

Luke 8:40-56

“God Delights In Doing The Impossible”

As you study the scriptures you’ll come to discover that God loves impossible odds. You’ll see it over and over again; God delights in doing the impossible. There they were, the children of Israel on their way to the Promised Land having been delivered through a series of miraculous means from the people of Egypt. But Pharaoh refusing to admit defeat, becoming furious set out to bring them back by force, so the entire Egyptian army pursued the children of Israel into the wilderness and caught up to them camping by the sea.

The children of Israel lifted up their eyes and saw the Egyptian army marching their way. There was a mountain to the left of them, a mountain to the right of them, the Egyptian army behind them and the Red Sea in front of them. They were trapped, nowhere to go and nothing they could do about it, a bunch of worn down civilians standing prey to the world’s most elite army of that day. Needless to say the people began to freak out and shout at Moses, “You should’ve left us alone to serve the Egyptians! At least then we’d have been alive but you’ve brought us out here to die with out mercy in the wilderness!”

You know the story (Ex 14). Moses said, “Don’t be afraid. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today.” There we read that the Angel of God, who went before them moved and went behind them forming a wall (a massive pillar of cloud) between them so that the enemy was unable to approach them. Moses stretched out his rod over the sea and the Lord caused the waters to divide and the children of Israel crossed between the walls of water on dry ground...God delights in doing the impossible.

Jonathon and one man (his armorbearer) confronted with the fact of 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen and men as the sand of the seashore in multitude standing opposite them in the Philistine army. Jonathon says, “*“Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the Lord will work for us. For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few.”* So his armorbearer said to him, *‘Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart.’*” 1 Sam 14:6-7 “Hey man, let’s go stand opposite the enemy today, who knows, maybe God wants to do a radical work. He can use us just the same as He can use *anyone.*”

Now when you want to embark on a venture of faith whereby the odds are impossible this is the kind of man you want by your side. You don't want "Dan the downer", "Fred the fearful" or "Rick the reluctant" going, "I don't know man that seems pretty risky and in case you haven't noticed *we don't have the resources!*" You want that guy, that gal that says, "Hey man, if you think God is *in* it, if He's moving in your heart in regard *to* it I'm in your corner, I'm on your side let's go *for* it and I'm with you every step of the way whether this thing sinks or sails." As you well know God granted them tremendous victory against impossible odds.

Gideon (need I say more?) What were his odds? No greater than 450/1, that's not improbable; that's impossible. 450 men to 1; (300 Vs 135,000) God delights to do the impossible. Our impossibilities become His opportunities to show Himself strong, to remind us of Who *He is* and who *we're not*. To underscore the reality of *His word* and increase *our faith*, "*Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?*" Jer 32:27

We've been reminded and will *be reminded* in Luke Ch 8 that be it danger in the natural, the supernatural, incurable disease or even death, that though each of these areas are completely out of *our* control they're completely *under* the control of Christ.

What a perfect segue into why it's so important that I relinquish my life utterly/fully and totally into His hands. with me in control I have at best limited resources, a limited ability to cope with what life may throw my way. Therefore I'm left in a state of uncertainty never knowing if I'll be able to deal with what comes my way adequately. In Christ I have that "blessed assurance". Because He has *unlimited* resources and has complete control over every situation that enters the equation of my life. That's why the bible exhorts us, "*...casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*" 1 Peter 5:7 You've heard it before let me encourage you again; Jesus cares for you...

Vs 40

Seems a rather obscure place to enter a text, be that as it may you recall that Jesus had set sail with His disciples over to the country of the Gadarenes whereby He'd calmed the tempestuous storm with but a word. When He got there He delivered the demon possessed man in similar fashion (by His word); Jesus brought calm to a tempestuous storm and He brought peace to a tormented soul; that's the power of the word of God.

That's why Paul the apostle said, "... *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes,*" Rom 1:16 God is in the business of renewing lives and taking people from dead in sin, with out hope being with out God in the world to alive in Christ. Peter echoed that principle when he said, "...*having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.*" 1 Peter 1:23

But what I want to point out here is the reaction of the people to His presence... Because I have discovered (no doubt you have as well) that various people will respond to the person of Christ in various ways. Back in Vs 35-37 we find the people filled with fear and freaking out; their natural minds were unable to discern spiritual matters and they actually asked Jesus to leave them and to let them live life their own way. That's generally the way the world responds to Christ, "I don't *understand* You, I'm a little worried about being *around* You, my preference is to be left alone."

The one to whom Jesus ministered wasn't fearful at all, he was begging to *follow* Him. Before you meet Jesus you're generally a little skeptical *of* Jesus, once you meet Him you just want to *follow* Him.

As Jesus returned to the side of the lake He'd come from the people were waiting for Him, and they *welcomed* Him.

They were filled with joy to see Him because they knew the blessing that went with being in His presence. Now among this crowd will surface 2 people in particular, both in a desperate place; both on their face (as a result of that desperate place) at the feet of Jesus.

You know there is such a thing as what we might refer to as "Blessed Affliction". How many people find reconciliation with God on their faces at the feet of Jesus due to a situation of desperation in their lives?

But before we go there I just want to say that it's my prayer for every one of us today that we'll find ourselves here in Vs 41. That when Jesus returns we will rejoice and *welcome* Him, because we're *all waiting* for Him...

Vs41-42

So see the scene, follow the flow. Multitudes waiting *on* Jesus, creating a barricade of sorts all *around* Jesus, but as they begin to press in *on* Him one comes *to* Him and there's purpose in his eyes. He's pressing through the crowd, pushing people out of the way; more than likely there's a silence that falls on the crowd as he makes his way, why? We're given 2 details about him; his name (Jairus) and his occupation (ruler of the synagogue). This guy is one of the most (if not the most) powerful man in the Jewish community in that area, he has money, he has power, he holds a prestigious position and he associates with those who have made it no secret that they really don't have any affection for Jesus. Now here he comes, pressing with a sense of urgency; there's expediency about his endeavor; what does he want, what's he going to do?

We read that he makes his way *to* Jesus, falls down *before* Jesus and begins to *beg* Him, "Jesus...my little girl...she's dying; *please*..." Mark's gospel informs us that he asked Jesus to come and lay His hands on her that she might be healed, and live. Now gathering who he is and how sick his daughter is it probably means that he's tried every other option and has sought at all cost to avoid having to come to Jesus. This is a huge risk for him; this move could cost him everything. It could cost him his position, his income, his status in the religious community; but you know what? Desperate times call for desperate measures, and when you find yourself in a desperate place...suddenly making money, having power or being famous doesn't matter anymore. You don't care what it's going to take or what people might think; you just need help (now listen); that's so often when people turn to Jesus.

Don't be misled here. It wasn't his love for God that drew him to Jesus, it wasn't a desire to serve the Lord that led him to Jesus' feet, it was his *need*. It was in Jesus that his only glimmer of hope remained and how often *despair* is the prelude to *grace*.

Now, note how our Master handled the matter. He didn't say, "Ladies and Gentlemen what have we here!? A *Religious Leader*...the other day you wanted nothing to do with Me but now that you have a problem I'm supposed to just *rush your way*!?"

That's not the nature of our Lord, but rather we're reminded of the scriptures, "*A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench*;" Isa 42:3 Speaking of the care and compassion with which He would handle the bruised and broken lives before Him. The one who comes to Christ He will by no means cast out (Jn 6:37).

Jesus is going to take this desperate measure of faith that Jairus is exercising and do a radical work in his life as the result of it. Listen; great faith is a great thing, but more than the *amount* of faith one has what matters is the *object* of one's faith. Just a *little faith* in Jesus can do *great things*. Jesus looked *at* him, had compassion *upon* him and immediately began to make His way *with* him.

Vs 43-46

As if it weren't already like an ambulance in a traffic jam now the situation hits gridlock and what unfolds for us is a scene with in a scene. This woman who's been hemorrhaging for the last 12 yrs, unable to find help or healing through medical means, alleviated only of her finances finds herself reaching out to Jesus Christ

I won't take a lot of time with it but I believe it's important to get a bit of a grip on how this condition has affected her for the last 12 yrs because it's impacted her physically, it's impacted her financially, it's impacted her emotionally, socially and most of all spiritually.

I think the physical pain and limitations it placed upon her are the most obvious, the financial devastation is stated; it wiped her out completely, she lives destitute and in poverty. It also took its toll emotionally, no one and nothing could do anything for her. You talk to anyone who lives with chronic pain and they'll tell you how it can wear upon your emotions. You think about it night and day; it affects what you do, when you do it and how it's done. This was devastating to her socially. According to Leviticus 15 it rendered her ceremonially unclean causing to become a virtual social outcast from the Jewish society. Everything/anyone she touched became unclean, anything she sat on, or laid down on was considered unclean (she was like a social leper). But most devastating is that she was suffering spiritually, she couldn't attend synagogue, she'd been barred/banned/cut off from corporate worship. She's defiled, destitute, discouraged and generally disillusioned...she's desperate.

Here's the deal; you can't always count on doctors, you can't count on counselors, don't place your hope in your pastor, but in the Person of Jesus Christ

Think it through, there's more than one interesting detail that's encompassed with in this happening. We have a poor woman and a powerful man, one who's wealthy the other who's completely with out. One has had 12 yrs of joy that's about to be extinguished, the other 12 yrs of misery that's about to be made whole. One was banned from the Synagogue; the other was the Ruler of the Synagogue. One was a man of prominence, the other was at best anonymous (we don't even know her name).

Neither could find healing in earthly physicians and both found themselves at the feet of the Great Physician and will find their hope realized in Jesus.

She made her way through the crowd because she was going to do what it took to have her moment, an encounter with Christ. When it says that the crowds "thronged" Him it's a word that's used meaning to "strangle" or "choke" or even "drown". The people were "thick"; this was no ez task. Maybe there's a crowd in your life that's hindering you from reaching the Lord. The crowd of unbelief, or entertainment, ungodly friends or distracting activities; press *through* those things, refuse to be denied *by* those things that you might encounter Jesus Christ in a way that will change your life; offer you healing and hope.

It's a dramatic scene to say the least; the multitudes inching along; a situation of desperation; people pressing in *on* Him, brushing up against Him when all of the sudden a hand reaches out unnoticed and touches the hem of His garment and suddenly Jesus stops. "Who touched Me." Peter's all, "Uh, Lord, there's 100's if not 1,000's of people here, *everyone* is touching You." Jesus says, "No, someone *touched* Me, power has gone forth from Me." I want you to note that Jesus readily discerns the difference between the crowd that surrounds Him generally Vs someone who's reaching out to Him *genuinely*.

There was a lot of people in that crowd on that day, but Jesus put a stop to the show because of one...Are you that one today? As Jesus "passes through our midst" though there may be many of us here generally are you the one He's seeking specifically? Are you reaching out to Him desperately...because things can't continue as they have? Something in you somehow has to change and you've tried other things and nothing has worked and now here you are...at the feet of Jesus.

Vs 47-48

Don't think that when Jesus said, "Who touched Me?" That He didn't know who it was; He was invoking her to share publicly what He had done for her personally/privately. In Vs 47 where it says that she saw that she wasn't hidden, that more than likely points to the fact that He was staring at her. She knew that He knew...

So trembling she fell down *before* Him and confessed the whole story *to* Him. This was a big risk for her; and it paid off even bigger. Jesus would reward her "venture of faith". I'm not a hockey fan but Wayne Gretzke once said, "You miss 100% of the shots you never take."

Few things in Vs 48 then we'll pick up the pace. There was more than 1 reason that Jesus drew her out like this. As we've mentioned before Jesus doesn't go for "undercover Christians" mark my words He'll blow your cover. Jesus also wanted to make it clear to her that it wasn't His garment that healed her; there was nothing "magic" about the hem of His garment.

It was by faith that His healing power was released to work in her life. This would also serve to restore her public standing; how could she really verify that though she'd been unclean for 12 yrs suddenly she's all better? Jesus testified to her healing publicly; she did her work obscurely/secretly; Jesus is rewarding her openly.

What else is happening here? Jesus is establishing a "personal relationship" with her. He wasn't going to allow her to slip away thinking that she "stole" a blessing from Him and now she needs to avoid Him for fear of how He might respond to her. He looked *at* her and said *to* her, "Daughter" (the only reference to Jesus ever calling anyone "daughter" in the scriptures). He wants her to know that she's in the family, she doesn't need to fear but rather she can "Go in peace" she's now at peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

One final note; when she touched Jesus He didn't become *unclean* but rather she was made *clean*. What a perfect picture of the reconciling work of the cross. Jesus takes from us our sin and in its place imputes to us His righteousness...

Well with all this excitement we've almost forgotten about our friend Jairus haven't we? Jesus seems to be delaying; meanwhile his daughter is dying...notice.

Vs49

His heart sinks, his face turns ashen and his worst fears are confirmed; “Why did You have to stop and minister to this stupid woman, Jesus?” I have no doubt that a whole gamut of emotions surged through him in a moment of time. Anger, devastation, emptiness, hopelessness...look at Vs 50

Vs50

This was another one of those moments that seemed to come so common in the life of our Lord. A situation filled with a fearful anticipation mingled with a certain expectation what Jesus can/will do. Jairus is left in a place whereby all he has left to hang on to is the promise of the word of the Lord. It's both the best and hardest place anyone could ever be.

Vs51-54

Few things quickly and we'll move to our close. It's interesting that when Jesus said that she wasn't dead but only sleeping that these people could go immediately from mourning to mocking, isn't it? In that day they would hire professional mourners to be on the scene so that when someone died they would pull out their hair and weep and wail, but we can sorta see how shallow that really was when they go instantly from mourning to mocking Jesus.

But notice that before Jesus did the work He made the mockers leave. Unbelief will hinder the work of Christ in your life; rid yourself of the ridiculers. Nothing will bring you down like constant skepticism and doubt; when Jesus was preparing to do a work He scattered the skeptics; got rid of them. Drive away those who will discourage your faith.

Hang out with those people who believe God can do anything, who seem almost to get some sort of pleasure out of having the odds against them just because they know they're in a prime position to watch God move. That kind of faith is contagious, but you know what? So is skepticism, criticism and unbelief. That's why the bible says, “*The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.*” Prov 12:26

Why were Peter, James and John the only ones allowed in (outside of mom and dad). We don't know the bible doesn't say, perhaps it was so that by the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses it would be established but we don't know.

Now why did Jesus say she wasn't dead, but sleeping? People often wonder about what happens to a child when they die. Of course we believe they go to heaven, but here Jesus underscores that in that when the scriptures refer to death it speaks of a separation of man from God. God told Adam that in the day he ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would surely die. The bible teaches that man is dead in sin while he lives, separated from God and that apart from Christ we leave this planet eternally separated from God; that's death. However for the believer the NT never uses the term death because though the body "sleeps" the spirit is in the presence of God (absent from the body, present with Christ). There's no separation from God; so when Jesus says that she's not dead, she's sleeping what He's telling us is that though she may not be inhabiting her body physically, she's not separated from God spiritually. She's not dead, she's sleeping.

He puts the mockers out, takes her by the hand and says, "Little girl, arise."

Vs55-56

Not **improbable/impossible**; our Lord delights in doing the impossible. Unbelief laughs at the word of God; faith lays hold of it and releases the power of God in your life. Flesh will press, but faith will touch; forgiveness is available, reconciliation can be a reality. Just come *before* the Lord, open your heart *to* the Lord, and believe *upon* the Lord. Come to the feet of Jesus...

Prayer Points:

Lord Your goodness goes beyond description. No matter who we are, where we've been or what "rung of the social ladder" we may be on You love us the same. The ground is level at the foot of the cross...and we give You praise. Lord touch our lives, increase our faith and help us to lay hold of You in a way that changes our lives forever. Draw us nearer to You and may our lives be used as a testimony of Your grace and of Your glory.

Jesus is in our midst today; are you in the crowd generally or will you reach out to Him personally, genuinely...desperately? He wants to touch your life, forgive your sin and breathe life into your spirit. Don't laugh *at* Him, lay hold *of* Him by faith, trust in the work of the cross, His death burial and resurrection for the forgiveness of your sins and you'll never be the same.