

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."

Today's passage contains two miracle stories: first, Jesus healed a woman with a discharge of blood; second, Jesus healed the daughter of Jairus. These two stories are closely connected because the healing of the woman happened while Jesus was going to Jairus' house. Their main topic is the same, which is faith. Jesus blessed the simple faith of the woman and asked Jairus to just believe. May God bless us to grow in faith through today's message.

I. "Daughter, your faith has healed you" (40-48)

A man named Jairus came and fell at Jesus' feet. Jairus was the synagogue leader of the town. A synagogue was a local meeting place and assembly of the Jewish people to preserve Jewish faith and worship. The synagogue leader was appointed by local elders to care for the building and select participants in Sabbath services. Therefore, Jairus was an influential man in a Jewish religious society. But he came to Jesus and fell at his feet, which means that he humbled himself before Jesus. Why did he do it? It was because his only daughter of 12-years-old was dying. We don't know what happened to her. Maybe she got sick from an unknown virus or disease. Maybe she got late-stage cancer. Maybe she had a severe accident. Anyway, her physical condition was so serious that she was dying. Jairus and his wife had taken her to famous doctors, but they couldn't heal her. Jairus had tried many treatments, but it was useless. Jairus couldn't find any solution and became hopeless. But one day he heard about Jesus who healed many sicknesses and diseases. He heard that Jesus had power and authority from God. Jairus found hope that his daughter could be healed by the power of Jesus. Thus, when he heard that Jesus was coming to his town, immediately he ran to meet Jesus and fell at his feet. He pleaded with Jesus saying, "My daughter, my only daughter, a girl of twelve-years-old, is dying. Please come to my house and heal her." He didn't care about his social position or age. He was ready to give up everything if his daughter could be healed.

I think that most fathers would do as Jairus did if their daughters were dying. I have a wonderful daughter whose name is Ana (we call her Anita). She is pretty, gifted, and smart. She is 20 years old and studying nursing at the University of Pennsylvania. Four years ago, she had the detachment of retina and had to get two delicate surgeries. It was very painful for me as her father. But she overcame it with prayer and faith. Before the second surgery, she posted a video on YouTube about her decision to serve God. This summer she went to Ecuador to support a non-profit organization that helps a needy neighborhood. But three weeks ago, a deadly and violent protest took place in Ecuador. My wife and I worried about her and prayed for her. Now

the protest calmed down and she is okay. I cannot bear to imagine my lovely daughter suffering in any way. My desire is her happiness in God. I believe that this is God's heart and every good father's heart.

Jesus was moved by the love of Jairus for his daughter and went to his house. But as Jesus was on his way, an unexpected thing happened. A woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of his cloak. The discharge of blood that she had was a menstrual disorder, bleeding outside her monthly period. The Law of Moses defined that a woman with a discharge of blood was unclean, and anyone who touched her would be unclean till evening (Lev 15:19, 25). Therefore, she was ritually unclean and should not have been secretly in the crowd. Probably, when she realized that she had a discharge of blood for the first time, she felt so scared and desperate that she didn't tell anyone. She had to stay at home for a long time. She couldn't meet her friends, even less could she have a boyfriend. She thought that her bleeding would stop soon. But it didn't happen. Eventually, she had to go to a doctor, and the doctor gave her some treatment. But it didn't work. She had to go to another doctor, but the doctor couldn't heal her. She had to go to other doctors, but no one could heal her. Mark 5:26 says: "She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse." She spent all she had. She became weaker and weaker physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. She couldn't have any hope for her life. Twelve years passed in this way.

But one day she heard about Jesus who healed various sicknesses and diseases. Then, she could have faith in Jesus. "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ" (Ro 10:17). While she was thinking of Jesus, her faith grew more. She could have great desire to go to Jesus to be healed. When she heard that Jesus was coming to her town, she realized that it was the only opportunity for her to be healed. She wanted to come to Jesus and fall at his feet as Jairus did. But she couldn't do it because she was an unclean woman. She shouldn't be in the crowd. However, she couldn't lose that opportunity. She thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed" (Mk 5:28). She had great faith in Jesus. Thus, she decided to go behind Jesus and touch his clothes. She believed that Jesus had healing power and she could be healed by just touching his clothes. She believed that just one touch to his clothes was enough to be healed. Her faith was so great that she could overcome all obstacles to approach Jesus. She was very weak physically, and Jesus was surrounded by the crowd. But she penetrated the crowd by faith. She would contaminate all those who would be touched by her, but she did it by faith. She came behind Jesus and touched the edge of his cloak. Then, what happened? Immediately her bleeding stopped!

Many people were touching Jesus. Some hugged him. However, the healing power of Jesus was not effective to them. On the contrary, the woman who had a discharge of blood was healed by just one touch. Why? What was the difference between the woman and others? It was because the woman had faith, while the others didn't have faith in Jesus. Her faith was genuine and sincere, while the others didn't believe genuinely. Her simple faith made her healed by the power of Jesus. We can experience the power of Jesus when we have genuine faith in Him. There was a severe drought in a small village. Their crops and livestock were dying. The people of the village

went to a hill to pray to God for rain. In about an hour, black clouds gathered and then a heavy rain began to pour down. The people of the village became amazed by the power of prayer and praised God. But when they returned to their homes, it was revealed that they hadn't brought their umbrellas, except one girl of eight-years-old who returned to her home without getting wet from rain. They realized that God blessed the genuine faith of the girl and gave them rain.

Do you believe that Jesus has power to solve all your problems if you come to Jesus by faith? I believe it. I believe that Jesus has enough power to solve all my problems. At the same time, I believe that I should ask anything according to God's will. 1 John 5:14 "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." Do you believe that God's will is always good and perfect? Yes! Then, our approach to Jesus should be: "Your will be done, and your name be glorified." I will come to Jesus by faith to see God's glory and receive His mercy; but I will put everything in God's hands for his will to be done, and his name glorified. I believe that our attitude as mature Christians should be like this.

The woman experienced the healing power of Jesus. Then, she should glorify God for being healed. But she wanted to disappear silently. It was her original plan. Everything was perfect according to her plan. But suddenly an expected thing happened. Jesus began to seek her asking, "Who touched me?" Can you imagine how she felt when she heard it? She froze immediately. She couldn't move anymore. All the people denied it saying, "Not me." Peter, as the spokesperson of the disciples of Jesus, said: "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you." But Jesus insisted saying, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me." Didn't Jesus know who touched him? Jesus is God and knows everything. Jesus knew who the woman was. Then, why did Jesus want her to reveal herself though she didn't want to? It was not to embarrass her; but to let her know Jesus personally. Even though she was healed by faith, she didn't know Jesus personally. Her body was healed, but her soul was still sick. She had been suffering not only from her physical sickness, but also from isolation, rejection, loneliness, complaints, guilt, and so on. Jesus wanted to heal her holistically and save her through a personal relationship with him.

She realized that she couldn't hide herself anymore. She came trembling to Jesus 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. Some people were amazed by the power of Jesus; while others got annoyed because they became unclean. But Jesus was very happy with her and said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace." When Jesus called her 'daughter,' she felt the great love of Jesus and burst into tears. She could meet Jesus personally and get to know him as the Messiah. She met the Messiah and was saved by faith! Jesus became her Savior and the purpose of her life. She could have great peace in her heart. I think she became a disciple of Jesus. Praise the Lord who found her and saved her from darkness! I pray that all of us may come to Jesus by faith and be healed by the power of Jesus. Amen.

II. "Don't be afraid; just believe" (49-56)

It was a beautiful time between Jesus and the woman. However, there was a man who was getting more anxious every minute. It was Jairus because Jesus was delaying to speak to the woman while his daughter was dying. He had come to Jesus because he had faith in him. But over time he was losing his faith. Fear and anxiety were attacking him constantly. Finally, he got knocked down when someone came from his house and said: "Your daughter is dead. Don't bother the teacher anymore." It was terrible news. "Your daughter is dead" meant that it was over. Many people think that death is the end of everything. They don't know what will happen after their death. Some think that they will disappear into darkness. Therefore, they are afraid of death. "Don't bother the teacher anymore" sounds reasonable and very kind to Jesus. But it was the voice of unbelief that implied that Jesus would not be able to do anything in that situation. It was the voice of Satan to put unbelief and fear in Jairus' heart. When Jairus began to lose his faith, a great fear attacked him. He felt like weeping bitterly saying, "My daughter is dead. It's over. It's over."

We try to live by faith. But sometimes we lose faith because our situations are getting worse. We pray for the healing of our beloved family members, friends, and coworkers. But it seems that their health conditions are getting worse, and we lose faith. We pray for the restoration of our families. But their situations don't change; on the contrary, they are getting worse. Thus, we lose faith. Some of us pray for our children to come back to Jesus and be restored in God, but don't see any changes from their children. So, they lose faith. Some are praying to get a job. But Satan continues to attack through unbelief and fear, and they lose faith. Our students are praying for their studies to get good grades or to get admission into a good college. But some of them are afraid of exams and lose faith. Our church leaders and members are praying for the spiritual revival of our ministry, but sometimes we cannot see the progress of God's work and lose faith. Satan whispers to us, "God can't help you. Don't bother God anymore."

But what did Jesus say to Jairus? "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed." The first thing that Jesus told him was: "Don't be afraid." To be afraid is the expression of our unbelief that comes from Satan. 2 Timothy 1:7 "For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (ESV). Also, 1 John 4:18 "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love." If we trust in Jesus and his love, we will not be afraid of anything, but we will have a spirit of power, love, and self-control. The second thing that Jesus told him was: "Just believe." Jesus wanted him to have simple and pure faith. What does 'just believe' mean? It means to believe that almighty God is alive and at work now. It is to believe that God has enough power and is working to help us out. Some Christians don't believe that God is working now. They say that they have faith in God, but they don't believe that God is working with His power. They don't believe that God is in control over everything in our lives. If we believe that God is in control, we will not be afraid of anything because fear is just a lie. Satan and his weapon death cannot do anything against us because Jesus gave us his promise saying, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world!" (Jn 16:33). We believe that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Ro 8:28).

Therefore, we can “rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for us in Christ Jesus” (1 Th 5:16-18).

(a photo of Horatio Gates Spafford) Horatio Gates Spafford was born in New York in 1828. He and his wife Anna were active in their church, and their home was always open to visitors. The evangelist D. L. Moody was one of their friends. They were blessed with five children and considerable wealth. But their son of four-years-old suddenly died of scarlet fever. A year later, in 1871, a massive fire devastated downtown Chicago, including many properties owned by Horatio Spafford. Two years later, Spafford planned to visit England with his family because his friend D. L. Moody would preach there. Horatio delayed for his business, so he sent his family ahead: his wife and their four daughters. While crossing the Atlantic, the vessel was struck by another ship and two hundred and twenty-six people lost their lives, including their four daughters. His wife Anna was found unconscious, floating on a plank of wood. Hearing the news, Horatio set off at once to meet his wife. During the voyage, the captain explained to him that they were passing over the very spot where his daughters had died. Then, Spafford returned to his cabin and wrote the hymn “It is well with my soul.” “When peace like a river attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll, Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, ‘It is well, it is well with my soul.’ It is well with my soul. It is well, it is well with my soul.” (Hymn # 554) In 1881, Horatio and Anna left America and settled in Jerusalem. They served the needy, helped the poor, and cared for the sick, and took in homeless children. Horatio Spafford died of malaria in 1888 at age 59 and Anna continued to work in the surrounding areas of Jerusalem until she died in 1923.¹ This is a beautiful story of faith.

While I was serving God in Venezuela as a missionary, I was kidnapped in 2011. Four kidnappers broke into my car with guns. They covered my eyes with a cap and began to threaten me, “Which is more important, your life or money?” “Bring a knife. Let’s cut off his fingers.” I thought that my life could end in that night. What I could do in that moment was to pray to God. In the midst of the danger of my life, I began to pray with repentance of my sins. I confessed to God that my life was in his hands. I put everything in God’s will. Then, great peace came to me. I could speak quietly and wisely to the kidnappers, and they released me in 2 and half hours. I could experience the words of Jesus: “Don’t be afraid; just believe, and you will be saved.” Praise the Lord!

Jairus could recover his faith through the word of Jesus. Jesus arrived at the house of Jairus and said to those who were wailing and mourning: “Stop wailing. She is not dead but asleep.” For Jesus who is the source of life, death is just sleep. Jesus took her by the hand and said, “My child, get up!” Then her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Her parents were astonished.

Are you in trouble in your life? Are you afraid that your problem will not be solved, and you will fail? What does Jesus say to you? “Don’t be afraid; just believe.” Our almighty God is alive and working in us and for us. We will be victorious in Jesus Christ who loves us. May God bless each of us not to be afraid; but to just believe. Amen.

¹ <https://www.bethelripon.com/life-stories/horatio-gates-spafford>

