

Becoming like Jesus in His care for the sick and needy

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[0 : 00] This is our vision month, so as a church we unite around three objectives, to be like Jesus, or to be with Jesus, to become like Jesus, and to do what Jesus did.

This second year in our vision month is around the theme of becoming like Jesus. And we've heard already how we need to become like Jesus in terms of his moral character.

When we see him, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is, says John. And then Sandy last week spoke to us about becoming like Jesus in his compassion for the fallen, and then this week we're looking at becoming like Jesus in his compassion, his care for the sick and for the needy.

And so we're looking at Luke chapter 8, verses 40 to 56. Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him.

Then a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house, because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

[1 : 22] As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him, and a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. But no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

Who touched me? Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you. But Jesus said, Someone touch me.

I know that power has gone out from me. Then the woman, seeing that she could not go on notice, came trembling 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.

Then he said to her, Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace. While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler.

Your daughter is dead, he said. Don't bother the teacher anymore. Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, Don't be afraid, just believe, and she will be healed.

[2 : 31] When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him, except Peter, John, and James, at the child's father and mother. Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her.

Stop wailing, Jesus said. She is not dead, but asleep. They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But he took her by the hand and said, My child, get up.

Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

Amen, and the Lord will bless to us the reading of his word. So as followers of Jesus, we are to become like him by replicating his care and his compassion to those who suffer in any way.

And we live in a world in which there is much suffering. You can't help but watch the news currently of the events unfolding in Israel and Gaza and hear and see the suffering and not be moved by that.

[3 : 39] It feels like you're kind of helpless in the face of such cruelty and such terrible consequences that cause as a result of hostility between human beings.

But then there's all kinds of illnesses and all kinds of distress that is caused in what we call the natural world as things in this fallen world happen that bring suffering and bring pain to so many.

And Jesus calls us as his followers to have compassion and to have care on those who are sick and in need. He is our model here as well.

For in the Gospels, we read of Jesus having compassion for harassed crowds, for the sick, for the hungry, for the blind, for the leper, for the demon-possessed, and for the bereaved.

It must have been hard for Jesus as he walked around and as he saw all of this suffering. And hard particularly because remember, although he healed many, he did not heal all.

[4 : 52] Although he intervened wonderfully and graciously, he didn't intervene every time. The sick, the poor, he said, you will always have with you.

But he tells us to feed the poor. He didn't empty the hospitals. Instead, he told us to take care of the sick. Because miracle is not his only way of healing broken hearts.

And in fact, it's not always the best way. So the problem with miracle is that miracles are wonderful signs. But miracles don't build character in the way that suffering does.

suffering has a way of developing our character, our moral character, because when we suffer, we learn to trust.

We learn to have fear. As we will see in the contrasting miracles between this woman and between Jairus' daughter and the response of the crowd, in the response of the crowd, the prospect of a miracle, the crowd responded by laughing at Jesus.

[6 : 03] And yet, the crowd probably weren't aware that this woman with the issue of blood had been healed. And yet, Jesus called the woman who had the issue of blood, he called her to declare what had happened.

But this public miracle with the healing of Jairus' daughter, Jesus commanded that nothing should be said. It's interesting, isn't it? because anybody can respond to a miracle.

You've got proof in front of your eyes. But when you hear the testimony of somebody who's been healed, it's a test of faith.

How will you respond to the word of another when you have no evidence before your eyes other than the word of testimony of one who says, my life has been changed by the power of God.

But just as you've just listened to Val share her testimony, many of you don't even know who she is, the authenticity of that is heard in the tone of her voice, in the look upon her face, in the cry of her heart.

[7 : 15] it authenticates, it's faith that speaks to faith. The skeptics can still be skeptical, of course. And so this is what we have to see here, that in having compassion upon the sick and the needy, Jesus is calling us to get our hands dirty and to get our hearts broken in this veil of tears where there is so much pain and so much suffering and where not every prayer is answered in the way that we would like and not every sickness is healed with a miracle.

So, Jesus models compassion as he cares for the sick. Remember in his story of the parable of the Good Samaritan, remember how he tells the story of the man who had been mugged and left for dead and then the Good Samaritan comes along and puts the man on his donkey and takes him to the inn and pays for his care and says he'll visit again just to make sure all is well and to pay up any outstanding debts that he may have.

Jesus said, didn't he, you go and do likewise. Have compassion upon those who are sick and especially stick with them while they're recovering and take care of their practical needs as well.

And that's the calling for the church to become like Jesus not necessarily and just saying have faith and you will be brought back to life but in actually getting by and supporting the person who is on their sickbed and meeting their practical needs and paying for their keep and praying for them while they recover.

We model the compassion of Jesus in our willingness to stand with and support the suffering. Go and do likewise. And so what are these two stories then?

[9 : 14] Jairus' daughter and this woman with the issue of blood. Well, first of all, we see next slide, Josh, an urgent appeal. Jesus is in Capernaum.

He's just returned from the region of the Gerasenes where he's cast out demons from a demon-possessed man called Legion and the demons entered into the pigs and the pigs ran off the cliff and this man was made well.

On returning to Capernaum, of course, technically, by the letter of the law, Jesus was now unclean. And up comes a synagogue leader and says, Jesus, will you heal my daughter?

Now, any self-respecting synagogue leader knowing where Jesus had been would not want to contaminate himself with somebody who had just been contaminated by the Gentiles.

Such was the sensitivities at that moment. But this is a man who is desperate, a man whose daughter is dying and a man who can do nothing about it.

[10 : 20] Notwithstanding his respect in the community, notwithstanding the status he has as leader of the synagogue, he is absolutely dependent upon the grace and the mercy of God.

And so he goes to Jesus. Jesus, will you heal my daughter? She's dying. She's only 12 years old. He humbly begs Jesus to go with him.

And so Jesus at once decides, yep, I'll go with you. I'll go to your house. But when he gets outside, when he gets on the journey to the house, he discovers that the crowds are everywhere and there's such a press.

He can't make any progress at all. You imagine being Jairus at this moment. You know, you're desperate for your daughter to be healed. She's at death's door and the crowd are preventing Jesus making any reasonable progress.

And then we have this intriguing interlude. There's a woman who has her own story, 12-year story as well as it happens. Jairus' daughter is 12 years old.

[11 : 26] This woman has been suffering from an issue of blood for 12 years. She has been hemorrhaging for 12 years and she spent all of her money on doctors who attempted to make her better but all have failed.

She's at the end of her tether. There is no one to help but Jesus. And so she thinks to herself, if I can approach him and just touch the hem of his garment, I've just touched the hem of his garment, maybe I'll be healed and then I can slink away and nobody will know.

And so she attempts to do that. She attempts to do it all privately whereas Jairus did it all publicly. She attempts to do it all privately and Jesus calls her out into public.

He does it publicly and Jesus keeps it all private. Interesting, isn't it? But remember that this woman is ostracized from her community.

She is ostracized because she is bleeding. Leviticus 15, 25 to 28. If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her menstrual impurity or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her impurity, all the days of the discharge she shall continue in uncleanness.

[12 : 45] As in the days of her impurity she shall be unclean. Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her impurity and everything on which she sits shall be unclean as in the uncleanness of her menstrual impurity and whoever touches these things shall be unclean and shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening.

It's awful, isn't it? But this means that this woman is entirely ostracized from the Jewish community. She shouldn't be in the crowd. She shouldn't be risking other people being contaminated by her.

She definitely shouldn't be trying to contaminate a famous rabbi. So she thinks if only I touch the hem of his garment I'll be made clean. She puts all her uncleanness on Jesus and she is healed.

That's a gospel message, isn't it? Here am I unclean. I can do nothing for myself but I touch the hem of the garment of this righteous man and I will be made clean.

I will be made whole. I was once abandoned but I will be received. I was once forsaken but I will be welcomed. Jesus will have me when no one else will.

[14 : 10] Twelve years of that. Imagine. Twelve years of never hugging a loved one. Twelve years of never feeling part of a family. Twelve years of utter isolation.

All changed in a moment by Jesus. That's a gospel story. A wonderful story. She touches the hem of his garment because she has faith.

Numbers 15 37 to 40 says the Lord said to Moses speak to the people of Israel and tell them to make tassels on the corner of their garments throughout their generations and to put a cord of blue on the tassel of each quarter and it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord to do them.

Not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes which you are inclined to or after. So you shall remember and do all my commandments and be holy to the Lord your God. So this woman you see what she's actually doing is expressing faith.

She's aware of the scriptures. She is aware that in her heart she wants to honor God and obey the scriptures but she is prevented to do so by something going on in her body which she can't control.

[15 : 24] And so in faith she reaches out to Jesus. from a heart of love for God and a desire to honor God's word she reaches out to Jesus and Jesus makes up the righteousness that she cannot find in herself.

He becomes her righteousness. He becomes her obedience in order that she might be welcomed back into the family of God. It's a gospel story.

She hopes she can get away but Jesus says who touched me? Get real Jesus there's a big crowd here. It's like yesterday I was in St. James' Park.

So cueing to get in and then watching the game and we scored four goals if you didn't know. I'll just let you know that. We scored four goals and when you score four goals at St. James' Park and you've got all the crowds around you somebody's going to touch you and they kind of they all jump on you anyway and kind of as if you're their best friend don't even know the guy next to me he's kind of hugging me and everything else and that's the way it is.

Who touched me? It's a big crowd here. Get real Jesus could have been anybody but Jesus says no power went out from me. I find it fascinating to think about that.

[16 : 42] Jesus could heal even when he wasn't conscious of actually wanting to do it. It was like nobody asked me she just touched me. But he knew power had gone out from him.

He said no somebody touched me and then this woman frightened as she was because she'd been found to be in a crowd when she ought not to have been there came forward and bravely acknowledged that it was her told her story and he said your faith has healed you go in peace.

It's lovely. She reached out to touch the Lord as he went by and found he was not too busy to hear her heart's cry.

We used to sing that didn't we? And my friend I can say that to you today there may be things in your heart that make you feel terribly ashamed.

There may be things that make you feel different that make you feel on the edge on the outside. There may be things that make you feel so unclean that you feel there is no hope for you but Jesus is here today and you may reach out and touch him and he will say if you reach out and touch me with faith go your way.

[18 : 01] Your faith has made you clean. For faith is forsaking all other things I take him it's an acronym forsaking all I take him.

When I reach that point where no one can help me but Jesus and I reach out to him and say Lord have mercy on me a sinner he will say your faith has healed you.

Go and be at peace. And Jairus well he's still there even more frustrated come on Jesus my daughter is dying.

He doesn't know what's going on with his other woman. But then message comes don't bother the master your daughter has died.

Oh Jesus you messed up there. You really ought to have been in more of a hurry. You ought to have seen the urgency and known the urgency of the moment.

[19 : 08] If only you had come quicker if only you hadn't allowed the crowd to prevent you if only you had not wasted time with this woman. And he says she's not dead she's asleep.

Now imagine your Jairus for a moment and your servants have arrived and said your daughter has just died and somebody and somebody else this Jesus says to you no no no she's not dead she's only asleep who would you believe?

It's a real test of faith isn't it at that precise moment would he believe the facts as announced by the servants whom he trusted or would he have faith in the voice of the one who says don't be afraid she is asleep.

Well he had nothing to lose so he went to the house he got into the courtyard of the house and everybody's there the family the neighbours they're all there and they're making a right old racket because this little girl is dead they're all they've seen a dead body before they know she's dead they've been in to have a look they know she's dead and they're just wailing and mourning they're putting ashes on themselves they're making a big cry out to God and they're feeling terribly sorry for Jairus and his wife and the family and Jesus said what a noise she isn't dead she's asleep and they all laugh this is an idiot he's never seen a dead person before how does he know he's not even been in the room yet and he goes into the room takes his three disciples three closest disciples with him closes the door reaches out his hand to the girl and says girl get up wake up now what a funny thing to say to a dead person wake up wake up as if she was only asleep well actually that's all she was only asleep there is this happy outcome you see this little girl who everybody thought was dead who medically speaking was dead responded to the voice of the son of God and lived the book of

Daniel Daniel chapter 12 in verse 2 says go your way you will sleep in the ground but then you'll rise again some to everlasting life others to shame and everlasting contempt or as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 15 we will not all sleep notice the language we will not all sleep he means we will not all die but we will all be changed in an instant in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet for the trumpet will sound the dead will be raised imperishable and we will be changed for the perishable must be clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality and when the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality then the saying that is written will come to pass death has been swallowed up in victory where oh death is your victory where oh death is your sting the sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law but thanks be to

[22 : 26] God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ you think death is bad it is but sleep it is but sleep for the child of God for one day he shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall live that's exactly the language of John 5 25 to 27 truly truly I say to you an hour is coming and now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live for as the Father has life in himself so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself and he has given him authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of Man Jesus speaks life to the dead my little daughter my son wake up it's time to rise it's time to awake and to live forever in the presence of almighty

God it is time for flesh to put on immortality they shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live when we were listening to that testimony from the Father it was smashing wasn't it I was like so moved by I had not seen it until just now and I didn't know Michelle was going to share it but it reminded me of the time I was with my father as he was dying in hospital and my father had a massive brain hemorrhage and when I got to the hospital he'd been in that condition for some hours the nurse who was there said to me she said you need to be a little bit careful what you say because the last thing that goes is his hearing so I thought well I ain't going to be careful about what

I say and as I sat with my father and held his hand as he was dying he was very distressed and I said to him dad I said you're going to die but Jesus is going to come by your bed and he's going to say to you in my father's house are many rooms if it were not so I would have told you I go to prepare a place for you and if I go to prepare a place for you I will come back to receive you where I am that where I am you will be also and at that moment he'd been very distressed he was calm so I stopped speaking and I waited and prayed and he got distressed again so I repeated what I'd said and he was calm again so he went quiet and I did it a third time and did again

I thought he's hearing me he's hearing me but he's hearing more importantly the voice of the son of man and I hope that he will live and I was amazingly comforted by this morning it was years since I've had that experience but just watching that again made me realize how amazing the voice and the power of God is the gospel is the power of God for everyone who believes for everyone who reaches out in faith everyone who waits to hear his voice say little child I say to you get up follow me have faith in me and all will be well and so we have this story of an urgent appeal to which Jesus responded and produced a happy outcome and then an intriguing interlude in which a woman who had been ostracized for 12 years of her life was made well and as

I said and as we've observed two very different outcomes the woman who didn't want to say anything was compelled to tell everyone Jairus and his wife who would have loved to tell everybody was told to be quiet because people who hear the story have to respond by faith in a word not with the evidence of their eyes faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God Jesus will not always perform a miracle just to answer and satisfy our skepticism but he will always respond to faith and isn't it interesting next slide that Jesus is looking always for faith which is expressed in action Jairus I'm coming to your house and your daughter is going to be well and I know they're telling you she's dead but I want you to believe me not what they say and he follows he does what he's told he obeys what he hears and he responds to it a faith which results in confession the woman wanted to receive the benefits of her healing but didn't want to tell anybody understandably because of all that she'd been through but

[28 : 02] Jesus says no no no no you can't hide your faith you've got to let it out you've got to tell people what I've done for you and faith will always result in confession if we confess with our mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead we will be saved Jesus calls us to tell people our stories have we been broken have we been hurt have we been damaged have we need healing have we need cleansing if we've had those things we need to tell others about it Jesus calls us to declare our faith to the world and then faith which responds in obedience whatever he says to you do it Mary said to the woman he said I want you to tell everybody to Jairus and his wife he says I want you to tell no one and in both cases they obeyed because faith obeys the command of our savior and so what can we learn from this story next slide please we can learn that

Jesus commands us to care for the sick and for the needy this is how we become like Jesus we get alongside them on their life's journey we find them in different conditions hurting distressed ostracized damaged bruised bruised battered by their life experience we don't simply wish them well and say go on your way I prayed for you be blessed we don't just do that we find out what their needs are and we seek like Jesus to help them on their road in their journey in the hope that they will be made whole by the voice of Jesus Jesus called us to lay hands on the sick and pray for them and so we should and James encourages us is anyone among you suffering let him pray is anyone cheerful let him sing praise is anyone among you sick let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him anointing him with oil in the name of the

Lord and the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick and the Lord will and therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working and you know we have a bottle of oil here people come every Sunday to be prayed for sometimes we'll anoint them with oil sometimes we'll pray for forgiveness for them because there may be many and multiple causes as to why they are their suffering may be mental their suffering may be psychological whatever their suffering is we operate a hospital here in the care of souls because that's what our Lord Jesus did we don't turn anyone away we don't look in disgust upon anyone's story we don't keep a record of anyone's wrongs love here covers a multitude of sins love hopes all things believes all things we bring people to

Jesus who can put it all right no matter how many years you've been suffering with a guilty conscience with regret whatever it might be no matter how bad it's been today you can begin again now you don't have to necessarily come to the front to do that but sometimes Jesus calls us out of our comfort zone because sometimes we want to hide in our seat and hope that nobody will find out because maybe I will be rejected you will never be rejected here there there is nothing you can tell us that will shock us and there is no sin too great that cannot be forgiven and that's why we call you to confess to confess before men but certainly before God that yes there are things that need to be cleansed but

Jesus is able to clean you the blood of Jesus God's son cleanses us from all sin and we will walk with you however long it takes we have a lovely next steps discipleship program it's fantastic everybody comes and tells you what's wrong with them and yet everybody feels so loved and so accepted and that's great that's great see the wonderful thing about being a Christian is!

[33 : 22] to me the best thing of all is that although there is all sorts of stuff for which I would naturally feel ashamed I know I can tell my brother or sister that stuff and they will not reject me because they know that it's forgiven on account of our Lord Jesus Christ and the cross upon which he died there is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins where sinners plunge beneath that flood lose all their guilty stain just like that woman I'm cleansed and forgiven and so is anyone who has trusted in our Lord Jesus Christ!

God no no more sin no more dying no more pain for the old order of things has passed away and so as Christians we are called to pray for the sick and needy we are prayed to care for the sick and needy Jesus said you need to visit those in prison you need to visit those who are sick he didn't say you need to heal them he says you need to visit them you need to stand with them you need to help them whether they're healed or not that's in the hands of almighty God that's something beyond human intervention but what matters is whether healed or not I am always there to care and thirdly we are there to meet the practical needs of the sick and needy bear with one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ and what might be the burdens of the sick and the needy well it might be practical it might be that they can't go out and get their own shopping it might be that they can't cook for themselves it might be that they can't help themselves in some cases they can't even do their own toilet needs you know

I think there's nothing more compassionate than watching people take another to the toilet and look after their needs but I also remember when my old mother needed that too there was nothing so hard for her to accept than that wonderful compassion needs to be exhibited between the carer and the one who has been cared for but what a privilege it is to wash somebody's feet or dare I say it wipe somebody's bottom in the name of Jesus what a loving and compassionate thing that really is that the church is called to do and support doing in the name of Jesus Christians are followers of Christ first called Christians because they just looked like Jesus and went about like

Jesus doing good Jesus calls us to become like him in our compassion for the sick and for the needy let me quote to you in closing Henry Nowen he looked after the people particularly people who were handicapped people for most of his ministry he was a genius of a man a theologian a very well educated individual very high up in the Roman Catholic Church but he chose to give it all up just to support those who had mental illness and disability and this is what he said when we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us we often find that it is those who instead of giving advice solutions or cures have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand the friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion who can stay with us in an hour of who can tolerate not knowing not curing not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness that is a friend who cares

Jesus calls us to be such friends let us then pray