

Don't Be Afraid; Just Believe  
Luke 8:40-56  
Key Verse: 8:50

by Kevin Albright

"Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, 'Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.'"

In the previous Bible passage, Jesus healed a demon-possessed man by his power and his love. In today's Bible passage, there are two miracles of Jesus--the restoration of life to a dead 12-year old girl and the healing of a woman with a chronic bleeding problem. In many ways these miracles are different. In some ways they are similar. Especially, both are done by Jesus, revealing again his power and his love. Let's learn more about Jesus and what it means to "just believe."

First, a man and a woman came to Jesus. Look at verse 40. "Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him." Recall that Jesus had gone by boat with his disciples across the Sea of Galilee. On the way, he calmed the stormy sea and then healed a demon-possessed man at the cost of a large herd of pigs. Now Jesus and his disciples returned to the western side of the Sea, in Galilee. A crowd was there, waiting for him. Some of them had heard Jesus preach. Some saw him perform a miracle of healing someone or commanding evil spirits out of people. Some of the crowd came out of curiosity to see or hear Jesus for themselves. Others came with personal problems to Jesus for help.

Luke mentions one specific man with an urgent problem in 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." Who was this man? His name was Jairus. He was a ruler of the synagogue. Obviously, he was a man of respect in the community, for to become a ruler does not happen lightly or randomly. Jairus was a man of prestige and influence. But he did not come to Jesus with a formal, polite request. He came with a desperate plea. He fell at Jesus' feet, in public. He also pleaded with Jesus to come to his house and heal his dying daughter. She was his only daughter. This could mean that she was an only daughter among brothers like Annie Lee Jr., or that she was an only child, like Danielle Hull, except that she was 12 years old. Certainly, Jairus' daughter was his joy and comfort of life. After a long day's work, dealing with many complaints and synagogue business matters, he came home. As

soon as he walked through the door, his daughter would shout, "Daddy!" She would run to him, swing her arms around his neck, and kiss him. He would say something like, "How's my sweetheart? Are you helping your mother in the kitchen?" Then he would think to himself, "What a blessed man I am to receive butterfly kisses from my daughter every day!"

But one day, she did not greet him when he walked in the door. His wife greeted him with a pale and worried look on her face, saying, "Come quickly. Our daughter is ill. She won't eat or get out of bed. I didn't want to bother you at work, so I called for the doctor. He hasn't been able to help her. What are we going to do?" Jairus may have replied, "Calm down, honey. We mustn't let her know we are worried. We have to keep showing her love and hope." Jairus knew he had to be strong, as a father and as a husband. But he began to wonder what he could do. Then he heard the news, "Jesus, the preacher-healer from Nazareth is in town." In desperation, Jairus went to Jesus, believing that Jesus could make her well. Jairus came to Jesus. He came humbly, putting aside all his prestige and all the negative opinions he heard from his elite peers.

As Jesus was on his way to Jairus' house, the crowds almost crushed him. Jesus' disciples must have tried hard to be bodyguards for Jesus. Many people were crowding and pressing against Jesus. Suddenly Jesus stopped and asked, "Who touched me?" All the people denied it, "Uh, not me, man." "Master," Peter said, "the people are crowding and pressing against you." It meant, "What do you mean, 'Who touched me?' A lot of people have nearly crushed you!"

Jesus knew already what Luke tells us in verses 43-44: "And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for 12 years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped." This woman was in many ways different from Jairus. For starters she was a nameless woman; Jairus was a well-known, prominent man in the community. Jairus came with an urgent, emergency life-and-death situation for his daughter; this woman came with her own chronic, 12-year medical problem. Jairus was a man of wealth; this woman was poor, having spent all she had on doctors who couldn't heal her. Jairus came openly with a bold plea in public; this woman came secretly, too embarrassed to reveal her unclean, bleeding problem. In a way, her coming to Jesus was a bit superstitious, for she thought that by touching Jesus she could be healed. Still, in spite of the differences, there was one important similarity with Jairus and the woman: they both came to Jesus with their serious problem, believing Jesus could help them. And they were right. Jesus helped them. Jesus accepted their faith in him. Jesus accepts all who come to him in faith. John

6:37 says, "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away." We learn here to come to Jesus with our problem. Perhaps the problem is urgent. Perhaps it is chronic, and you've nearly lost hope. Whether our problem is urgent or chronic, we can come to Jesus. No one should wait until they get sicker. Our sickness is bad enough already. The hymn song says, "Turn from your sin, let the Savior come in, and come just as you are." And as another hymn assures us, "Still he is mighty to save."

Second, "Daughter, your faith has healed you." Jesus did not allow the woman to make a secret getaway. He repeated, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me." The power was not in the woman's touch. The power came from Jesus and was transmitted to her. The power flowed from Jesus to her. It's like she got plugged in to the power source. Are you plugged in to Jesus? He is the vine; we are the branches. Apart from him, we can do nothing. Without Jesus, our battery is running out.

The woman could see that she couldn't escape Jesus' all-seeing eye and all-knowing mind. Instead of waiting for Jesus to call her out, she 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. In this way, Jesus helped her to not be a secret, closet believer. Jesus helped her to share her testimony before others. Through her testimony, she confirmed Jesus' healing in her life. At the same time, she gave credit and glory to Jesus for what he had done. Jesus was not embarrassed to show the crowd that he blessed a bleeding, unclean woman. Jesus took her uncleanness gladly upon himself. Actually, the holiness in Jesus overtook all her uncleanness and healed her. Jesus' cleansing and healing power healed her.

Can you testify to his saving, healing grace in your life? Jesus wants us to share our testimony of his power and love in our lives. When we share what the Lord has done for us, we bring him thanks and praise and glory. Not only this, our faith in him is also strengthened. Romans 10:9-10 says, "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." I want to share briefly with you what the Lord has done for me. I grew up in a church-going home. Sometimes I was humble and kind. Other times I was controlled by my sins of lust, pride, anger, rebellion, despair, vanity, and materialism. I wanted to be superior to others in sports and academics. Death stung me hard one month away from high school graduation when my father died by heart attack. I was frustrated by the meaninglessness and emptiness of my life. I thought I believed in God since I went

to church. But at the end of my first few months in college I cried out, "I don't really believe in God, I don't know what I believe." Soon I prayed, "God, if you exist, give me a sign. Just let me know the truth, and I'll give my life to make it known." Within the next 4 months, through a Christmas worship service, a Genesis Bible School and an Easter Bible conference, Jesus answered my prayer. The hope and promise of eternal life in Jesus took away the sting of death and gave me meaning, joy and peace. My foul mouth was cleansed and my interest in rock music, disco dancing and even sports faded away. The words of a hymn rang true to me: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace." Jesus has been healing me. I'm not yet fully healed. I still struggle to die to sin every day. So I keep coming to Jesus for his cleansing, healing and grace. Please consider his grace to you and I urge you to share it with at least one person this week.

What happened after the woman shared her testimony? The Bible says, "Then Jesus said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.'" Jesus called her "daughter." Did you know that she is the only recorded individual that Jesus called "daughter" in the gospels? Jesus loved her like his own child. He loved her as much as Jairus loved his own dying daughter. Jesus recognized her faith in him and pronounced her healing: "your faith has healed you." Probably she thought Jesus was going to rebuke her for touching him in her uncleanness. But Jesus commended her faith and sent her away in peace. We learn that Jesus gives peace to trembling hearts and troubled souls who come to him and who reach out to him in faith.

Note the distinction that Luke makes between this woman and the crowd of people. Many people bumped into Jesus. They were hanging out with Jesus. But Luke does not mention any of them being healed except this woman with a chronic bleeding problem. Luke is telling us not to be those who just hang around Jesus as curious spectators, but to come to Jesus with faith and a pure desire to be healed and cleansed of our sins. Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." May each one of us reach out and touch Jesus in sincere and earnest prayer and be healed. May we each have a testimony of his grace to keep sharing with others.

Third, Jesus said, "Don't be afraid; just believe." While this woman was sharing her testimony with the crowd, we can only imagine that Jairus was getting more and more nervous, anxious and impatient to get to his house a.s.a.p. ("Hurry up and finish your testimony, woman!" Come on, I know you think that sometimes in a

testimony sharing meeting.) To Jesus, this woman was a precious daughter who needed to share her testimony for others to hear. But to Jairus, he could only think about his daughter's urgent situation. Then some very unfortunate news came.

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.'" Surely the words were solemn, but they hit Jairus hard: "Your daughter is dead." Then the messenger gave his own recommendation: "Don't bother the teacher any more." It meant, "It's too late. I'm so sorry. It's over." Maybe even the messenger added some good Hallmark card words like, "She's in better hands now," or, "Sometimes God takes the best flowers for his garden." In any case, the messenger told Jairus to leave Jesus alone and just come and make funeral arrangements. The messenger was destroying hope and faith in Jairus' heart. He was not speaking for God, but planting fear in Jairus. This is how the devil usually speaks to people, planting doubt and causing one to lose heart.

Jesus heard the same news. But his words to Jairus were quite different. Let's read verse 50. "Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, 'Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.'" First, Jesus said, "Don't be afraid." Jesus knew that fear was threatening to invade Jairus' heart. Fear of what? Perhaps it was fear of his own loss, or fear that he couldn't cope with this tragedy. Maybe he was afraid of his daughter's eternal destiny. Especially, he was afraid of death itself. One of the devil's most effective strategies is to plant this kind of fear in people. Hebrews 2:15 says that the devil holds people in slavery by their fear of death. Fear is the enemy of faith and trust in God. Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid." It meant, "Don't lose hope. Don't give up. Don't listen to that message. Listen to me." Jesus also said, "Just believe." To "just believe" means to keep on trusting Jesus. Jesus wants us to keep our hope and faith in him. Hebrews 11:1 includes hope in the definition of faith. It reads, "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see." Jesus also said to Jairus, "and she will be healed." This is Jesus' specific promise to Jairus. Jesus promised Jairus, "she will be healed." It meant, "Don't worry. I'm in control." Two Bible translations paraphrase Jesus' words to Jairus like this; "Just trust in me, and everything will be all right." (NLT, Message)

Please put yourself in Jairus' place for a moment. How could Jairus listen to Jesus and accept Jesus' words when he had just heard the tragic news that his daughter had died? Actually, Jairus had a choice whom he would listen to. Jairus chose to listen to Jesus and accept Jesus' words, rather than the factual words of reality which came through the bad news messenger. This may seem like he was denying reality and holding an unrealistic hope or expectation. But consider faith in God.

We cannot see God with our eyes. Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Who hopes for what he already has? We each exercise choices every day. For example, we choose who or what we decide to listen to or to look at. Take the internet: we choose the news articles we want to read and we look at the photos we want to look at. Well, most of the time. So the question to ask myself is: who am I going to listen to--pop psychology? the latest movie or novel? a college professor? a neighbor? or Jesus? Jairus decided to listen to Jesus and to keep trusting him. The one who trusts in Jesus will never be put to shame and will never be disappointed. There are many very great and precious promises in the Bible. Are you believing any promise or word of Jesus? I'm not talking about your own wishful thinking or dream or idea. I mean a promise from Jesus in the Bible for you. Faith is not merely wishful thinking. Faith is believing God's promises that he has given us in the Bible.

There are so many examples in the Bible of those who kept their hope and faith in a seemingly hopeless situation: Joseph in prison, Daniel in a lion's den, Daniel's friends in a fiery furnace, Paul in a shipwreck, on trial and later in prison. These people all overcame with faith in God very real fears. We all face fears of all kinds, even daily: fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of getting a job or losing a job, fear of our health or our children's health or spiritual destiny, fear of keeping up with daily obligations, fear of unfruitful ministry, fear of unchanging hearts, even our own, etc, etc, etc. Then what are we going to do? We can either give in to fear or believe God's word. For example, Matthew 6:33 is a great promise in the Bible that deals with daily provision. There is a promise from God to overcome any fear that threatens or plagues us.

I want to share one example about an Irish missionary named Amy Carmichael. As a missionary in India, she worked to save children from being sold as temple prostitutes. She confronted great opposition, threats of physical danger and criminal charges of kidnapping to rescue the children. But she persisted in her faith and mission and after 12 years had 130 children under her care. She also wrestled with remaining single all her life. She shared her struggle with one of her rescued children: "I had feelings of fear about the future. The devil kept on whispering, 'It's all right now, but what about afterwards? You are going to be very lonely.' And I turned to my God in a kind of desperation and said, 'Lord, what can I do? How can I go on to the end?' And He said, 'None of them that trust in Me shall be desolate.' That word has been with me ever since. It has been fulfilled to me. It will be fulfilled to you." [In "From Jerusalem To Irian Jaya," by Ruth Tucker, p.241]

So what happened next after Jesus' words to Jairus? Jairus led Jesus to his house. Obviously, he took Jesus' word rather than the messenger's advice. Jesus went in to the house with Peter, John and James, and the child's parents. There were also many people wailing and mourning for the dead girl. "Stop wailing," Jesus said. "She is not dead but asleep." This is not the only time in the Bible that death is called sleep. Death is not the end as unbelievers think. Just as morning comes after a night's sleep, we all must appear before God after death for judgment. Hebrews 9:27 says, "man is destined to die once and after that to face judgment..." Jesus said in John 5:28-29, "a time is coming when all who in their graves will hear his voice and come out--those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned."

The mourners and wailers in Jairus' house laughed when they heard Jesus' words. One moment they were crying and the next they were laughing. They laughed because they knew she was dead. But Jesus was not trying to make a joke. Look at verse 54. "But he took her by the hand and said, "My child, get up!" Jesus called the healed bleeding woman, "daughter." Jesus called this young girl, "My child." She too was precious to Jesus. Jesus commanded her, "Get up!" When Jesus said, "Get up!" her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. With one command of Jesus, the girl's spirit returned to her body and she was alive again! Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. Jesus was mindful of her physical condition, for she must have been weak and hungry. Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened. This girl owed her life to Jesus. Jairus owed Jesus a lifetime of thanks. Jesus is the Lord of life and the God of hope. Jesus is the Great Physician, our Healer and Savior. In today's passage we learned to come to Jesus as we are. Let's hold on to Jesus' promise and experience his power and love. Let's give thanks and glory to Jesus and share with others his grace to us--what he has done for us personally. Let's overcome all attacks of fear with his promises. Jesus says to us, "Don't be afraid; just believe."