

To Seek and To Save the Lost

Jesus Heals a Woman and Jairus's Daughter

Luke 8:40-56

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Scripture

In chapter 8 of his Gospel, Luke answers the question, "Who then is this?" (8:25). In four different accounts he shows that Jesus has power over nature, demons, disease, and death.

Previously, we examined Jesus' power over nature (8:22-25) and demons (8:26-39). Today we are going to examine Jesus' power over disease and death.

Let's read about Jesus healing a woman and Jairus's daughter in Luke 8:40-56:

⁴⁰ Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. ⁴¹ And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, ⁴² for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

As Jesus went, the people pressed around him. ⁴³ And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. ⁴⁴ She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. ⁴⁵ And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!" ⁴⁶ But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me." ⁴⁷ And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. ⁴⁸ And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

⁴⁹ While he was still speaking, someone from the rul-

er's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more." ⁵⁰ But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well." ⁵¹ And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. ⁵² And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." ⁵³ And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴ But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." ⁵⁵ And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. ⁵⁶ And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened. (Luke 8:40-56)

Introduction

Some people argue that miracles, including Jesus' resurrection, are impossible because nature is a closed system and miracles would therefore violate the laws of nature. But John Lennox, mathematician and professor at Oxford University, says that Christians don't claim that Jesus rose by some natural process that violated the laws of nature. Instead, Jesus rose because God injected enormous power from *outside* the system.

He illustrates by saying, "Suppose I put \$1,000 tonight in a drawer in my office. Then I put another \$1,000 in tomorrow night. That's \$2,000. On the third day, I open the drawer and I find only \$500. Obviously, when you find only \$500 in the drawer, the laws of arithmetic have not been broken. \$1,000 plus \$1,000 still equals \$2,000. What those laws tell you is that someone (in this case, probably a thief) has put his hand into the drawer and removed the money from the drawer. The laws of mathematics can't stop the thief from doing that."

And so Lennox concludes, "In the same way, the resurrection of Jesus – and every other miracle – does not negate the laws of nature. The resurrection, or any other miracle, shows

that Someone has reached into the drawer of history and removed something – the sting of death. So unless you have evidence that the system is totally closed, you cannot argue against the possibility of miracles.”¹

That is what Luke is writing about. He is showing his readers that Jesus is God in human form who came to seek and to save the lost. Jesus is reaching his hand, as it were, into our time and space to demonstrate his enormous power from outside our system to do miracles and transform lives.

Lesson

The account of Jesus healing a woman and Jairus’s daughter in Luke 8:40-56 will teach us about the power of Jesus over disease and death.

Let’s use the following outline:

1. The Request to Jesus (8:40-42a)
2. The Restoration by Jesus (8:42b-48)
3. The Reassurance from Jesus (8:49-50)
4. The Restriction by Jesus (8:51)
5. The Ridicule toward Jesus (8:52-53)
6. The Resurrection by Jesus (8:54-55a)
7. The Requirement of Jesus (8:55b-56)

I. The Request to Jesus (8:40-42a)

First, let’s look at the request to Jesus.

In verse 40 Luke said that **when Jesus returned**, presumably to Capernaum from the country of the Gerasenes on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, **the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him**. Jesus’ entire ministry, with only a handful of exceptions, was conducted in public. People constantly flocked to his ministry of preaching and healing.

¹ Adapted from John Lennox, *Miracles* (The Veritas Forum, 2013), 24.

In this crowd were two people who desperately wanted Jesus' help. One was a man, the other was a woman. Luke began and ended this narrative with the man and sandwiched the woman's story in the middle.

Luke said in verse 41a that **there came a man** to Jesus **named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue**. He was a respected religious leader in the community, and was probably fairly well off financially too. Luke recorded earlier that in the town of Capernaum Jesus healed the sick people by laying his hands on every one of them and healing them (4:40). He had also cast demons out of many (4:41), and had even cast a demon out of a man in the synagogue in Capernaum (4:31-35), which **Jairus** may have witnessed.

Jairus, we learn in verse 42a, was extremely concerned, **for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying**. We don't know what ailed her, but Jairus went to Jesus. Knowing that Jesus had healed others, he believed that Jesus could heal his **only daughter**.

Jairus was so concerned about his only daughter that, **falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house** (8:41b). Gone was the decorum. Gone was the thought about what others might think of him. His request to Jesus was for him to come and heal his daughter, which Jesus agreed to do.

II. The Restoration by Jesus (8:42b-48)

Second, notice the restoration by Jesus.

Actually, Luke now described an interruption. Jesus was on his way to Jairus's house. Jesus' disciples and crowds of people were going with him.

Luke then said in verse 42b that **as Jesus went, the people pressed around him**. And one of the people in the crowd was a woman who had a desperate need of her own.

A. *The Woman's Disease (8:43)*

First, notice the woman's disease.

Luke said that **there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years** (8:43a). Most commentators suggest that she had some kind of uterine hemorrhage. Interestingly, she had been ill for as long as Jairus's daughter had been alive.

According to the Old Testament Law, a woman with a **discharge of blood** was considered ceremonially unclean (Leviticus 15:19ff). She was not allowed to participate in public worship. Moreover, if anyone touched her, that person would be ceremonially unclean, and so it is likely that she had had virtually no physical contact with anyone for twelve years.

In addition, **though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone** (8:43b). In fact, Mark said that she "had suffered under many physicians, and was no better but rather grew worse" (Mark 5:26).

B. *The Woman's Determination (8:44a)*

Second, notice the woman's determination.

Luke said that **she came up behind Jesus and touched the fringe of his garment** (8:44a).

C. *The Woman's Deliverance (8:44b-48)*

And third, note the woman's deliverance.

An amazing thing happened! She had just touched the fringe of Jesus' garment **and immediately her discharge of blood ceased** (8:44b). She was instantly healed!

But **Jesus** stopped and **said, "Who was it that touched me?"** (8:45a). One can almost see all the people bumping into each other. Although people were crowding around Jesus, no

one was intentionally touching Jesus. **When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!"**

But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me" (8:45b-46).

Commentators differ about whether or not Jesus really knew who had touched him. I side with those who believe that Jesus did know that the woman had touched him and that he had healed her. After all, many people were touching Jesus as the crowds surrounded him, and they were not healed. Jesus asked who had touched him, not because he did not know the woman's identity, but because he wanted to draw this woman out into the open so that she could give a public testimony of God's powerful work in her life.

And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed (8:47). God wants his children, like this woman, and you and me, to give public testimony to his powerful and saving work in our lives.

But Jesus also wanted to assure her about what it means to belong to him. **He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace" (8:48).** Jesus wanted her to know that she was not healed because of some superstitious belief that somehow by touching his garment she would be healed. No. He wanted her to know that it was her faith in him, timid though it was, that healed her.

Friend, you may feel that you are ostracized from God and others. But if, like this woman, you come to Jesus, he will save you. No matter what you have done, no matter what you have suffered, Jesus will save you and give you his peace.

Notice that Jesus stopped the crowd and gave his full attention to this woman. Although Jesus' ministry was primarily to crowds, he *always* had time for individuals.

III. The Reassurance from Jesus (8:49-50)

Third, note the reassurance from Jesus.

One can imagine how anxious Jairus must have been as he watched Jesus' interaction with the woman. His little girl was dying. She was actually critical, whereas the woman had a chronic illness. Couldn't Jesus come back to the woman after he had taken care of Jairus's daughter?

While Jesus was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more" (8:49). Why, the very thing that Jairus feared had happened! If only Jesus had not stopped to talk with the woman, Jairus must have thought to himself, and his daughter might now be alive.

But Jesus on hearing this news about Jairus's daughter answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well" (8:50).

We should remember that God's timetable is never the same as ours. Tim Keller points out in one of his sermons on this incident that Jesus will not be hurried. We want Jesus to take action on our timetable and schedule, but Jesus is in control. And when things don't happen on our timetable, we think that God does not love us. You see, Jesus knows things that we don't. Jesus has no more trouble healing a dead person than a sick person. He is at work in our lives for his glory and our ultimate good, and not for our present comfort and lack of problems.

And so Jesus tells Jairus to trust him, even though he feels so terribly distraught about what had just happened to his girl.

IV. The Restriction by Jesus (8:51)

Fourth, observe the restriction by Jesus.

In verse 51 Luke said that **when Jesus came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child.** We are not told why no one else was allowed to enter.

V. The Ridicule toward Jesus (8:52-53)

Fifth, look at the ridicule toward Jesus.

By this time the professional mourners, family members and neighbors had all arrived at the house. In the culture of that day, people were buried the same day that they died.

And all were weeping and mourning for her, but Jesus said, “Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping” (8:52). Some have said that Jairus’s daughter was not really **dead** but that Jesus correctly understood and said that she was simply **sleeping**, as if in some sort of coma.

However, we know that Jairus’s daughter really was dead because the people **laughed at him, knowing that she was dead** (8:53). They knew a dead person when they saw one.

Jesus was referring to the fact that he was looking at the death of Jairus’s daughter from God’s perspective. From God’s perspective, it was as if she was simply **sleeping**.

VI. The Resurrection by Jesus (8:54-55a)

Fifth, notice the resurrection by Jesus.

But taking her by the hand he called, saying, “Child, arise” (8:54). We miss a lot in our English translation at this point.

First, Luke translated Jesus’ Aramaic into Greek, but Mark kept the Aramaic. Jesus used the diminutive for **“child.”** And in that culture, a diminutive was used as a pet name. Literally, Jesus was saying something like, “Honey” or “Sugar” or “Sweetie.”

Second, when Jesus said, “**Arise,**” he was not saying, “Get up from the dead!” He was using a term that simply means, “Get up.”

Basically what Jesus was doing was what Jairus did every morning when he went into his daughter’s room and took her by the hand and said, “Honey, it’s time to get up.”

Do you see the incredible power of Jesus? Death is the greatest enemy we have. Death is our most feared and dreaded enemy. Jesus did not go into the room, roll up his sleeves, recite a bunch of hocus-pocus incantations, wave his coat over the little girl, and raise her back to life. No. Jesus spoke to her as if death was nothing but sleep.

Here’s what that means. Jesus is saying that if you believe in him, then you don’t have to be afraid of death. The greatest and final human enemy that we all face – death – is nothing more than a good night’s sleep to Jesus.

Well, as soon as Jesus told Jairus’s daughter to get up, **her spirit returned, and she got up at once** (8:55a). Jesus demonstrated his power over death.

VII. The Requirement of Jesus (8:55b-56)

And finally, observe the requirement of Jesus.

First, notice the compassion of Jesus as **he directed that something should be given her to eat** (8:55b). He knew that she must be hungry after having been ill for a while.

Luke noted in verse 56 that **her parents were amazed, but Jesus charged them to tell no one what had happened.** Of course, as soon as the girl stepped out the room, everyone would know that *something* had happened and that she was alive and no longer dead. However, Jesus often told people not to say anything about his miracles because he did not want the people to misunderstand his mission and try to make him king by force, as they once did try to do (John 6:14-15).

Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed Jesus healing a woman and Jairus's daughter as set forth in Luke 8:40-56, we should believe that Jesus has power to save anyone.

Jesus calls us to trust him. We cannot physically see him but his Word calls us to put our trust in him.

An illustration of trusting when we cannot see comes from the time when the Nazis were bombing London during World War II. A father, holding his small son by the hand, ran from a building that had been struck by a bomb. In the front yard was a shell hole. Seeking shelter as soon as possible, the father jumped into the hole and held up his arms for his son to follow.

Terrified, yet hearing his father's voice telling him to jump, the boy replied, "I can't see you!"

The father, looking up against the sky tinted by the burning buildings, called to the silhouette of his son, "But I can see you. Jump!"²

Jesus calls us to trust him too. We cannot see him. But we are not jumping blindly into the dark. We hear his voice in the Word of God. He demonstrates his power over disease and even death. He calls us to put our faith in him so that we might be saved.

Have you put your faith in Jesus?

² Donner Atwood, *Reformed Review*, quoted in Craig Brian Larson, *750 Engaging Illustrations for Preachers, Teachers, and Writers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 196.

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develop them to Christlike maturity,
equip them for their ministry in the church
and life mission in the world,
in order to magnify God's name.*

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PRAYER:

Father, we thank you for this wonderful account of Jesus' power over disease and even death. Thank you for the powerful way Jesus demonstrated his power over disease and death.

Help us to put our trust in Jesus. Help us to believe that it is as simple for Jesus to raise a dead person back to life as it is for him to heal a sick person.

If there is anyone here today who has not yet put his or her trust in you, will you please grant that person the gift of faith.

And for this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

BENEDICTION:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and always. Amen.

CHARGE:

Now, brothers and sisters, go and serve God wholeheartedly!