

A Tale of Two Daughters

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Bible Text: Luke 8:40-56
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Our passage this evening comes from Luke 8 and we'll be reading verses 40 to 56. This takes place after the healing of the demoniac in Gadara and we pick up at Luke 8:40.

Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. And a man came and his name was Jairus and he was ruler of the synagogue, and he fell at Jesus' feet and was begging him to come into his house because he had an only daughter about 12 years old and she was dying. Now as he was going, the crowd kept pressing in on him and a woman having a flow of blood for 12 years, who though she had spent all her resources on physicians, could not be healed by anyone, came near from behind and touched the edge of his cloak and immediately her flow of blood stopped and Jesus said, "Who touched me?" Now while all were denying having done so, Peter said, "Master, the crowds are hemming you in and pushing against you." But Jesus said, "Someone touched me for I knew that power had gone out from me." Now when the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling. When she fell down before him, she declared before all the people why she had touched him and how she was healed immediately. Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace." While he was still speaking, someone came from the synagogue ruler's place saying, "Your daughter has died. Don't trouble the teacher," and he mourned. But when Jesus heard, he answered him, "Don't be afraid. Only believe and she shall be made well." When he came into the house, he did not allow anyone to go on in with him except Peter and John and James and the child's father and mother. Now all were weeping and lamenting over her but he said, "Stop weeping for she has not died but is sleeping." They began laughing at him, knowing that she had died but he himself took hold of her hand and called out saying, "Lass, get up!" And her spirit returned and she stood up immediately and he gave orders that she be given something to eat. Her parents were amazed but he commanded them to tell no one what had happened.

Well, we're often stricken with what seems to be so impressive and special, no more so than efforts in the area of sports, I suppose. For example, there is a major university that

has completed the construction of a 55 million dollar playland for its football players, complete with a laser-tag room, arcade, bowling alley, nap room, beach volleyball court, and miniature golf course. Now you might think that's over the top but you have to admit, that's impressive.

Or go back to 1952. Jackie Robinson has been in the major leagues now for about 5-6 years and he is playing against Cincinnati and Jackie Robinson hits a single, a base hit to right field and Jackie Robinson always made a sweep around first in case that outfielder bobbled the ball he'd go for second base. Well, the right fielder had played with Brooklyn before he had been traded to Cincinnati and he knew that Robinson tended to do that and so when Jackie Robinson made that bend, he took the ball on the first hop and he threw it right back to the first baseman to try to double Robinson off base and get him out. Unexpectedly for Robinson, I suppose, but the first baseman for Cincinnati whose name was Ted Kluszewski, was not looking for an outfield throw, he was looking down at the base, at the bag to make sure that Robinson actually touched the base when he ran around it, and he didn't see that throw coming in from right field and it hit him smack in the chest. Now Ted Kluszewski was a huge fellow. He had arms on him like that. Now he was massive. That plunk in the chest didn't even faze him. That's impressive.

Or back in 1997, the University of South Carolina baseball team scored 38 runs in a game. Now that's impressive.

Well, you turn to the Gospels and sometimes they're trying to get you to have something of that kind of reaction, that that's impressive, and you have it here in our text tonight. Our text tonight is part of a larger chunk of Luke 8, actually verses 22 to 56 as a whole glob, you might say, a whole unit and it parallels a unit in Mark at the end of Mark 4 through Mark 5. It's the same kind of material. There are four different instances that Luke reviews as you begin at verse 22. One is danger, it's in the storm at the sea. Then there's the demons that Jesus casts out. Then there's the disease of the woman with the issue of blood. Then there's death, Jairus' daughter. But there are these instances and these aren't just little samples of what Jesus does, these are instances that are worst case scenarios. People are in dire need in each one of them, in extremis, you might say, and Jesus is fully adequate for them all and Luke, then, embarks in his parallel, recounts these one after another in a chunk because they don't just want you to say, "He's really impressive," they want you to say, "Hallelujah, what a Savior." Now that's Luke's concern here.

Now in our text, though, for tonight, verses 40-56, it just has two episodes from this section and they're tied together, they're interlinked, and it has to do with two daughters, one whom Jesus addresses as daughter, and one who is a literal daughter of Jairus, and interestingly enough, the numeral 12, I'm not going bananas on this, but the numeral 12 appears in both the woman who has the flow of blood for 12 years, and Jairus' daughter is about 12 years old. So here's a true tale of two daughters, two episodes that intrude the one on the other, and Luke's purpose is to say to you through this Jesus is the Savior you can trust in your desperation and even in your death.

So what does Luke want us to see here? Well, I think he wants us to see, first of all, the touch of faith. Verses 43 to 48, the touch of faith. Here's this woman with a flow of blood for 12 years and we don't know in the last of verse 43, there's debate about whether this is really part of the original text, that she'd spent all her resources on physicians and couldn't be healed. I think probably it is, it's just a matter, a technical matter. Now other Gospel writers indicate that that was the case but a flow of blood for 12 years, probably some kind of irregularity and difficulty with her monthly periods and so this would mean that she would be constantly in a state of uncleanness and that's not that she was dirty but rather that in a state of ritual or technical uncleanness. You can read about it in Leviticus 15:25 and following. So that anything that she sat on, a chair that she sat on, a bed that she was reclining on, if someone else sat on that chair or sat on that bed, they would be unclean until the evening. But it was this technical state of uncleanness because of this flow of blood that apparently was always a problem and it would socially isolate her. It would be very limiting in the connection she would have with other people so she shouldn't have been going out in this crowd. Everybody that she touches is gonna become unclean. But she probably thought that the crowd would be a kind of a cover. The crowd pressing in on Jesus and so on, and so she could probably weasel and shenanigan her way through the crowd to get to Jesus. She thought the crowd would probably provide her with cover, you might say, and she had apparently convinced herself that if she could only touch the edge of Jesus' cloak, she would be healed of her malady.

Now she didn't have any word from the Lord on this. Nothing. She didn't have a scriptural promise, she didn't have any word from God about this. This was what we might call a holy hunch perhaps on her part, or she felt that she just had an intense conviction that this would be so, and so she was operating on it. Obviously, it noted some kind of faith and trust in what Jesus could do for her, but she convinced herself of this and you notice the result. Verse 44, "She touched the edge of his cloak and immediately," that word "immediately" is used three times in our text tonight, "her flow of blood stopped."

Now Jesus then says, "Who touched me?" And the voice of logic comes out. Peter says, "Look, the crowd's pushing around you and bumping up against you and so on. What do you mean, who touched you?" Answer, "Everyone practically." And Jesus said, "No, no, no, I know that power has gone out from me." Many were pressing upon him, someone said, but only one touched him and Jesus knew that.

Now she was hoping for anonymity but apparently there was little space now that maybe opened up around Jesus and she realized that she couldn't be hidden anymore, and so finally she comes trembling. Why trembling? Well, she probably thinks she's facing the anger of Jesus, I suppose. Not only that, but the embarrassment of it all as it says before the people she's gonna be exposed and so on.

So she tells him, notice what she says, the last of verse 47, "She declared before all the people why she had touched him and how she was healed immediately." So you have a confession and you have a testimony. Confession: why she had touched him. Testimony: how she was healed immediately.

Then Jesus, perhaps surprisingly to her, says in verse 48, "Daughter." Jesus doesn't say that to anyone else in the four Gospels, addressing them as daughter. That's interesting. This woman probably isn't all that much younger than Jesus himself. She's probably, I would guess, calculate maybe in her mid 20s possibly, but Jesus addresses her as daughter. Such a note of tenderness in that must have set her immediately at ease.

Then he said, "your faith," now in the Greek there's the emphasis is on "your faith. Your faith has made you well. Go in peace." What's Jesus getting at there? I think the reason here that Jesus made a spectacle, you might say, or flushed her out, is because he wanted her to be sure to know how it was that this benefit of healing had come to her. It was her faith that laid hold of that. It may have been kind of a shabby faith that was around a conviction that she had operated on but there was this clear shred of faith and Jesus wanted her to know it was her faith that laid hold of that benefit. It was not some magic in his clothes. He didn't want her to be operating in some kind of superstition. He wanted her to know how it was she laid hold of this benefit. "Your faith has made you well."

You see how Jesus can see, who knows what kind of conceptions were going around in her head and so on, but there was. Jesus could see and perceive that there was genuine faith there no matter how much perhaps ignorance or lack of light there may have been mixed up with it, and isn't that often the case that faith can be genuine yet mixed up with certain perhaps misconceptions or can be clear faith and yet be much darkness mixed in with it.

I told you once before of a fellow by the name of Thomas Rhodes. He was called Old Rhodes and he was in Charles Spurgeon's grandfather's congregation but he wasn't very regular. He would go to the tavern and drink and smoke his pipe and little Charles Spurgeon, I suppose he was maybe 6 or 7 years old, went in the tavern one day and reamed him out and chewed him out about that, and it made Thomas Rhodes made, and then it made him repent and he went back and apologized to Spurgeon's grandfather and his pastor and said, "I didn't mean to do that," and he was very, he was a different man after that.

Well, but time moves on and so Thomas Rhodes is old and he's on his deathbed and Charles Spurgeon's grandfather is not pastor of this church anymore. I suppose he's died. There's a new minister there in the congregation and Thomas Rhodes is dying and so the minister comes to call on Old Rhodes and he is going to read a passage of Scripture and, of course, custom often was instead of the preacher bringing his own Bible in his pocket or something, he would take up the family Bible there in the home. So the minister took up the Bible and was going to turn to a passage to read and Thomas Rhodes said, "I've counted the leaves, sir," the pages, and being, I suppose, a typical Yankee or something, the pastor said, "Why ever did you do a thing like that?" And Thomas Rhodes said, "Well, I never could read a word of it, you see, so I thought I would know how many pages there were."

He was illiterate. He couldn't read but he could count and so he counted the number of pages in the Bible. Who cares about that? What difference does that make? Yes, but don't you see as you burrow through that, that's a way in which he was trying to express his own reverence and confidence in the word of God. You may think it's bonkers but there's something genuine and real in that and Jesus can see that in a faith that may have much darkness and many misconceptions in it, he can still see the faith that is there and that was the case with the touch of faith here.

Now secondly, you see here the trial of faith. The trial of faith, verses 40 to 42, and 49 to 56. This is a chunk about Jairus and you notice that in verses 41 and 42, there's really a matter of time that comes up. Jairus is ruler of the synagogue. He falls at Jesus' feet. He's begging him to come into his house because he had this daughter about 12 years old and she was dying. So off they went. It was a matter of time. It was important to get there in sufficient time.

Now, let's just turn aside for a minute and notice that this is a kind of dilemma that God's people have always had. This is a common difficulty among servants of Christ. Of course, now in our day with medical advances, it's not the case so often as it perhaps has been in times past, but there are any number of the Lord's people that know being on edge like this because they have buried one of their children. There's a sense in which it strikes you as not quite right. A parent shouldn't have to bury a child. But you notice that's what Jairus is afraid he's going to be facing and this is what the Lord's people have faced time and time again. I think maybe it's just worth pointing that out and very commonly in days past, much more so than today.

Some of you have heard of John Owen, the great Puritan theologian. He had, he and his wife had 11 children. Only one of them reached adulthood. Charles and Sally Wesley, Charles Wesley, the evangelist and hymnwriter, I'm not sure but at least a couple of their children I think they lost. And then Benjamin Morgan Palmer in the 19th century who was for many years the pastor of First Presbyterian Church in New Orleans was pastor of this Presbyterian church for a while, wasn't he, in his earlier days. He lost, he and his wife lost a little towhead toddler to death, and then I think it was four grown daughters that died of consumption, I think. We would call it tuberculosis. How common this is and maybe it's not so common today but it doesn't take me any time at all to conjure up the names of any number of you that have faced this kind of situation. There's a sense in which the text of the Bible has a certain sympathy for you. It recognizes that there are troubles that God's people have that are like the troubles some of you have had to face.

Now just turning aside there, let's go back here to this text. As you notice, this is a trial of time and probably doubly so when this woman comes up and touches Jesus and is healed and Jesus takes the time to deal with this woman. He took time for her. The text doesn't say that Jairus was itchy and anguished and so on, so we don't know in that regard, but I can't help but think that he was wondering, "When can we get on? We need to get to my place." It was a matter of time, but then it was worse, it was a matter of fact because in verse 49 while Jesus was still speaking, someone comes from the synagogue ruler's place and says, "Your daughter has died. Don't trouble the teacher anymore."

Time was of the essence but now it's not a matter of time but a matter of fact. She died and his messenger's suggestion makes sense, "Don't trouble the teacher anymore. No one can do anything now. Everything is beyond hope." You can imagine that if Jesus, I suppose, were an American, he might have said something like, "Well, yes, Jairus, if I can ever be of help to you sometime in the future, please don't hesitate to call on me. I'm sorry about this time. Where there's life, there's hope. Where there's not, call the mortician. Nothing we can do now." No, that's not what Jesus says. Oddly enough he says, "Don't be afraid. Only believe and she shall be made well." It's almost ludicrous.

So you go from the matter of time, to a matter of fact, to a matter of revelation, verses 50 to 55. Her death becomes the occasion of seeing life and it's meant to show Mr. and Mrs. Jairus and all of Jesus' people that Jesus has power even over the realm of death. We dealt with this a couple of weeks ago in connection with the widow, of Nain's son in Luke 7. It's the same kind of thrust here. This restoration of Jairus' daughter to life again and it wasn't final resurrection life, it was a restoration to normal earthly life but it was a calling of her back from death to life. She would die again, you know. She would live for who knows how much longer. She would probably bury her parents now rather than her parents burying her. But Jesus restored her to life and the point there is that he has power even over the realm of death. This is an acted parable. It's a preview of what is to come when resurrection day comes and Jesus does it for all his people.

You may wonder as you look at the text why is it that he insisted on having Peter and John and James go with him. Well, he wanted witnesses to be there because this story would be told again and again and Jesus wanted to make sure it was authenticated by eyewitnesses because there would be people that say, "Oh, that's a bunch of legendary rubbish," you know?

So he was careful about that and he also told the parents to tell no one what happened, verse 56. You may wonder why that. Well, the people there were mocking and laughing at Jesus when they knew she was dead and so on, and so he told them not to tell anything. What do you mean? They would know and would see her there. She's eating her oatmeal now and she'll be back playing with your kids in the street, etc. They'll know Jesus did something but that's not the point, Jesus said, "Don't tell them what happened, that is, don't give them a play-by-play." They're gonna say, "What exactly did he do?" Just say, "Sorry, classified. Can't tell."

So this the way the passage shapes up but don't you see that he says why bother the teacher anymore, don't bother the teacher anymore, but when Jesus' hand grips that little girl's hand, he reaches across the threshold of death and conquers it. The time for resurrection hasn't come yet but in this deed, Jesus is showing who he is and he has the keys of death and of hades. That ought to make a kind of difference, shouldn't it?

I always think of that story that James S. Stewart, the Scottish preacher of the 20th century told once about the picture that had been painted of the conflict between in Goethe's story between Faust and the devil. Faust had gambled with his soul to the devil and he had lost

or he was losing, and it was in the form of a chess game and whoever painted the picture showed the look of despair on Faust's face as he stared looking at the pieces on the chessboard and the leering triumph in Satan's face as he looked at it. The situation is hopeless. It's checkmate and someone painted that in a picture and it was in a gallery and so on, and according to Stewart's story, there were a number of people that would come in and out of the gallery, well, there were all kinds of pictures and so on and pieces of art in it, coming in and out and so on, but one fellow came in who was a great master of the game and he was fascinated by this look of blank despair on Faust's face and he stood there in front of that picture and he latched on to the pieces on the chessboard and just focused on that. People kept coming in and looking at things and going out and so on, and after a great deal of time, a cry rang out in the gallery, "It's a lie! The king and the knight have another move!" And James Stewart said, "We know this is true of the human condition."

Jesus is not flustered by death. The King always has another move and it may look like you shouldn't bother the teacher anymore but the King has the keys of death and of hades and that gives you hope in the trial of faith.

Now we press your patience and point you to a third matter here and that's the teaching of faith. The teaching of faith. Now here I want to look back just briefly and reflect on both episodes that we have in this text because I think by them Luke instructs us even more perhaps than we have seen so far. The first piece of instruction is that Jesus may seem most severe when he is doing us much good. Jesus may seem most severe when he's doing us much good as was that woman and she thought she was going to get reamed out, you might say, by Jesus' anger and instead found that even though it was embarrassment, it was a matter of assurance for her how Jesus' severity sometimes or seeming severity may be only the wrapping or the prelude to his goodness or as William Cooper put it in that hymn #128 in your Trinity hymnal, you remember that one phrase or clause, "Behind a frowning providence, he hides a smiling face." So it is with Jesus.

Now there's a second element of instruction here, this teaching of faith, that has to do with Jairus and it's this: Jesus tends to lead us to see more of himself than we have. Jesus tends to lead us to see more of himself. Now, you notice in Jairus' case in verses 41 and 42, that reveals Jairus' faith. He asked Jesus to come to his house because his little daughter is dying and he knows Jesus, he's convinced Jesus can do something about that, but in verses 49 and 50, Jesus calls him to a deeper, higher step of faith because he's received word that she's died. So now what? And it's as if Jesus in verse 50 is saying to Jairus, "You trusted me in what was urgent, now trust me in what seems hopeless. You trusted me," he says, "in what was alarming, now trust me in what seems irreversible. You thought I was adequate for that situation, but what about this one? Can you believe that I am adequate for this very different, very much more difficult situation?" So we put it this way whether it's for Jairus or for me or for you, Jesus is always more than you can imagine.

Now we know that that's the case even in very human relationships, don't we, because we get surprised, don't we, even in what happens in human relations. I remember, you'll

pardon a personal note, I remember one time about probably 1996 or 1997, I was teaching at Reformed Seminary in Mississippi with such luminaries as Derek Thomas and others, and I had a class, Old Testament class that met I think about 11:00 or so, about noon it was over and we were coming out. It happened to be on this occasion Valentine's Day and I was coming out of the class and who should I meet by here are four women in long red dresses, they're called the Sweet Adeline's and they stand there and they start singing to me. It's embarrassing. There are seminary students all around the atrium and the biblical studies building and around me, and I'm standing there like a goofus in the door of the classroom and they're singing, "Let me call you sweetheart, I'm in love with you. Let me hear you whisper that you love me too," etc. etc. And then there was another number.

What happened? It was my wife that had hired these people to do this. Now you live with someone for a while and you think they're pretty normal and you don't expect something like that. It takes you by surprise but you don't know. There's a hidden abyss that you can never plumb the depths of. I simply say to some of you husbands when you have someone tell you that you need to try to understand your wife, don't listen to them. You never will. There is the hidden something I didn't think... I mean, after, what? 23 or so years of marriage, you don't expect stuff like that to come out but it did. It was a surprise. You didn't know she had it in her.

So now, back to Jesus. That's what Jesus is teaching Jairus here, isn't it? And what Luke is saying to us is the same. Jesus is always more than you can imagine and that's part of the teaching of faith. So Jesus is a Savior you can trust in your desperation and even in your death and his severity brings comfort and his delays lead to joy.

Let us pray.

Father, we pray you would give to us as well as to that woman in the crowd, that you would give to us a confession and a testimony as well, and perhaps you've done that in the words of the hymn, "All the way my Savior leads me, what have I to ask beside? Can I doubt his tender mercy, who through life has been my guide? Heavenly peace, divinest comfort, here by faith in him to dwell. Where I know what ere befall me, Jesus doeth all things well." And we thank you in his name. Amen.