying daughter (cf. Luke 8:42—“only” daughter). Jesus responds immediately. As He heads towards the home of Jairus, a large crowd goes with Him.

Part II (vs. 25-34) opens abruptly with a shift from the emergency situation of Jairus to an anonymous woman with an issue of blood. Her arrival on the scene causes a delay in the journey to the home of Jairus. For twelve years this woman has unsuccessfully tried everything. Finally, she decides to go to Jesus by pressing through the crowd and touching the hem of His garment. Just then, Jesus asks what seems to the disciples to be a rather ridiculous question: “Who touched my clothes?” At Christ’s persistence, the woman confesses what has happened, and Jesus encourages her to go home in peace.

In Part III (vs. 35-43) the narrative shifts back to Jairus. Messengers from his house arrive with the bad news of the child’s death. Jesus ignores the news, urges Jairus to have faith, and goes to his home with Peter, James and John. Despite the scorn and ridicule of professional mourners, Jesus raises the dead child back to life and charges the parents not to publicize the miracle.

We see that the passage focuses on Jairus, shifts to the woman, and finally moves back to Jairus. It sandwiches one story (the woman’s) within another story (Jairus’s). Inasmuch as the passage begins and concludes with Jairus, we can say that Jairus is the principal focus of the entire passage. However, the key to understanding his story lies in the story of the woman with an issue of blood. This “Story Within the Story” offers valuable lessons on what we must do when, after taking a stand for Jesus, our situations go from bad to worse.

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**A Closer Look at “The Story Within the Story”**

A casual reading of Mark 5:21-43 reveals some general parallels between the two stories of Jairus and the woman: both have desperate needs; both go to Jesus for help; and both are helped by Jesus. However, when we study the two accounts more closely, we discover some interesting contrasts:

1. *Names.* Whereas Jairus is identified by name, the woman’s name is not given; she is simply identified as “a certain woman” (v. 25). Thus, we have a prominent, well-known person and an anonymous, unknown individual.

2. *Condition.* The woman’s condition may be described as chronic (she has battled an incurable illness for twelve years). On the other hand, Jairus’s daughter’s situation is acute (a sudden terminal illness that will soon lead to her death).

3. *Time/Duration.* The woman has suffered in her condition for twelve years. This is also the age of Jairus’s daughter (we are told that “she was of the age of twelve years,” v. 42). In other words, the year in which the child is born is the exact year in which the woman begins bleeding! Thus, while Jairus’s daughter experiences twelve years of vitality and health, the woman suffers twelve years of continuous dying. Jairus experiences twelve years of joy and hope; the woman suffers twelve years of deterioration and despair.

4. *Religious Status.* Jairus is a ruler of the synagogue. But the woman, because of her issue of blood, would be an outcast of the synagogue, for according to Leviticus 15:25-33 and Numbers 4, the woman’s condition makes her unclean, and any contact with others makes them too unclean.

5. *Social/Economic status.* The woman is economically handicapped, having spent all that she has on many physicians. But Jairus is a man of means, with servants and social respectability.

6. *Options.* For the woman, Jesus is the *last* resort. She has unsuccessfully tried other remedies and options. But apparently, for Jairus, Jesus is His *first* choice; he goes straight to Jesus when his child takes ill.

7. *Advocate.* The woman has no one to plead her case with Jesus, so she has to go herself. Jairus serves as a mouthpiece to plead the case for his daughter.

8. *Manner of Coming.* The woman comes to Jesus secretly, anonymously. But Jairus comes to Jesus publicly and openly.

9. *Direction of Approach.* The woman approaches Jesus from behind (v. 27), falling later at His feet at the end of her encounter with Him. On the other hand, Jairus comes to Jesus face to face, falling at Jesus feet at the beginning of his encounter.

10. *Result of Delay.* Because of Jesus’s delay in going to Jairus’s home, the woman is healed. But because of the delay, Jairus’s daughter dies.

11. *Word from Jesus.* Jesus speaks to the woman only after the *good* news of her healing. But He speaks to Jairus in the text only after the *bad* news of the child’s death.

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12. *Testimonies.* Though the woman comes to Jesus secretly, her healing is made public. On the other hand, though Jairus comes publicly to Jesus, the healing of his child is to be kept secret (v. 43).

The above differences and similarities in the two stories help us understand why Mark sandwiches the story of the woman within that of Jairus. Later we will return to consider the significance of the differences. Now we will focus on Jairus.

### **The Trial of Jairus Faith**

Jairus exercises great faith when he comes publicly to Jesus, an unpopular decision that could cost him his job as a ruler of the synagogue. He could come to Jesus secretly like the woman or like Nicodemus, another ruler of the synagogue (John 3). But Jairus takes a stand for the Man of Galilee. He recognizes that the Man who associates with sinners and tax collectors is none other than the Messiah.

Jairus has come to a point in his life where nothing, not even his social standing, job, or wealth, matters to him more than one simple fact: his child is dying. Only a Savior can save her. Every other earthly consideration pales into insignificance. Thus, he makes a costly decision for Christ. He *does* right because it *is* right and leaves the consequences to God. And God always honors those who take a stand with Him, regardless of foreboding circumstances.

Christ rewards this faith by immediately setting out to Jairus's house. But since every true faith requires public testing, Jairus's faith is also tried. Notice how Jesus allows Jairus's faith to be tested.

**Delay by the crowd.** Jesus is on a life and death errand—an emergency situation in Jairus's home—and the crowd impedes his movement. Jesus could drive away the throng that surrounds him (v. 21). But He chooses not to do so. Later on, when the child dies, Christ sends away the crowd (cf. v. 37). But now, when we expect Him to do something about the crowd which is jostling and obstructing His movement, Christ does nothing about it!

Can you imagine the driver of an ambulance caught in traffic and yet refusing to sound his sirens? Can you imagine how Jairus feels when the crowd delays the movement of Jesus to his home?

*Why does the Lord often delay when we trust Him with our urgent cases?*

**Silence of Jesus.** Jairus experiences another trial. Notice that besides not asking the crowd to give way, Jesus also does not speak a word of encouragement to Jairus, assuring him that all will be well. Instead, Jesus allows his movement to be interrupted by the woman (v.25-34).

*Why does the Lord often allow our cherished plans to be interrupted? Why does the Lord speak to others, but not to Jairus? Why does He sometimes seem to care about others, while appearing indifferent to our plight? And worse still, why does Jesus stop and ask a seemingly pointless question: "Who touched my clothes?" (v. 30)?*

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To the disciples this is not logical, since Jesus has been jostled and touched by a host of individuals (v.31). The fact, however, remains that what Jesus says may not always be logical to our rational minds. It is illogical to insist that we should never lie, steal, kill, or break any of God's Ten Commandments to save life. The Christian does not always operate on human logic, but faith in God and His Word. We are urged: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov 3:5, 6).

But the question still remains: *Why is it that when we put our trust in the Lord He sometimes allows our plans to be interrupted? Why does the Lord seem silent to us when, at the same time, He appears to pay attention to others? Why does He call on others while He appears to pass us by?*

To Jairus, the delay by the crowd, the interruption by the woman, and Christ's silence and stopping is a real trial of his faith. I can imagine Jairus saying to himself: "Master, if we continue delaying my child will die! Our immediate mission is to assist a dying girl. Why are you concerned about the insignificant question about who touched your clothes? Further delay will be catastrophic."

But Jesus still delays.

**Further Delay by the Woman.** Jesus looks in the direction of the woman and speaks to her (v. 32, 34), but not a word to Jairus. Can you imagine what is going through Jairus's mind? I can hear him saying to himself: "Lord, this woman's situation is chronic, not an emergency like mine!"

In verse 33 we read that, "in fear and trembling," the woman falls at Christ feet and tells all. She is afraid because: she has broken the rules of the Torah (God's law) regarding ritual uncleanness, and by touching Jesus, she fears, she has made Him ritually unclean (Num 5:1-4; cf. Lev 15:25ff.). Even worse, she is asked to acknowledge her uncleanness in the presence of a leader of her local synagogue. Besides the courage such a step would involve, Jesus is asking her to do something humiliating: talk about her problem in front of men. It is one thing for a woman to discuss this kind of problem with other women; it is another to declare the uncleanness before a large crowd, including the disciples of Christ and the ruler of the synagogue.

Meanwhile, as the woman tells "all the truth" (v. 33), Jairus waits impatiently. Can you imagine what telling "all the truth" (v. 33) entailed? I can hear the woman saying to Jesus:

Master, when my problem started, I thought it was my normal monthly period. But this prolonged beyond the regular time. Therefore, I consulted with my family doctor, who also referred me to some brilliant Jewish specialists in a leading Tel-Aviv hospital. When the specialists were unable to do anything about the situation, I was encouraged to try some alternative or non-traditional (read as New Age) medicine—acupuncture, hypnotism, yoga, biofeedback, homeopathy, massage therapy, therapeutic

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touch, etc. These were no help either. Then I heard that I should go and swim in the Dead Sea. I tried it, but it didn't work. Some friends of mine also urged me to try some African and Indian herbs. These helped a little bit. But I soon realized the situation was getting worse. Then I was told by some TV evangelist that by touching the TV screen the demons causing my ailment would be cast out. Master, I even sent a thanks offering ("seed of faith money") to the televangelist. But it did not help. My health insurance has been cancelled; I have exhausted my entire pension and social security funds; I am currently on welfare and food stamps.

The Bible simply says that the woman "came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth." While she tells "all the truth," Jairus is seemingly ignored by Christ. Jesus

patiently listens and gives encouragement to the woman: "Daughter, your faith [not your superstitious touch of my garment] has saved you; go in peace." But not a word to Jairus.

**From Bad to Worse.** Just then messengers from Jairus's home arrive with bad news: "Thy daughter is dead" (v. 35). We can imagine Jairus saying to himself: "I told You so! I knew that with all these delays, it would come to this."

Have you ever heard those words?

"Your loved one is dead!"

"Your job is ended!"

"Your career is over!"

"Your future is hopeless!"

"Your marriage is over!"

"Your cancer is terminal!"

Often, these cruel words come when you've just committed or rededicated your life to Christ. The verdict is announced when you're trying to do what is right, such as getting out of an immoral relationship, or returning a faithful tithe.

*Why is it that when you are trying to do the right thing, things go from bad to worse?* You do your best to honor God's Sabbath, only to lose your job; you try to do God's will and your husband threatens divorce; you try to tell the truth under dire circumstances and you are fired from your job.

Have you ever experienced that? Have you ever been told: "Yours is a hopeless case. Don't waste Christ's time"? Jairus experiences this when he is told: "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Master."

**More Trials.** But Christ's words and actions after the bad news may test the faith of Jairus even more. Observe that when the situation becomes hopeless, Jesus speaks some strange words to Jairus: "Be not afraid . . . only believe [i.e. keep on believing]" (v. 36).

To us, this may sound hopeful, but we know how the story ends. Think of how it sounds to Jairus to be told, "Be not afraid." Afraid? What is there to fear

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now? The worst has occurred. And believe? What is there to believe? The girl is dead!

Someone has said that whenever God says, “Don’t be afraid,” it is time to start worrying, because He is about to ask you to do the impossible (think of Abraham, Moses, Gideon, Jeremiah, Mary).

But *whenever Jesus says “Be not afraid,” that command is also a promise.* It is estimated that there are some 365 “Fear Nots” in the Bible—at least one for each day’s need. Therefore, when we’re told, “It is finished,” Jesus says, “Fear not. It is the beginning.” When we’re told, “I’m sorry, that’s the end,” Jesus says “Fear not. It’s not the end; it is to be continued.”

The real question for us to answer is: Do we trust God enough to believe in His word? Do we believe that He knows what is best? Do we believe He has power to save—even in difficult situations?

Those words of Jesus, “Be not afraid . . . only believe,” are calculated to encourage Jairus so he does not give up. For just then, Jesus does another strange thing: He drives away the crowd, save Peter, James, and John. Why does he now send away the crowd? Why does He choose to do so now that all is lost? Why hasn’t Christ sent away the crowd earlier, when there was hope for the child’s healing?

Perhaps Jesus is teaching Jairus that God’s ways are not our ways. His timing is always the best. All we have to do at all times is to trust Him.

**Trials at Home.** The trial of Jairus is not over when he nears home (v. 38-40). He is greeted by the weeping of mourners, confirming that indeed, the child is dead. What will Jesus do now that the situation has gone from bad to worse?

Speaking to Jairus, whose faith is then wavering, Jesus declares that the child is not dead but only sleeping. You see, though death is the most hopeless condition in this life, Jesus calls it “sleep.” And if death is simply “sleep,” then there is hope for the most hopeless situation. That’s why we are to be “faithful unto death.” And this is why we must not attempt to save our jobs, positions, or even our lives at the cost of our obedience to the One who calls death merely sleep.

But Jairus’s faith is to be tried one last time. At the words of Jesus that the child is not dead but asleep, the mourners stop their weeping and laugh Him to scorn. Their ridicule is not so much directed at Christ as it is at Jairus. The funeral professionals seemed to say: “What does this man think? Doesn’t he know the difference between death and sleep? And, you Jairus, is this the kind of person on whom you are willing to stake your career and child’s life?”

Have you ever experienced ridicule, derision, or scorn on account of your faith? Have you experienced ridicule from the experts, the specialists, family, friends, church members—people who should know better? And have you ever wondered why the wicked mock the righteous? Jairus goes through that experience. Perhaps he asks: *Why does the Lord delay in times of emergency? Why*

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*does He keep silent when His children need to hear from Him? Why does He allow other people to interrupt the plans of His children? Why does the Lord allow things to go from bad to worse? And why does He permit enemies to subject His children to scorn and ridicule?*

### **Reward of Faith**

The Good News is that in all such trials, Jesus is always very near. If we remain faithful He will honor our faith—even as He does for Jairus. For in verse 41, we are told that the One who once stood at Lazarus' tomb and said "Come forth" now goes to Jairus's daughter's room, takes the child by the hand and commands: "TALITHA CUMI." Jesus speaks in Aramaic, but Mark translates His words into Greek, and that Greek is emphatic. He literally says: "Little girl, *It is I who says unto thee, arise*"

—Some may say that you are dead, but "I say unto thee, arise."

—Others may say that your case is hopeless, but "I am the resurrection and the life. I say unto thee, arise."

—Some may tell you your future is ended, but "I am the alpha and omega. I say unto thee, arise."

—Others may think that I am delaying and silent, but "I am He that died and am alive. I say unto thee, arise."

—Some may think there is no way out, but "I am the way, the truth and the life. I say unto thee, arise."

—Others may think that no power on earth can save your situation, but "All power is given unto me. I say unto thee, arise."

The same Jesus who brings life out of death can transform our hopeless situations today. Our responsibility is to remain faithful, no matter what.

Perhaps we may be asking what Jesus is seeking to teach by the delay, silence, bad news, and scorn? Consider four possible reasons:

**Divine Timing.** One reason is to teach something about the mystery of Divine timing. Despite what may appear as a delay or interruption in our plans and expectations, to the child of God, God's timing is never late.

Never talk about delay, unless you know God's arrival time. We cannot speak about a delay when we talk about the second coming of Christ. This is because Jesus has not given us His arrival time. And neither can we talk about delay with regard to God's plan for our lives unless we fully know what He is seeking to do in our lives. Since God's time never knows a delay, we must always trust Him, no matter how long it may seem to us.

To all who are reaching out to feel the guiding hand of God, the moment of greatest discouragement is the time when divine help is nearest (*The Desire of Ages*, 528).

Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief. Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us, of which we know nothing. Those



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who accept the one principle of making the service and honor of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish and a plain path before their feet (*The Desire of Ages*, 330).

When in faith we take hold of His strength, he will change, wonderfully change, the most hopeless, discouraging outlook. He will do this for the glory of His name (*Prophets and Kings*, 260).

**Nature of True Faith.** Another lesson Jesus was teaching was that true faith steps forward regardless of humiliation, intimidation, scorn, or even loss. It is the nature of true faith to take a stand—even in the face of obstacles. One cannot secretly hold to faith. Faith requires public testing—it calls for a public stand regardless of consequences.

The woman with an issue of blood takes a courageous and humiliating step of faith when she steps forward publicly to talk about her uncleanness. Jairus takes a courageous step of faith when he decides to come to Jesus publicly—even amidst derision.

We must also dare to take a stand for Christ and His truth, no matter what. If teachers can't take a stand for unpopular theological truth, how will our students do so? If pastors and church leaders are unwilling to take unpopular stands, how can they expect their members and churches to do so? If parents are unprepared to honor the Lord, how can their children be expected to make decisions of faith for the Lord?

The days in which we live call for men and women who dare to stand for truth, regardless of consequences. Ellen G. White writes

In deciding upon any course of action we are not to ask whether we can see that harm will result from it, but whether it is in keeping with the will of God (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 634).

True Christian principle will not stop to weigh consequences. It does not ask, What will people think of me if I do this? or, How will it affect my worldly prospects if I do that? (*The Sanctified Life*, 39).

Christ's ambassadors have nothing to do with consequences. They must perform their duty, and leave results with God (*The Great Controversy*, 609-610).

"It is better to die than to sin; better to want [be in need] than to defraud; better to hunger than to lie" (*Testimonies for the Church*, 4:495).

**Reward for Faithfulness.** Jesus was also teaching that divine blessing will always attend those who are faithful to the Lord. He will never fail anyone who puts trusts in Him.

Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence (*Desire of Ages*, 331).

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Those who surrender their lives to His guidance and His service will never be placed in a position for which He has not made provision. Whatever our situation, if we are doers of His word, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexity, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend (*The Ministry of Healing*, 248-249).

**Not Alone in Suffering.** Perhaps the most important reason why Jesus allows the faith of Jairus to be tried is to instruct him through the experience of the woman. Though Jairus's ordeal is bitter, he was not alone in his pain. There is another person also suffering, and for twelve years. Sometimes our trials are designed to help us appreciate others. Pain makes us more sympathetic; disappointment makes us more humble; and hardship keeps us dependent on God.

Jesus is teaching Jairus from the experience of the woman. It is here that the contrasting characteristics we identified earlier between the woman and Jairus become most helpful. If Jesus is able to help the woman's hopeless case, what about Jairus?

—If Jesus can help the woman's chronic disease (twelve years of dying), what about Jairus's daughter's recent illness after twelve years of full life?

—If Jesus can help a woman without a name, what about a person who has a name (Jairus)?

—If Jesus can help an outcast of the synagogue, what about a ruler of the synagogue?

—If Jesus can help a woman who comes secretly, what about Jairus who comes publicly?

—If Jesus can help a woman has no intercessor, no advocate, what about Jairus's child, whose father is her advocate?

—If Jesus can help a woman who comes from behind and superstitiously touches His garment, what about Jairus, who exercises true faith by coming face to face with Christ, kneeling and pleading?

—If Jesus can help a woman who who comes to Jesus as a last resort, what about Jairus, who apparently makes Jesus his first choice?

—If the one who makes a silent request can bear public testimony, what about Jairus, who makes his request in public?

Jesus does not needlessly delay, keep silent, or utter ridiculous or strange words. It is Christ's design to instruct Jairus. This is, perhaps, the most important message contained in "the story within the story": If Jesus did it for the woman, how much more would He not do for Jairus?

### **Some Lessons for Us Today**

What lessons can we draw from "the story within the story"? First, all of us have feel pain. Ours may be similar to Jairus's. Perhaps it is a loved one (child, husband, wife, parents, sister, relative, friend) who is in some serious difficulty. Or it may be that our situation is similar to the woman. We are the one actually

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bleeding to death. Perhaps it is our health, finances, or family situation that is slowly but hopelessly bleeding.

Whatever our situation, we must go to Jesus with our burdens. We may choose to go to Him like the woman—secretly in the closets of our homes, or silently and anonymously in church (as did Hannah, the mother of Samuel, 1 Samuel 1:9-17). Or we may choose to go to Jesus like Jairus—openly in church or prayer meeting, during the time for prayer requests.

Another lesson we learn is that we must not fear taking a stand for Jesus. The times in which we live call for men and women who dare to risk all for Jesus' sake. If we do not stand up for something, we shall fall for anything. Fear of censure from our critics and fear of losing our jobs should not prevent us from doing the right thing. Neither should we wait until retirement before declaring where we stand on issues. Both the woman and Jairus take risks. And so must we.

Often the follower of Christ is brought where he cannot serve God and carry forward his worldly enterprises. Perhaps it appears that obedience to some plain requirement of God will cut off his means of support. Satan would make him believe that he must sacrifice his conscientious convictions. But the only thing in our world upon which we can rely is the word of God. . . . Matt. 6:33. Even in this life it is not for our good to depart from the will of our Father in heaven. When we learn the power of His word, we shall not follow the suggestions of Satan in order to obtain food or to save our lives. Our only questions will be, What is God's command? and what is His promise? Knowing these, we shall obey the one, and trust the other (*Desire of Ages*, 121).

Finally, when we take a stand for the Lord and He seems to delay, and our prospects grow darker and darker, we are still to trust Him. Each of us should say with Job: "Though he slays me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). With the three Hebrew children, we must be able to say: "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. *But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up*" (Dan 3:17-18).

As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so in the closing period of earth's history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for the right. He who walked with the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain. In the midst of the time of trouble—trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—His chosen ones will stand unmoved (*Prophets and Kings*, 513).

The season of distress before God's people will call for a faith that will not falter. His children must make it manifest that He is the only object of their worship, and that no consideration, not even that of life itself, can induce them to make the least concession to

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false worship. To the loyal heart, the commands of sinful, finite men will sink into insignificance beside the word of the eternal God. Truth will be obeyed though the result be imprisonment or exile or death (*Prophets and Kings* 512-513).

#### **Appeal**

Perhaps it appears that the Lord is delaying in answering your prayers.

—You have asked for light, but all you experience is darkness.

—You have asked for health, but you are experiencing more sickness.

—You have asked the Lord for companionship in life, but you are still experiencing loneliness.

—You have asked Him for success, but you see only failure.

—You have asked Him for deliverance, yet you know only distress.

—You have asked him to clear your name, but no one seems to vindicate you.

—You have asked for life, but death is what you get.

“The story within the story” tells us that when you take a stand for Jesus and things go from bad to worse, you are still to trust Him, even if He delays, and even if your plans are interrupted.

When you are told that because of your faith, “your daughter is dead,” tell them she is only asleep; she will rise again.

When you are told “your future is finished,” tell them that your future is in God’s hands, and that He has better plans for your life. What may seem like the end may very well be the beginning of real life.

When you are told that your prospects are bleak, tell them that as long as Jesus lives there is hope.

And when you are ridiculed and told, “don’t trouble the Master,” “it’s a waste of time,” and “there’s no hope,” tell them that no one who goes to Jesus is ever a “trouble” to Him.

There is hope for every one of us who makes a decision of faith to serve the Lord and do His will. Therefore, in all our afflictions, sorrows, pains, let us go to Jesus, and in the words of that familiar hymn plead: “Pass me not, Oh gentle Savior; Hear my humble cry. While on others Thou art calling, do not pass me by.”

Your situation may be desperate. You may have experienced sorrow after sorrow, trouble after trouble. You may have lost your health, wealth, job, friend, or family. You may have been misunderstood or persecuted. Whatever your situation, remember that it was this same situation that Jesus deals with when He meets Jairus and the woman. Someone has said: “Every sorrow is a summons to us to go to Jesus.”

Therefore, when Jesus appears to delay, when He seems silent, or when things go from bad to worse, we must still keep trusting Him. Everything will be all right in the long run.

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The Elder Brother of our race is by the eternal throne. He looks upon every soul who is turning his face toward Him as the Savior. He knows by experience what are the weaknesses of humanity, what are our wants, and where lies the strength of our temptations; for He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He is watching over you, trembling child of God. Are you tempted? He will deliver. Are you weak? He will strengthen. Are you ignorant? He will enlighten. Are you wounded? He will heal. The Lord 'tellethe the number of the stars;' and yet 'He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.' Ps. 147:4, 3. 'Come unto Me,' is His invitation. Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. Your spirit will be braced for endurance. The way will be opened for you to disentangle yourself from embarrassment and difficulty. The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon the Burden Bearer (*The Desire of Ages*, 329).

May the Lord help us to *remain faithful*, even if we have to "suffer many things." This is my prayer for each one.