

A Dead Girl and A Sick Woman

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[0 : 0 0] Throughout the gospel, Jesus meets with a bewildering variety of people, tax collectors, wealthy religious leaders, women of ill repute, blind beggars, Roman soldiers, and grieving widows, to name but a few. He treats them all as human beings, each with their own individual issues and their own personal histories.

Jesus' public ministry was all about people. Far from withdrawing into holy isolation, Jesus' ministry was people-shaped. It teaches us, does it not, that whoever we are, whatever particular needs and issues we have, Jesus is for us. There is no one who can say today, Jesus would not be interested in me.

Well, in our passage today, Jesus meets with at least three people, each with their own issues. The first is a synagogue ruler called Jairus, whose daughter is dying. The second is a nameless woman suffering from an issue of blood. And lastly, the daughter of Jairus, who by the time Jesus had got to her, had died. He treats each of them with the dignity and compassion they deserve as human beings made in the image of God. For Jesus, these people aren't a distraction from the work of kingdom mission. These people are the work of kingdom mission. Whoever we are today, and with whatever issue we have, Jesus wants us to come to Him.

This double healing passage at the end of Luke chapter 8 is dominated by two themes, each of which Luke, the writer of this gospel, wants us to understand clearly. First of all, authority in Jesus, where we see the great power of Jesus over chronic human illness and human death. And secondly, the faith in Jesus, where different people put their trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

You know, in a world where we are just numbers, we are not numbers to Jesus. We are people worthy of His attention, His compassion, and His love. The question for us, therefore, becomes, what is it that's keeping us away from His powerfully healing touch upon us and a living faith in Him?

[2 : 5 3] First of all then, authority in Jesus, authority in Jesus. Well, throughout Luke's gospel, we've already encountered Jesus' power over a storm on the Sea of Galilee, authority over unclean spirits as well. Jesus has authority over nature and over the forces of spiritual darkness. But we've also seen Him healing the sick, raising the dead. In our passage here, this is reinforced. A synagogue ruler called Jairus comes to Jesus, begging Him to come and heal his dying daughter. Now, this synagogue ruler was an important figure in the Jewish community. And by this, his title, it may be that Jairus was the most senior synagogue ruler in the whole region.

Jairus was a person to whom everyone looked up. A person with social and religious power, Jairus was very much part of the in crowd. You know, not every religious person of Jesus' day was against Jesus. Most of them were. But some, like Jairus and Nicodemus and Simon of Arimathea, admired and respected Jesus. Some even became followers of Jesus. We tend to think that high-profile people are immune from the problems the rest of us face. But not Jairus. His daughter was dying of some unnamed disease. Jairus falls at Jesus' feet and begs Him to come and heal his daughter.

Jesus, already thronged by a great crowd, hears the man's passionate plea and makes to follow him home. But on the way there, Jesus, with this great crowd pressing against Him, is touched by a woman with an issue of blood. We don't know what her precise medical condition was, but it was a chronic condition.

She had suffered from it for many years. She'd spent all the money she'd had on doctors, but they'd not been able to treat her. Her medical condition rendered her unclean. She's not allowed to go to the synagogue.

She's not allowed to be in decent company. So compared to the Jairus, who was very much part of the in crowd, this woman is part of the out crowd, as it were. But she's part of this great throng, and she reaches out to touch Jesus. There were so many people there that she managed only to touch the fringe of His garment. Perhaps she didn't have the confidence to press any closer to Him, or perhaps for modesty's sake, this was the only part of Jesus she was willing to touch.

[5 : 55] But immediately, she felt in herself that the issue of blood had stopped. In an instant, what medical professionals had been unable to heal was gone, and all because she touched the fringe of the garment Jesus was wearing. Well, moving on from there, Jesus reaches the house of Jairus, where the mourners are gathered because in the interval, the little girl has died.

People come to meet Jesus outside the house, and they say to Jairus, they say, your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the teacher anymore. Now, unless we are incredibly arrogant, we must accept that this little girl really had died, that she had finally succumbed to the illness. But Jesus, undeterred by the news of her death, insists upon seeing her. He says to Jairus and to Jairus' wife, He says, do not weep. She is not dead. She is sleeping.

As we saw last Sunday morning, Jesus is not denying that she has physically died. He's telling those gathered there, He is going to bring her back to life.

And we read that He touches her hand, and He gently and tenderly calls to her, child arise. Those gathered there must have thought Jesus was mad.

Well, the doctors back then could not heal the woman with the issue of blood, and perhaps today they could. But the doctors today still can't bring someone back from the dead.

[7 : 48] But Jesus did. For we read, her spirit returned to her, and immediately she got up. What was impossible back then, Jesus did. What is still impossible now, Jesus did.

The point is this, the great authority of Jesus over chronic human disease and over human death. There is no power greater than that of Jesus, for with a touch He heals a woman with the issue of blood, and with a touch and a word, His power brings that little girl back from the dead.

And we have to ask ourselves this morning, who is this Jesus such that He possesses such great authority? Nothing in our world comes close to this kind of power.

Our most sophisticated science requires medicines, equipment to work. But even then, it takes time for improvement and time for recovery.

But with a touch and with a word, Jesus does the unthinkable and the impossible. He heals this woman, and He brings a young girl back from the dead. Now, we have two options here.

[9 : 03] Either we accept the truth of what Jesus did here, or we decide that the Bible is a book of fables and legend, none of which is actually true.

Two options. This seems rather a stark choice, but logically speaking, and we're all reasonable people here, right, we've only got these options available to us.

Unless we accept or plump for the most foolish option of them all, which is to say, well, this is true, but so what? Listen, if what the Bible records is true, then no one in history comes close to possessing the power and authority of Jesus.

When you go home, type into Google the question, who was the most powerful man in the world? It will not come up with the answer, Jesus of Nazareth.

But if the Bible is really true, then Jesus really is the most powerful man in the world, powerful enough to have authority over a chronic human disease and over human death.

[10 : 18] Let's think of a few of the most powerful figures of the past. Emperor Julius Caesar. Genghis Khan. The Duke of Wellington.

Winston Churchill. Franklin Delano Roosevelt. None of them possessed this kind of power. Only Jesus did.

Oh, and by the way, they're all dead. Which Jesus isn't. For on the third day, he rose from the grave. If we plump for that second option, that the Bible is nothing more than a book of fables and legends, then we must seriously ask ourselves today whether it's worth bothering to be here in church and to what extent we can really call ourselves Christians at all.

If we are so skeptical about the Bible, such that we don't believe that these things happened in Luke 8, then is there anything in the Bible we can believe?

It becomes so subjective, so pick and mix. Let's just stay at home, make up our own religions to suit our own lifestyles and our own opinions. Which brings us back to this question.

[11 : 33] If what we read in Luke chapter 8 is true, we're faced with this question. Who is this Jesus such that he possesses this kind of authority?

Is he not the Savior and Messiah? Is he not the Son of God, the Lord? Is he not far more powerful?

And does he not possess far more authority than anything and anyone in our world today? Presidents and kings, scientists and generals, they are as nothing compared to the power of Jesus Christ the Lord.

You know, we are naturally drawn to powerful people. Do we not feel drawn to this most powerful of people? To Jesus Christ? The Jesus who uses his power not to destroy people, but to heal people.

Not to kill people, but to raise them from the dead. Jesus stands today, head and shoulders, above every other human in history, in every single way.

[12 : 53] But especially, I suppose, today, in this. He was the most powerful man to have ever lived. Which makes it all the more amazing, don't you think, that we find him in just a few short months after the events here recounted in Luke 8, hanging on a Roman cross in weakness and shame.

But then we know, do we not, that he was dying for us there. He was taking upon himself our sin and our guilt. That he was suffering on our account.

Surely, if ever were to be drawn to anyone, it must be to Jesus, whose authority is greater than any other. Authority and Jesus.

But then secondly, we have faith and Jesus. Faith and Jesus. For if this is a passage about the great authority of Jesus over chronic human disease and death, it's also a passage about what it means to have faith in Jesus.

We've already said that we feel drawn to powerful people and that as a result, perhaps we may feel drawn to Jesus, whose authority is greater than any other. What does it look like not just to be drawn to Jesus, but to put ourselves in a position where we can experience Jesus' healing touch in our lives personally?

[14 : 26] The forgiveness of sins. The relief of our misery without Him. And the eternal life, which He promises to all those who will have faith in Him.

Well, drawing from these accounts, we want to suggest the following three elements of what it means to have faith in Jesus. Approach, persistence, and openness.

Approach, persistence, and openness. Approach, first of all, approach. Both Jairus and the woman with the issue of blood approach Jesus in their own ways.

Jairus, rather, in verse 41, approaches Jesus in this way. He fell at Jesus' feet, imploring Him to come to His house. When faced by His daughter's illness, this most prominent of men in the community wasn't proud.

He fell at the feet of Jesus. This is the posture of worship and request. It's how someone approaches a king, perhaps.

[15 : 41] They fall down before Him. Friends look each other in the eye when they meet each other, for after all, they're equals. But Jairus recognized Jesus not as an equal, but as a superior.

Given what we learn later about the supreme power of Jesus, we don't approach Jesus as an equal. Faith falls on its knees before Jesus and recognizes Him as superior.

Faith comes to Jesus as Lord and King. Isaiah fell to his knees before the vision of the majesty of God in Isaiah 6. Peter fell to his knees before the Jesus who stilled the storm and walked on the water.

The apostle John fell to his knees before the revelation of the risen glory of Jesus. Faith falls to its knees at Jesus' feet in great humility.

But we also read in verse 41 that Jairus was imploring Jesus to come to his house.

[16 : 51] He also realized he needed the help only Jesus could provide, so having fallen down before him, he was begging for Jesus' help. Are we too proud to beg for Jesus' help to get rid of our sin and shame, for Jesus to make us new people, give us a new start, and give us the hope of eternal life?

Faith doesn't argue with Jesus as much as it pleads for help and implores him to come to our aid. When it comes to Jairus, faith falls to its knees in humility before Jesus, and faith pleads with Jesus for help.

Well, when it comes to the woman with the issue of blood, her approach to Jesus is far more hidden. Jesus is pressed in by the crowd. Hiding in the crowd, she creeps up behind him and she touches the fringe of his garment.

Her approach is far more subtle than that of Jairus. She comes to Jesus in a different way, and yet she shows no less determination in her approach.

She must touch Jesus lest she will not be healed. Faith reaches its hand forth to touch Jesus.

[18 : 13] No matter what reasons the rest of the crowd may be there, this woman is there out of her great personal need, and she reaches her hand forth to touch Jesus.

So these people approach Jesus in their own ways. Jairus' faith is demonstrated in his falling before Jesus' feet in great humility and pleading with Jesus for help. This woman's faith is demonstrated in reaching out to touch Jesus.

The important thing is they both come to Jesus from a place of need. They both come to Jesus from a place of need. We need Jesus today.

Are we willing to approach Him? The second element behind approach in this passage is persistence. That's the second element of their faith.

Approach and persistence. The persistence, the determination, the endurance of the woman with the issue of blood is plain to see.

[19 : 19] She gets herself into the crowd and she wriggles herself into a position where she can touch Jesus. perhaps, you know, perhaps she had to shove others out of the way. Or perhaps she bent down beneath the crowd and crawled between people's legs.

But however she did it, she was so persistent because she was so needy, she got herself in there to a place where she could touch the hem of Jesus' garment. She's not going to let other people get in the way of her desperate need for wholeness.

You know, I wonder at times whether we let other people and what we think they're going to say to us get in the way of our own coming to Jesus.

We're afraid of what we think they might say to us when we tell them that we've become Christians. But whatever our fear, we must overcome it.

We must be persistent in our approach to Jesus. Our need is simply too great to let others get in the way of our forgiveness, our comfort, and our wholeness.

[20 : 29] When it comes to Jairus, it's a different matter. Let's put ourselves in his shoes. So he comes to Jesus in desperation.

And he falls down before Jesus' feet and he's begging Jesus for help. Jesus responds and begins to make his way to Jairus' house. But between Jesus and Jairus' house is this massive crowd pressing in upon him.

And then this woman with the issue of blood gets in the way and it takes time for Jesus to deal with her. Can you imagine an ambulance trying to make its way along the expressway at quarter to five on a normal evening and suddenly there's two lanes of traffic and the ambulance can't get through.

Right? One can imagine that given how sick his daughter was, Jairus was getting more desperate by the moment. Every second was as long as an hour to Jairus and every distraction was a pest.

And yet he persisted. He didn't give up. Having returned to the house, having learned that the child was dead, Jairus and his wife accompanied Jesus into the room where the child's body lay.

[21 : 43] His persistence was rewarded for Jesus raised his daughter from the dead. He didn't let physical circumstances, Jairus did not let physical circumstances get in the way of approaching Jesus and receiving his help.

both Jairus and this woman demonstrate persistence in their approach to Jesus. That's what genuine faith does.

It doesn't let other people's opinions keep us from Jesus. It doesn't let the circumstances of life keep us from Jesus. It doesn't say, I'll wait until life gets a bit easier for me.

I'll wait until another time. I'll wait until I'm older. It persists now. It lets no one and nothing get in the way of its coming to Jesus.

What is it that's keeping us from Jesus today? What people? What things? What circumstances? Faith is persistent. Let's allow nothing to get in the way of our coming to Jesus.

[23 : 03] And then lastly, the openness of faith, the approach of faith, the persistence of faith. Lastly, the openness of faith.

While Jairus came to Jesus openly, the woman with the issue of blood came secretly. Faith in Jesus must be an open public affair.

Jairus, in full view of this crowd, knelt at Jesus' feet and was begging him for help. There couldn't be a much more open approach to Jesus than that.

Even though Jairus' daughter was healed with only a few people around, the very fact that the little girl was up and about after she had died was evidence of Jesus' healing touch upon her life.

Nothing about Jairus' faith was a secret. It was open. It was public. It had its own results on Jairus' popularity in the community, but it was open.

[24 : 11] But this woman's a different matter. Perhaps because of the shame of her condition, she'd got used to doing things in secret, sleekedly. it was in secret she came to Jesus.

Secrecy a crowd afforded her. But what was a secret was known to Jesus. What's a secret is always known to Jesus, as I said in the kids' talk.

She touched Jesus, and Jesus felt it. Now there were 10,000 other people in this crowd touching Jesus, but only she touched him by faith, and Jesus knew it, and so he said, who is it that touched me?

He knew fine well. But then at this point, the woman steps forward with fear and trembling. She falls down before his feet. What she expected Jesus to say and do, we do not know.

Notice again how faith falls down before Jesus' feet in humility. She told her story publicly. She gave witness to Jesus' healing touch.

[25 : 22] She may have been dragged kicking and screaming as it were, but finally she was open and public about her faith in Jesus. And listen to how Jesus responds.

Daughter, he says. Wonder when the last time she'd been called that was. Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Such kind words.

She came in secret to Jesus, but she left publicly professing her faith in Jesus.

This is the model of faith. It cannot be hidden. It must come out in the open. Some people say that faith should be a private matter, not when it comes to the thought world of the Bible.

gospel. The early Christians to whom Luke was writing this gospel were, as a function of their openness about their new faith in Jesus Christ, liable to all manner of persecutions at the hands of the Romans, and yet they had to speak about Jesus.

[26 : 33] They could not be silent about their faith in Jesus. For them, faith in Jesus was not only a deeply personal matter, it had to be an openly public matter.

It had to be. So we have these three lessons about faith in the Jesus of all authority and power. Faith approaches Jesus not as an equal, but falls down at His feet in humility.

Faith persists over every obstacle until it reaches Jesus, and faith is a public matter. Given the power and authority of Jesus, faith in Him is our reasonable response.

So this passage, you see, details for us both the reason we should have faith in Jesus Christ and describes what that faith in Jesus Christ should look like so that none of us are left with the excuse that we don't know what to do with Jesus.

But let's go back to the beginning. Jesus was the ultimate people person. He received the in crowd represented by Jairus, and He welcomed the out crowd represented by this woman with the issue of blood.

[27 : 57] Now we all belong to one or the other, the out crowd or the in crowd, which means that the Jesus of the Gospels is for us. Whoever we are, whatever problems we may have, either hidden or open, embarrassing or public.

Perhaps some of us here are wondering whether we qualify for the help only Jesus can give us, or whether Jesus really wants to help us. This passage gives us the answers that we so desperately need.

Yes, Jesus wants us, and yes, we qualify for the salvation that only Jesus can give us. As He hung and died upon the cross to take away the sins of the world, we were in His heart, in His mind, every single one of us.

What then is holding us back from trusting and believing in this greatest of all? Surely nothing. Surely no one.

Certainly not Jesus. Jesus. God justice.

[29 : 16] God, he championship Lord God c him.■