

Jairus' Daughter

Jesus was having a busy day when he encountered Jairus.

Matthew 9:18-19: **While he was saying this, a synagogue leader came and knelt before him and said, “My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live”.** Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples.

Matthew 9:23-26: **When Jesus entered the synagogue leader's house and saw the noisy crowd and people playing pipes, he said, “Go away. The girl is not dead, but asleep”.** But they laughed at him. After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. News of this spread through all that region.

But Mark remembers it a little differently.

Mark 5:22-24: **Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live”.** So Jesus went with him.

Mark 5:35-43: **While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead”, they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore”?** Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe”. He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep”. But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha koum!*” (which means “*Little girl, I say you, to get up!*”). Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

In Matthew’s version, the daughter is already dead when Jesus meets Jairus. In Mark’s scenario, the girl is not dead when Jairus seeks Jesus’ help, but she dies before Jesus gets to her. In Matthew’s version, news of the miracle spreads like wildfire. In Mark, Jesus swears everyone to secrecy.

These are the kinds of differences one would expect. People see, interpret, and remember things differently, especially if some time has elapsed between the events and the writing of them. But we do not expect these kinds of discrepancies in a book that is claimed to be the infallible, inerrant, inspired Holy Word of the Christian omniscient, omnipotent, immutable God. It is foolish to cling to the myth that there are no errors in the Bible, as millions of Christians do, despite overwhelming proof to the contrary.