

Luke 8:40-56 - Powerful Cleansing

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Preacher: Will Spink

[0 : 00] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

Turn with me to Luke chapter 8. Luke 8 is on page 864 of the Bible in the pew in front of you. We're going to be looking this morning at the story at the end of the chapter where Jesus heals a woman and a young girl.

That's where we're going to be focusing our time. But I want to look back first to the beginning of this chapter, to the first three verses of Luke 8.

Let me read those for you. Soon afterward, Jesus went on through cities and villages proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities.

Mary called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out. And Joanna, the wife of Chusa, Herod's household manager. And Susanna and many others who provided for them out of their means.

[1 : 13] We looked at these verses on our way through Luke's gospel a few weeks ago when 50-some of our women were on a retreat. I thought this morning would be an appropriate one to revisit them before we leave this chapter of Luke's gospel.

Our passage this morning does feature Jesus healing two women. But the passage is not primarily about the fact that they are female.

It's just not the main focus of it. However, in these verses, at the beginning of Luke 8, the gender of the people following Jesus is significant.

They're providing for his ministry, serving him and his disciples. And it's highlighted that there are women there. And that's significant because Jesus honors women among his followers in a way that is completely counter-cultural for his day and in particular for a Jewish rabbi in these days. It says, many women, many women are traveling among his followers and using their gifts and graces to support the ministry of Jesus and his kingdom.

[2 : 31] Last time when we paused briefly, I said this is a good reminder to us that Jesus is good news of great joy for all people.

That the new community he's building includes women as well as others who were often excluded in his day. I challenged us, there were a lot of men here that morning, to consider how we treat the women God has placed in our community.

Do we honor them? Value them? Thank God for them? And work to promote the use of their gifts in the life of the church. We must do that.

But since many of you ladies are back today, let me speak to our women and young girls for just a minute this morning. This is something I hope you already know.

But Jesus treasures you. You are so precious to him and so significant in his kingdom. He would have you to know that.

[3 : 37] No matter how discounted or marginalized or taken for granted or mistreated you may feel by anyone else, Jesus honors you.

And your value is not merely in being female. God created us, man and woman, male and female, in his image with unique and important gifts that we might reflect his image in this world.

And so you, ladies, are image bearers. You bear the image of the king of the universe, your God. You all reflect it to us in a variety of ways.

He has made you women who are like him, creative. You consistently work hard and make things beautiful. He's made you women who are like him, loving.

You teach us so much about what that means and looks like. Women who are like him, orderly, in the midst of family and work chaos.

[4 : 48] Women who are like him, gentle and patient. And that's so needed. Listen, Jesus loves you and who he has made you to be.

And his kingdom community should always honor and engage women as he did. We as the church are not always known for doing that well to our shame.

Any Christian community is weakened when it neglects to engage well with its godly women. And so I would say to you women this morning, we are a weaker reflection of the image of our God without you.

We are weaker witnesses to the glory of his grace to this community that he's placed us in. Without your unique personality and giftedness, we are so thankful for you.

Don't step away or think you're not needed here. Please continue to work with us to see the kingdom of God advanced as these women did who walked alongside Jesus when he was here.

[6 : 01] Let's pray this morning and then we'll look at the end of chapter 8. Father, we give you thanks for the women in this particular community.

We are grateful for your giving them to us. We're grateful for the ways in which they bless and help us. Father, some of them may come this morning particularly rejoicing.

Others perhaps particularly hurting. And we may not know every heart, but Father, you do. And so we pray this morning that wherever their hearts are, they would know of their value in their Father's eyes.

They would know of their significance in your kingdom. That they would know that they are treasured here in this church the way their Savior treasures them.

Would they feel as treasured by us as they are by you? Father, we look now together. All your people.

[7 : 07] Men, women, children. We look to your word. Because it alone is what directs us. We want to hear from you. We pray that you would shape us in ways that would challenge us.

In ways that would stretch us beyond our natural priorities. Our natural things that we chase after. Would it reshape our hearts and allow us to reflect more of our glorious Savior?

It's in his name we pray. Amen. Amen. The passage we'll be walking through this morning is a really neat juxtaposition of characters who encounter Jesus.

Remember that these are the last two episodes in a series of four miracles displaying the incredible power and the divine deliverance that Jesus brings.

He's already calmed the storm with a word. He's already spoken and demons came out of a man who'd been possessed for years. And now his power over things that are beyond our control is on display again in this passage.

[8 : 22] You'll notice as we read that he exercises authority over a disease that it makes clear to point out no doctor has been able to touch. There's so many rich threads in these people and in Jesus' interaction with them.

That we're just going to walk right through the story together this morning and then we'll ask some questions of ourselves at the end. The story opens in verse 40 of Luke 8.

Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him for they were all waiting for him. When Jesus returned from having been across the sea healing the demoniac, he comes back and there's a crowd waiting for him.

They'll be here through much of the story. Many witnesses of these events and the historicity of what's going on here in this passage. And these crowds coming around Jesus are all so close to him we'll see as we go through.

But at this moment, at the beginning of the passage, all of a sudden the crowds part. And make way for someone. You hear the whispers running through, step back.

[9 : 38] It's Jairus. It's Jairus. Step back. And Jairus shows up. 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 for he had an only daughter about 12 years of age.

And she was dying. Jairus is a ruler of the local synagogue. His position is one where he's deciding who's going to read the law this week.

Who will be teaching on the Sabbath. How do we keep our religious practices in line. He's a guy who is ordering things. Who is well connected.

Well respected in the community. But Jesus and the synagogue people in general, the leaders especially, they haven't been getting along real great, have they?

In fact, already as we've seen in Luke's gospel, Jesus has been run out of synagogues. Oftentimes the reception has not been warm. Jairus and his buddies, other synagogue leaders, were probably looking to avoid this controversial Jesus figure.

[10:49] But now Jairus is desperate. His life has been disrupted. He's used to it being organized and under control.

He's confident and capable. But now his little girl is seriously ill. And he comes and throws himself at Jesus' feet to beg for help.

Perhaps many of us can relate to Jairus. Successful professional. Respected citizen. Orderly life. Things look pretty good. Things seem to be going alright. But then something interrupts your idyllic life.

Shatters your controlled world. In this case, for Jairus, the sickness of his beloved daughter that no one can seem to help.

[11:52] I don't know what it may have been or may yet be in your life that would interrupt and break in like that. But Jairus, when it happens, finding himself in great need does what?

He runs to Jesus. And Jesus begins to go with him to his home. Phew! It's going to be okay, right? Jesus is coming.

My little girl, she's going to be alright. You can see Jairus' spirits rise. But then as Jesus in these growing crowds, because this is quite an event, they begin to squeeze through the streets to Jairus' house.

Someone very different from Jairus shows up. Verse 43. There was a woman who had a discharge of blood for 12 years.

And though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. Let me try to paint a picture of this woman's life for you from what we know of Jewish law and culture here.

[13:04] She has had a discharge of blood for 12 years consecutively. Doctors can't fix it. It's only getting worse. She's tried everything.

But the bleeding hasn't stopped. Listen to what Numbers tells us is reality for her. Numbers chapter 5 at verse 1. God gives commands to his people for how they are to operate.

He spoke to Moses saying, Command the people of Israel that they put out of the camp everyone who is leprous or has a discharge. There's her problem.

And everyone who's unclean through contact with the dead. You shall put out both male and female, putting them outside the camp, that they may not defile their camp in the midst of which I dwell.

This woman is religiously and socially outcast. She is not allowed in. Literally, she's outside the camp consistently.

[14:06] And when she comes in, Leviticus 15 has a whole litany of descriptions of restrictions for such a person. Restrictions like if she sits on something, it becomes unclean.

If she touches someone, he becomes unclean. So if she even was married at some point, it's a good chance she's no longer married in this culture.

She's ceremonially unclean, so no temple, no worship, no being near the presence of God, His holy dwelling among His people, she's not allowed there.

She's not been allowed to touch anyone. And no one has been supposed to touch her for 12 years. Feel that pain for just a minute.

No one's supposed to touch you. Unclean. Unworthy. Maybe you've had chronic pain or illness yourself.

[15:15] It can be physically and emotionally devastating, right? As it drags on month after month, year after year. Now, add to that the social humiliation and isolation, some of which you may also have felt.

But this woman definitely had. The religious distance. Not being good enough. Feeling not even God would have you near.

Perhaps wondering about that and what it meant for you. Let's contrast this woman with Jairus for just a minute. He's a man.

And she is a woman. Adding to that perhaps initial difficulty, he runs the synagogue. She's banned from the synagogue. He's financially stable.

Good job. She has spent all she has trying to get a cure. Now she's broke. Look, he's socially in. People know Jairus. They want him around.

[16:23] They want to be known by him, liked by him. She's socially out in about every way you could imagine. No one enjoys hanging around with her.

But notice that in this story, these two very different people are united in the same way. Both of them come together because they have a common need.

They're both desperate, aren't they? Desperate. My daughter, 12-year-old girl. My illness for 12 years.

Nothing can be done. And what do they do in their desperation? They run to Jesus. Both of them. We find two very different people following a very similar path now to Jesus.

So as this woman desperately squeezes through the crowd, you can imagine it must have been quite a crowd for her to hide and be slipping in. She's probably concerned the whole time she'll be recognized.

[17:23] Someone will get angry with her for touching them and making them unclean. But she finally reaches out. She gets close enough. I can just touch Jesus. Verse 44.

She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment. And immediately her discharge of blood ceased. It stops.

Immediately. And now, put yourself in her shoes. She realizes she's healed. Now to disappear. How to get away? How can I slip out of the crowd?

How to get away? How to get away? How to get away? How to get away? How to get away? How to get away? Jesus won't have that happen, will he? Jesus has other ideas. Verse 45.

Jesus said, who was it that touched me? And when all denied it, not me. I didn't touch him.

Probably a lot of people had bumped into him. Everybody says, not me.

[18:20] And Peter says, come on. Come on, Jesus. Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you. But Jesus insists, no.

Someone touched me. For I perceive that power has gone out from me. Jesus stops, doesn't he? In the midst of a crowd rushing toward Jairus' house, he stops.

He's concerned for her. Jesus sees the poor woman. Their eyes meet and perhaps she starts thinking, oh no.

Will I lose the cure? Will the healing go away? Will this man reject me like so many others? Will he expose me publicly for the unclean person that I am?

And it's here in the midst of those fears that we see Jesus' love on display alongside his power. We realize Jesus is not finished healing yet.

[19:29] Remarkable power has gone out from him. But Jesus heals and restores holistically. Completely. And he's got more still for this woman.

Verse 47. When the woman saw that she was not hidden. He felt that before. If I could just stay hidden.

If no one would notice. If I could just stay hidden. But Jesus refuses. She saw she was no longer 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. Jesus seeks her. And he wants to restore her. Not in isolation. Not by herself.

But in community. She tells that story to everyone within earshot. They know of her uncleanness. They hear she's been healed. Maybe they're skeptical.

[20:32] Maybe some of them are starting to fume. Did she touch me? Is there blood on my cloak? I can't believe her. The gall.

And Jesus speaks grace. Jesus. He said to her. Daughter. Your faith. Has made you well.

Go in peace. Jesus speaks to her. Daughter. The only time in the whole Bible. He uses. That word. Not only do I not reject you. I include you in my family. You are clean. You've been made well. You are welcome.

God himself embraces your touch. Jesus insists on holistic healing. That not just she. But everyone around her.

[21:30] See what has happened. See if Jesus had just wanted the blood to stop flowing after 12 years. Which would be miraculous enough. He could have just kept on walking to his seemingly more important destination.

Right? She tells us she had already been healed. Verse 47. That's the word for physical healing. Jesus instead stops.

And says your faith has made you well. A holistic word. Yes it includes physical healing. But often this word is used to include spiritual healing.

Salvation. Relational healing. Go in peace. In community. In restored relationship with God who speaks to you.

And with his people. Right? He loved her too much. To stop short of that healing. She trusted his amazing power.

[22 : 34] And that power healed her completely. In every way. Amazing. But don't forget Jairus.

Jairus is getting anxious. Right? He's got a 12 year old little girl at home. Dying. And we don't know if he was patient or impatient. But what's got to be in his heart?

Come on Jesus. Let's get going. She needs you. And now Jesus has delayed for too long.

Verse 49. While he was still speaking. Someone from the ruler's house came and said. Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the teacher. Anymore.

Perhaps they've heard the rumors of. Jesus's healing power. But death seems to be too much. Too final. In their minds.

[23 : 34] Just come on home Jairus. And start to grieve. That's what's needful now. Jesus is not thrown at all. By this development.

He doesn't hesitate. Jesus on hearing this report. Answered him. Do not fear. Only believe. And she will be well.

Believe. Jesus says. Echoes of what we heard a couple weeks ago. In the previous miracles. In this passage. Where we saw the need for our natural fear.

To lead us to faith. In Jesus. Of course Jesus understands Jairus' fear. Right? Fear of losing a daughter.

He's just been told she died. Jesus says. Don't be afraid. Believe in me. Trust me. I'm going to walk with you. Let's keep going.

[24 : 32] And they head. To Jairus' house. They reached the home. Verse 51. 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. And all were weeping and mourning for her. But Jesus said. Do not weep. For she is not dead.

But sleeping. And they laughed at him. Knowing that she was dead. Jesus calls it sleeping. Because it will be temporary.

But they're all clear. That the girl is dead. They know that. And for the sake of this story. It's important for you to remember. That dead equals unclean.

Right? You remember that list. Back in Numbers chapter 5. We don't have a leper in this story. We've seen it other places. But a woman with a discharge.

[25 : 27] And now a dead body. Things that make you unclean. No one can touch.

But Jesus does. Verse 54. Taking her by the hand. Luke says. He called. Saying. Child. Arise. And her spirit returned.

And she got up at once. And he directed. That something should be given her to eat. And her parents were amazed. But he charged them. To tell no one. What had happened.

They're not supposed to tell. Matthew's gospel. Actually clarifies. For us. That word of this. Spread through the whole region. We don't know if they told or not. But Jairus was well known.

The report of his daughter's death. Was publicly stated. And now here she is. Alive. And people begin to hear. She's eating. And walking.

[26 : 24] And relating with her parents. As we see Jesus again. Intent on a holistic restoration. He raises her from the dead. But feed her.

Hold her hand. Parents. Talk with her. Perhaps even more poignant. Or significant. In this text though. Is we now have seen.

The unclean touch Jesus. The woman. We've now seen Jesus touch. The unclean. This little girl. By all accounts.

That uncleanness. Is supposed to flow. Into him. Instead. What happens? His cleanness. Flows into them.

Jesus cleanses. So powerfully. That the flow. Is reversed. The flow of sin. The flow of the curse. That has been at work.

[27 : 21] For many. Many ages. The flow of death. Itself. Is turned backwards. At the touch of Jesus. That which no one.

Has been able to heal. Which no one. Has been able to conquer. Jesus heals. And Jesus. Conquers. His power. Is unmatched. You've seen nothing like it.

So the call to us here. Is clearly. To believe. To have faith. In this. Powerful. Savior. So in order. That we might believe. Jesus gives us. This incredible display. Of his power. Waterfalls. I love. Waterfalls. Not that one in particular.

It's off the internet. But. But there's a lot of. Beautiful waterfalls. Like that. I love the. The grandeur. Of them. The majesty. Of a waterfall. The roar.

[28 : 20] Of the water. As it. As it crashes down. Into the pool below. Over. And over. And over. And the power. Of a waterfall.

There's power there. Isn't there? You can hear it. You can feel it. You can see it. When you're there. I want you to imagine. Something kind of silly. This morning. Imagine that you're.

Standing at the bottom. Of this. Powerful waterfall. And you've. Completely covered. Yourself in mud. And for some. Strange reason. In your uncleanness.

You've decided. That you would like. To make. The waters at the top. Of that waterfall. Dirty. Because you like. Mud. And so. Covered in mud.

You think to yourself. That's what. I'm going to. I'm going to get up there. And make. Everything dirty. And so. You find yourself. At the base. Of that waterfall. Right where it crashes. Into the pool below.

[29 : 16] And for a split second. You think. Yes. I'm going up there. That's the way. This uncleanness. Is going to move. Only to be absolutely. Pummeled. Down.

Probably. A little painfully. Several feet. Under water. By the utter power. Of the waterfall. Crashing down on you.

When you come up. For air. Some time later. How much mud. Is on you? Not much. Right?

Not. Not much of that. That stuck to you. So well. A minute ago. So far from spreading. Your mud. Up that waterfall. To the top. So far from that.

It washes you. And the mud just kind of. Disappears. Goes away. That's just a taste. Of the healing power.

[30 : 16] Of Jesus. One drop. Of his shed blood. One touch. One touch. Of his gracious hand. And Satan and his demons.

Retreat. Sickness. Is pushed back. And death. Itself. Dies. One touch. From Jesus.

Step back for just a minute this morning. And get a glimpse. Of his power. As we've looked back over these last few miracles. His power over all of creation.

Over demons. Over tormented people. Over incurable illnesses. Over situations that are beyond our power and control.

Over death itself. He indeed is the divine deliverer. The one we can trust. The one who saves us. The range of his power.

[31 : 20] What he is strong enough to handle. Is incalculable. And the reach of his love. Is likewise. Breathtaking.

Last time the disciples. Receive it. He loves the demoniac. The townspeople who reject him. He pursues in love. This time an influential man.

An outcast woman. A dead little girl. Receive personal. Life altering love. That reaches into our sin. Into our hurt.

Into our shame. And heals. And restores. Completely. Just stop and think about that for a minute. Marvel. At his power. His love. One side note here. Before I ask us.

[32 : 17] A couple questions to consider as we finish. Don't be misled. By someone who says. This passage means. That if we just have faith.

And enough faith. Jesus will heal when we ask. How we ask. For whom we ask. That that's what's going on.

Yes listen. Jesus calls us. To faith here. And yes. He promises. To heal. And demonstrates his power. But remember even here.

That he often understands. The healing needed. Better than we do. He often understands. The healing that's needed. Better than we do.

The woman wanted to hide. Didn't she? Stop at physical healing. Jesus knew something better. Was needed. Jesus eventually heals.

[33 : 16] The little girl. But his power is such. That he can be trusted. Even when his timing. Seems bad. Even when death itself. Gets in play.

That doesn't stop him. Sometimes the bleeding persists. For years. Sometimes Jesus seems to move more slowly.

Towards our need. Than we are asking for. Sometimes in that frustrating timing. In that delay that we don't understand. Death itself interferes.

But listen. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. Not time. Not death.

Nothing. Stops our powerful. And loving Savior. From healing. Holistically. And completely. The one. Who trusts. Him.

[34 : 14] Pray. To him. Pray. He is powerful. And he wants us to throw ourselves at his feet. And plead for healing.

He uses those prayers. Pray. And trust him. He loves to heal. Sometimes in ways.

And at times even better. Than we imagine. Or would have been asking for. Two questions I want you to ask yourself. As we prepare to come to this table.

This morning. And celebrate together. The cleansing. Power of Jesus. The first is. What keeps you. From throwing yourself. At Jesus feet. What would keep you.

From that. Like Jairus. It could be your. Pride. And your own. Power. You don't need his power.

Because. You're. You're managing just fine. Life's okay.

[35 : 12] Y'all we need to be honest. We struggle here. Don't we. Many of us. Struggle feeling like. Life's basically okay. I'm not sure. Will. If I know what it means.

To feel desperate. It's why we often. Don't pray. The way. Many other believers. Have. Over history. And do. Today. Because we don't. Feel as desperate. As they do.

Every morning. When we wake up. We're okay. Like the woman. On the other hand. It could be your shame. Your own helplessness.

You don't want to come to Jesus. Because. You don't want him. Or others. Exposed. To the real. You. It can feel safer. To stay hidden. Can't it?

The beautiful thing here. Is the proud. Synagogue. Ruler. And the poor. Shameful woman. Both meet. Together. At the feet. Of Jesus. United.

[36 : 08] In their. Common need. And in their. Common savior. Who provides. For both. Both desperate. And both meeting. The deliverer. That they need.

Listen. Wherever you are. This morning. Don't let anything. Keep you. From coming. To Jesus. Come throw yourself. At his feet. Plead for his power. And his love.

To rescue. You. Second question. Are we a community. That fully.

Embraces. The unclean. We know. Jesus does. Luke's not going to let us. Forget this question. Is he? Over. And over.

And over. As you read through this gospel. We watch Jesus. Move towards those. Who are outcast. And bring them in. In his community. In fact. We see again this morning. The kind of community.

[37 : 02] He's creating. Where outcasts. Like this woman. Are not merely healed. But are welcomed. Into a new community. Where they are clean.

And how do you know? Because they are embraced. As family. By the king himself. And if the king embraces them. Oh boy. Everybody in the kingdom. Will too.

They're clean. And he says so. Are you just okay? That there are. Unclean. Outcast. Misfit. Religiously.

Religiously. Questionable. People. At your church. Or do you actually. Embrace them. As Jesus does. I know you're glad.

They're here. But. But what about in your. Life. Do you leave them. On the fringes. Of social groups. Just glad. To be able. To say.

[37 : 56] That you're not actively. Running them off. When was the last lunch. You shared with someone. Who. May have appeared. Unclean.

But you embrace them. As clean. In Jesus. You may feel different. From. Many people. Here at Southwood. For any number of reasons.

I don't know. What it would be. But Jesus. Unites us. In common. Desperate. Need. With a common. Gracious. Savior. And that goes beyond.

Anything else. That would divide us. I'll be talking. With you more. In the days ahead. About. Our core commitments. As a church. Things we want to characterize. And shape who we are. One of them. Is that in everything. We do. We are committed. To loving. The least. The lost. The littlest. The lonely.

[38 : 52] And the left out. Loving. Them. Why? Because we know. We are. Them. And Jesus.

Has healed. And embraced. Us. And so. We are to be a place. Where the marginalized. Find a welcome. Where the hurting.

Find a home. And you get to be a part of that. In fact. You must. Be a part of that. We won't. Be a place like that. Unless. You are like that. Because that happens. One relationship.

And one conversation. At a time. That's what. Is demonstrated. In this table. Where we gather. To celebrate. The single.

Greatest act. That Jesus did. Of healing. We gather together. And we love. People that way. Who might. Seem unclean. Because we have the hope.

[39 : 48] Of a savior. Who makes all of us. Clean. That's what we celebrate here. What Jesus did. At the cross. Remember how Paul. Recounts Jesus words.

In 1st Corinthians 11. Paul says. I received from the Lord. What I also delivered to you. That the Lord Jesus. On the night he was betrayed. Took bread. And when he'd given thanks.

He broke it. And said. This is my body. Which is for you. Do this. In remembrance of me. And in the same way. Also. He took the cup. After supper. Saying. This cup.

Is the new covenant. In my blood. Do this as often. As you drink it. In remembrance of me. For as often. As you eat this bread. And drink this cup. You proclaim the Lord's death.

Until he comes. This is the Lord's table. So if you know. And trust. The Lord Jesus. If you're part of the church. Of Jesus Christ.

[40 : 42] Then come. And celebrate with us. This morning. If you don't know him. If you haven't. Trusted Jesus. God's word. Warns you. Not to come to this table.

But at the same time. Invites you. To come to Jesus. To know. And to trust him. And we would be delighted. To talk with you about that. Would you pray with me? Father.

Thank you. For the invitation. To this table. Thank you. For the body. And blood of Jesus. That invites us. And welcomes us. Into your presence. Would you set these.

Very common elements aside. For a sacred purpose. This morning. That they might be to us. A reminder. Of his death. Because of his love for us. A reminder.

Of his cleansing power. That we are saved. By the blood of the lamb. And when he saves. He saves. Completely. Do that work.

[41 : 39] We pray in this time. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. For more information. Visit us. Online. At southwood.

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