

## DON'T BE AFRAID; JUST BELIEVE

Luke 8:40-56

Key Verse: 8:50

“Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, ‘Don’t be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.’”

In today’s passage, Jesus helps two very different people: Jairus, a man of standing in the community, and a nameless woman. Though they make a great contrast in their social position, they are both helpless before disease and death. Each one comes to Jesus by faith. While Jesus deals with each of them uniquely, he helps both of them to improve the quality of their faith. Ultimately Jesus blesses each of them, revealing his power to heal diseases and even raise the dead. Today let’s learn more about Jesus and how to improve our faith.

First, Jairus was a good father (40-42a).

Look at verse 40. “Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him.” As we studied last time, Jesus had been on the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gerasenes. Jesus had gone there to have a quiet time with his disciples. But it turned into a time of spiritual training through the storm at sea and the healing of the demon-possessed man. At last, they returned to the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, near the place from where they had departed. As their boat came into view, a crowd which had been waiting for them, began to buzz with the news of Jesus’ return. They gathered together, displaying banners which read, “Welcome home Jesus!” They might have prepared flower necklaces for Jesus and his disciples, too. What a refreshing welcome it must have been. These people were Jesus’ beloved sheep. He had taught the word of God to them and healed their sicknesses. Because Jesus first loved them, they began to love Jesus. They had been longing for Jesus’ return. Most of all they wanted Jesus to teach the word of God to their thirsty souls. They were so happy to see Jesus. They felt all their problems would be solved and everything would be okay and the kingdom of God would come on earth as it was in heaven.

Look at verses 41-42a. “Then a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came and fell at Jesus’ feet, pleading with him to come to his house because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.” Among those in the crowd, one man came forward and fell at Jesus’ feet to ask for help. He was Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue. He must have been morally upright and faithful, a leader in his community. In addition, he must have been a man of wealth. He was used to solving all kinds of problems and many people must have called him when they needed help. But this time, he had a serious and urgent problem that he could not do anything about. His only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying. At the age of twelve, she should have been blossoming into a vibrant teenager. She was Jairus’ only daughter and joy of life. Though Jairus struggled hard in the world, when he saw his daughter, he forgot all the agonies of life and smiled widely. But now she was dying.

When his precious daughter became sick, Jairus was really troubled. He did everything he could to help her. But she was only getting worse. Jairus began to tremble with fear. In a nightmare, he watched her breathe her last. The devil’s torment through fear was like the pounding jab of a heavyweight boxer. Jairus felt that he was losing everything. Then he remembered Jesus. Jesus had healed many kinds of sicknesses. He found hope in Jesus. So he came to Jesus.

Jairus did not come to Jesus as a dignified synagogue ruler. He came to Jesus as the father of a dying daughter. He fell at Jesus’ feet and pleaded with Jesus to come to his house. Jairus was a humble man. Before Jesus, he knelt in prayer. Before Jesus, he pleaded earnestly with all his heart and strength. Humanly, this was quite awkward for the synagogue ruler. The Pharisees’ political maneuvering had made Jesus unwelcome in the synagogues of Israel. Jairus risked losing his position as a synagogue ruler by publicly entreating Jesus in such a humble way. But it did not matter to him. When Jairus came to Jesus for help, he was willing to sacrifice anything to gain Jesus’ favor. He had a true shepherd’s heart for his daughter. He was willing to lay down his own life to save his daughter. Moved by his shepherd’s heart, Jesus went with him.

Here we must know that Jairus was a good father before becoming a man of faith. He loved his daughter more than his own life. A father’s heart motivated him to come to Jesus. A father’s heart enabled him to humbly entreat Jesus at the cost of his future career. Jesus is pleased by good fathers. How can we be good fathers? Some think that having children makes them fathers. We call them biological fathers. However, many biological fathers have the

heart of a pig or a snake. Good fathers are those who love their children more than their future careers or even their own lives. Good fathers are those who have a father's heart.

Our Father God is a good Father. When we were dying in our sins, he did not ignore us. He looked on us with great compassion. He sent his one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins. Our Father God loved us more than himself, even more than his one and only Son. This is a Father's heart. May God help us to be good fathers for our children, our sheep, and many fatherless young ones in America.

Second, Jesus heals a woman physically and spiritually (42b-48).

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. He might have gone three steps forward, two steps back. To Jairus, it was hard to watch Jesus' slow progress. Jairus wanted to shout, "Get out of the way and let Jesus through. My little daughter is dying." But each person in the crowd thought his own problem was most urgent. For example, among the thronging people was a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years (43). To this nameless woman, her bleeding problem was critical. It made her smelly and weak all the time. It robbed her beauty. Moreover, it made her socially "unclean" according to the law of Moses (Lev 15:25-31).

This problem had gone on for twelve years. In twelve years the world changes. Twelve years ago, Russia was emerging from 70 years of Communist rule and seeking her direction. Dr. Samuel Lee gave them John 14:6, "I am the way." Many Russian students found their way in Jesus. In twelve years, the work of God in Russia has grown into a missionary-minded movement. For twelve long years, this woman had suffered from a bleeding problem. She must have tried everything for a cure. But no one could heal her. Now she stayed in her room in dark privacy, watching the world go by. But one day, she heard about Jesus.

This woman came up behind Jesus. How this weak and fragile woman penetrated through the dense crowd is a question. Maybe she had mastered the art of obtaining sympathy from others with pitiful facial expressions. One thing is sure: she had to make a life-giving effort to get near Jesus. This was her faith. She came to Jesus overcoming her weak body, social restrictions and fatalism. She is exemplary in overcoming obstacles to come to Jesus by faith. When she reached him, she touched the edge of his cloak. Immediately her bleeding stopped. By one touch of Jesus, she was healed. By one touch of Jesus, her twelve years of suffering was ended. There is no incurable disease in Jesus.

Now she was healed physically, but she was still sick spiritually. Her spiritual sickness can be understood in light of Romans 1:21. Although she believed Jesus could heal her, she had neither glorified Jesus nor given thanks to him. She wanted to use Jesus for her own benefit and run away. She was really selfish. She needed to thank God and glorify God to be healed spiritually. How did Jesus help her to receive spiritual healing?

The woman's idea was to touch Jesus, receive healing, and go away quietly without being noticed. She wanted to "hit and run." She turned away, starting to depart. Suddenly, Jesus' voice rang out, "Who touched me?" To others it seemed a ridiculous question. They all denied it, "Not me, not me." Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you." But they did not understand Jesus. Jesus was not referring to a mere physical touch. Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me." The woman's touch had catalyzed and ignited Jesus' healing power. Jesus was very sensitive to the touch of faith. Jesus wanted the woman who had been healed to come forward. Why? It was to make a personal relationship with her. Only a personal relationship with Jesus could heal her spiritually.

What happened to the woman? Look at verse 47. "Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed." The woman realized she could not hide. When Jesus said, "Who touched me?" she felt his eyes look into her very soul. She knew that he knew she was the one. But to admit what had happened was harder for her than coming to Jesus in the first place. Nevertheless, Jesus was relentless. Jesus insisted that she come forward and make a confession. She may have said: "I suffered from bleeding for twelve years. No one could heal me. But when I touched your garment I was healed. Thank you, Jesus! Praise Jesus!"

Then Jesus said, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace." Jesus called her "Daughter." She was no longer a nameless woman. She became a daughter of Jesus Christ. She was not only healed from her physical infirmity, she

was healed spiritually as well. Indeed, her testimony glorified Jesus as the one who heals incurable diseases. Her testimony was her thanksgiving to Jesus. Her testimony was a great encouragement to Jairus. Her testimony blessed the crowd of people around Jesus to learn that the touch of faith procures Jesus' healing power. Her testimony has blessed people down through the generations. This happened because Jesus helped her to live for the glory of God and give thanks to God. Now Jesus was happy with her. So he said, "Your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

Jairus was concerned about his own daughter. But Jesus was concerned about a nameless woman who had suffered in the darkness. Jesus was concerned about all the daughters of Israel who were suffering in the darkness. So Jesus stopped on the way to Jairus' house and spent time to heal this woman both physically and spiritually. Jesus is the Everlasting Father for all women who need healing. Surely our Lord Jesus Christ is concerned for all the daughters of America. Surely Jesus wants to heal young American women spiritually. Among us are those who have received Jesus' grace, but have never glorified Jesus nor given thanks to him. May God help us to do so through testimony sharing at our summer Bible conferences.

Third, "Don't be afraid; just believe" (49-56)

Look at verse 49. "While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. 'Your daughter is dead,' he said. 'Don't bother the teacher any more.'" The person who came from Jairus' house must have meant well. Most likely, he wanted to make sure that Jairus was the first to know that his daughter had died. He wanted to spare Jairus the further humiliation of bringing Jesus and the crowd to his house when it was too late. He thought that death was the end of everything. In this crisis, only words of faith could be a help to Jairus. This man's words were the devil's poison to Jairus' soul.

Look at verse 50. "Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, 'Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.'" While healing the woman with the bleeding problem, Jesus seemed to pay all his attention to her as if she were the only person in the world. But Jesus was keenly aware of Jairus' situation and his inner struggle. Jesus knew that Satan was attacking Jairus, trying to occupy his heart through fear. He said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed." Jesus taught Jairus what to do: "Don't be afraid; just believe." And Jesus promised that his daughter would be healed.

First, Jairus had to overcome fear. Jairus had just heard the bad news of his daughter's death. The devil was trying to occupy his heart, channeling in through fear. But Jesus said, "Don't be afraid." Jairus had to resist the fear of the devil. If he had become fearful, he could have turned into a devil to blame Jesus and disturb the crowd of people. But he did not entertain the devil's fear in his heart. He held Jesus' word, "Don't be afraid," and resisted the devil as a matter of life and death. In the time of crisis our first job is to overcome fear. Without overcoming fear we are useless to God and cannot grow in faith. Jesus said, "Don't be afraid." We must overcome fear as of first importance. But we cannot overcome fear by our own willpower. We need God's help through the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:15 says, "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'"

Second, Jairus had to just believe. What does it mean to "just believe"? It means to just believe. It means to believe Jesus' words because Jesus says so. Jesus is God. Jesus has power over wind and waves. Jesus has power to drive out demons. Jesus has power to heal diseases. Jesus has power to raise the dead. If Jesus says so, it will be so. Jairus had to just believe.

Third, Jairus had to accept Jesus' promise in his heart. Jairus had come to Jesus with faith based on what Jesus had done for others. On the way to his house, he had seen Jesus heal the woman's incurable bleeding problem. Now Jesus promised Jairus that his daughter would be healed. Jesus taught him personal faith in his word of promise. This is great faith, like the faith of Abraham, who believed that God would make him into a great nation, even if he had to raise Isaac from the dead. Of course, we learn faith from others. But in a crisis Jesus trains us to learn personal faith in his word of promise. Jairus accepted Jesus' promise and followed Jesus to his house.

Jesus finally arrived at the house of Jairus. He went into the house with Peter, John and James and the child's father and mother. All the people were wailing and mourning outside. Jesus said, "Stop wailing. She is not dead but asleep." It was time for all of them to learn faith in Jesus. But they laughed at Jesus. They knew the reality: she was dead. And reality was reality. Jesus took the girl by the hand and said, "My child, get up!" Her spirit returned and at

once she stood up. Jesus has power to raise the dead! To Jesus, death is like a sweet sleep after hard work. To Jesus, death is a journey to the kingdom of God. To Jesus there is no reason to be afraid of death. Faith in Jesus gives us victory over the power of death. Faith in Jesus gives us eternal life.

In this passage we learn that Jesus has power to heal any disease. Jesus has power to raise the dead. We must come to Jesus by faith with our personal problems. Then Jesus helps us grow in faith. We should not avoid faith training. We must learn faith that overcomes fear and the power of death and renders glory to God. Let's remember Jesus' words, "Don't be afraid; just believe."