

Bible Notes for Small Groups WB 15th June '25

The Strength of Outstretched Arms

Mark 5:21-24 and 35-43

- What does the word 'Father' mean to you? Only answer if you find it comfortable.

Some people have had a good father. Some have not. Some people have not had a father in their lives at all. This year some may be having to go through Father's Day without their father for the first time.

Father's Day can be a mixed blessing for some. This week of Father's Day we celebrate the gift of our Father God and His deep, deep love for us.

Fatherhood can be difficult at the best of times and those men who have grown up with a damaged experience of fatherhood may find it doubly troublesome. Some mothers have had to be like fathers too which is very difficult. There is a question abroad at the moment that asks if we are seeing more violence in our society because of the increase in the number of fatherless homes. There has been an investigation that has come up with the information that 70% of youths in custody or prisons have not had a good father in their lives. We all need the strength of a father's love and affection.

- Have you seen anyone being that kind of strong and loving father?

Fatherhood presents a great responsibility to protect and provide and the pressures of that responsibility can be very tough.

- What do you consider to be the most difficult thing for fathers?

Jairus was an elder in the local synagogue. That meant he was highly respected with a position to uphold. He was responsible for leading prayers, planning and organising worship services and on top of all this he was a loving father.

In spite of all this we see him running to Jesus and falling at His feet.

- There are many people in scripture that we see falling or sitting at Jesus' feet. Can you remember any of them? Where do we stand in this? Are you happy to sit or fall at Jesus' feet and when do you do that?

Jairus, the highly respected leader, does not send a servant to Jesus in his place, **he goes himself**. In fact, he runs and lays at Jesus' feet. This would have been

shocking but shows his humble spirit. He acknowledges that there were some things as a father, he could not do for his daughter however much he loved her. Only Jesus could do this. **It is OK for our children to realise that we are not infallible, we have weaknesses and limitations.** They need to know that we acknowledge our need of Jesus.

We have seen fathers stretch out their arms to toddlers as they wobble towards their dad. The father scoops up the baby in his strong arms. The Dad gives his sad child a hug, the Pops holds on to his child as they cross the road. The Father supports the child who is feeling unwell. **A father's strength is seen in his outstretched arms, to beckon, to steady, to catch, to hug, to protect, to affirm.**

Deuteronomy 33:27

- How can we help each other to apply this scripture to our everyday experiences

With outstretched arms we give, we receive, we carry, we express, we love. With folded arms we can do none of these things. A child stretches out their arms as a sign they want to be picked up or hugged.

What caused Jairus to run and fall at Jesus' Feet? His love for his daughter. He was willing to do anything to make her better. His pride and position meant nothing to him at that moment.

This is a good example of God's love for us. He was prepared to do anything to help and save us. So, He gave up His only son. Jesus stretched out His arms on the cross. Those outstretched arms say to us 'Come, have life, be hugged, be loved, be saved. **And when we respond to those arms and allow Him to, He will make us whole.**

A house caught fire and a father and several children ran out of the house just in time but one child was scared and ran back inside. He looked out the bedroom window and his father spotted him. 'Jump and I will catch you.' Shouted the father with his arms outstretched. 'I can't I'm too scared.' Shouted the child. 'I'm scared because I can't see you.' 'It's OK' shouted the Father. 'I can see you. Jump into my arms.'

- Have you ever had to jump into Jesus' arms? What happened?
- Pray the Lord's prayer together and remember how much He loves and want to protect us.