**DON’T BE AFRAID; JUST BELIEVE**

October 26, 2014

Luke 8:40-8:56
Key Verse 8:50 “Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, ‘Don’t be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.’”

In today’s passage, Jesus helps two very different people: Jairus, a man of standing in the community, and a nameless woman. Though they make a great contrast in their social position, they are both helpless before disease and death. Each one comes to Jesus by faith, and Jesus revealed his power to heal diseases and even raise the dead.

Look at verses 41-42a. “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.” Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue. He must have been morally upright and faithful, a leader in his community. In addition, he must have been a man of wealth. He was used to solving all kinds of problems and many people must have called him when they needed help. But this time, he had a serious and urgent problem that he could not do anything about. His only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying. At the age of twelve, she should have been blossoming into a vibrant teenager. She was Jairus’ only daughter and joy of life. Though Jairus struggled hard in the world, when he saw his daughter, he forgot all the agonies of life and smiled widely. But now she was dying. When his precious daughter became sick, Jairus was really troubled. He did everything he could to help her. But she was only getting worse. Jairus began to tremble with fear. In a nightmare, he watched her breathe her last. The devil’s torment through fear was overwhelming. Jairus felt that he was losing everything. Then he remembered Jesus. Jesus had healed many kinds of sicknesses. He found hope in Jesus. So he came to Jesus.

Jairus did not come to Jesus as a dignified synagogue ruler. He came to Jesus as the father of a dying daughter. He fell at Jesus’ feet and pleaded with Jesus to come to his house. Jairus was a humble man. Before Jesus, he knelt in prayer. Before Jesus, he pleaded earnestly with all his heart and strength. Humanly, this was quite awkward for the synagogue ruler. The Pharisees’ political maneuvering had made Jesus unwelcome in the synagogues of Israel. Jairus risked losing his position as a synagogue ruler by publicly entreating Jesus in such a humble way. But it did not matter to him. When Jairus came to Jesus for help, he was willing to sacrifice anything to gain Jesus’ favor. He had a true shepherd’s heart for his daughter. He was willing to lay down his own life to save his daughter. Moved by his shepherd’s heart, Jesus went with him.

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. To Jairus, it was hard to watch Jesus’ slow progress. Jairus wanted to shout, “Get out of the way and let Jesus through. My little daughter is dying.” But each person in the crowd thought his own problem was most urgent. For example, among the thronging people was a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years (43). This woman had a monthly feminine bleeding which never stopped. For twelve years she had steadily grown weaker and weaker. Perhaps her husband abandoned her, and she was shunned by her neighbors and friends. The fact is that she could not touch or be touched by anyone. Three things in Jewish daily life could make a person ceremonially unclean; touching the dead, menstrual bleeding and leprosy. She could not participate in the worship with others.

According to the footnote, she spent all she had on doctors. But no one could heal her. Now she stayed in her room in dark privacy, watching the world go by. In spite of all her previous effort she remained unhealed. Twelve long years without remedy for her problem, and presumably she has by now decided, “There is no hope for my problem.” This poor woman was broke, cut off from family, society and even the church and in declining health. I suspect that she had to deal regularly with bitterness, with anger - anger against her circumstances, perhaps even against God who had allowed these circumstances to continue: loneliness, self-hatred, fear of the future, alienation from God.

But one day, she heard about Jesus, who healed the sick. Then she found hope in Jesus. She believed that if she could but touch Jesus she would be healed. Matthew 9:21 says “She said to herself, ‘If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed”; literally she “said and kept on saying” and she acted upon it. In order for her to act, she had to overcome some obstacles. She could have allowed those hindrances to become excuses. The first obstacle that she had to overcome was her physical weakness. It must have been difficult for her to get up out of bed, let alone fight her way through a crowd. The second obstacle that she had to face was her own hopelessness and despair. The third obstacle that she had to overcome was the press of the crowd around Jesus. She had to force her way through a crushing mob but in such a way that it did not draw attention to herself. It was embarrassing to talk about her problem. The final obstacle that she had to overcome was the social and religious stigma that said she dare not touch Jesus because in so doing she would make him unclean. It was against the law to touch a man’s prayer shawl unless one was a member of a man’s family. Thus this was a desperate act of this woman, because this would have serious consequences if she were not healed.

But she did overcome these obstacles for finally she got within reach of Jesus. By the way, what is blocking you from the touch of Jesus this morning? Maybe instead of a crowd of people – it is pride or shame. What is it that is keeping you from reaching out to Jesus? Verse 44 says, “She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.”
The woman came to Jesus secretly from behind because she felt unworthy to approach him directly. Upon touching Jesus the woman was instantly healed. No doubt she intended to remain as inconspicuous as possible, allow the crowd to pass on, leaving her alone, unnoticed to return to her home and a normal life. With a touch of faith she draws power from Jesus, whereas the rest of the crowd, pressing around him on every side, touching him many times in the course of the journey, were not receiving anything from him.

In verse 45 Jesus asks, “Who touched me?” Jesus knew what had happened and who had touched him. He asked the question to bring the woman out of hiding. Initially, no one admitted they had touched Jesus. Poor Jairus must have been exasperated beyond words at this interruption. Precious time was being lost as the life of his little daughter slipped away. He must have been thinking, “Come on Jesus, My daughter is dying, who cares that someone touched you!” As Jesus dealt with a problem that in Jairus’ eyes was not an emergency, he must have question Jesus’ timing. In the same way that you and I often struggle to understand God’s timing. Ultimately we learn that faith means trusting in God’s care accepting God’s timing!

In Mark 5:32 we are told that Jesus “kept looking around to see who had done it.” He stops, turns around, and begins to scan the crowd, looking for her because she needs him and he knows it! The woman had not expected to be detected, but when Jesus turned and asked the question, she knew that he knew. Remember the penalty for deliberately making someone unclean is death. It was a bad moment for the woman. Perhaps she thought she had done wrong in touching Jesus.
In verse 47, “Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, 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.”

Why did he insist on her public confession? It was not the miracle that Jesus wanted to make public, but rather the woman’s faith. He demanded for the benefit of others (as a testimony). Faith is not intended to be a “private” matter as some seem to think. Faith in Christ is not intended to be just personal. This was so important that Jesus refused to allow her to go without a confession of faith. Then Jesus said, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.” This is the only time in the gospels that Jesus directly called someone “daughter.” When Jesus called her “daughter,” He made her a part of His family, which meant there was no penalty for touching his prayer shawl, and took away her fears. What a blessing it is to also be made part of his family and a member of the kingdom of God.

She was not only healed from her physical infirmity, she was healed spiritually as well. Indeed, her testimony glorified Jesus as the one who heals incurable diseases. Her testimony was her thanksgiving to Jesus. Her testimony was a great encouragement to Jairus. Her testimony blessed the crowd of people around Jesus to learn that the touch of faith procures Jesus’ healing power. Her testimony has blessed people down through the generations. This happened because Jesus helped her to live for the glory of God and give thanks to God. Now Jesus was happy with her. So he said, “Your faith has healed you. Go in peace.”

Look at verse 49. “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.’” The person who came from Jairus’ house must have meant well. Most likely, he wanted to make sure that Jairus was the first to know that his daughter had died. He wanted to spare Jairus the further humiliation of bringing Jesus and the crowd to his house when it was too late. He thought that death was the end of everything. In this crisis, only words of faith could be a help to Jairus. This man’s words were the devil’s poison to Jairus’ soul.

It is one thing to believe in a healing and quite another to believe in a resurrection. It now appeared that the healing of this woman has cost the life of Jairus’ daughter. What pain and disappointment and even anger must have flooded Jairus’ soul! Jesus quickly reassures Jairus in verse 50, “Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, ‘Don’t be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.’” He tells him, “Don’t Be afraid; just believe” which literally means “start believing and do not stop believing” Fear is to be met by Faith. Faith is not the belief that we will get what we want but the belief that God knows what is best!

First, Jairus had to overcome fear. Jairus had just heard the bad news of his daughter’s death. The devil was trying to occupy his heart, channeling in through fear. But Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid.” Jairus had to resist the fear of the devil. If he had become fearful, he could have been the devil’s prey and blame Jesus and blame the woman and the crowd. But he did not entertain the devil’s fear in his heart. He held on to Jesus’ word, “Don’t be afraid,” and resisted the devil as a matter of life and death. In the time of crisis our first job is to overcome fear. Without overcoming fear we are useless to God and cannot grow in faith. Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid.” We must overcome fear as of first importance. We see Jairus overcame fear by faith. From the time Jesus was stopped by the woman with a hemorrhage, Jairus had waited very patiently for Jesus. Jesus spent quite a long time to help her make a confession of faith. At the moment, Jairus felt that his blood pressure went up and he was about to faint. Still, Jairus was waiting on Jesus quietly and patiently. I am a hot-tempered person. If I were Jairus, I would press Jesus to leave quickly, looking at my watch every 5 seconds. But Jairus was a man of great faith in the word of God which had enabled him to overcome fear in his heart.

Second, Jairus had to just believe. What does it mean to “just believe”? It means to just believe. It means to believe Jesus’ words because Jesus says so. Jesus is God. Jesus has power over wind and waves. Jesus has power to drive out demons. Jesus has power to heal diseases. Jesus has power to raise the dead. If Jesus says so, it will be so. Jairus had to just believe. Jairus accepted Jesus’ promise that his daughter would be healed and followed Jesus to his house.

Jesus finally arrived at the house of Jairus. He went into the house with Peter, John and James and the child’s father and mother. All the people were wailing and mourning outside. Jesus said, “Stop wailing. She is not dead but asleep.” It was time for all of them to learn faith in Jesus. But they laughed at Jesus. They knew the reality: she was dead. And reality was reality. Jesus took the girl by the hand and said, “My child, get up!” Her spirit returned and at once she stood up. Jesus has power to raise the dead! To Jesus, death is like a sweet sleep after hard work. To Jesus, death is a journey to the kingdom of God. To Jesus there is no reason to be afraid of death. Faith in Jesus gives us victory over the power of death. Faith in Jesus gives us eternal life.

In this passage we learn that Jesus has power to heal any disease. Jesus has power to raise the dead. We must come to Jesus by faith with our personal problems. Then Jesus helps us grow in faith. We must learn faith that overcomes fear and the power of death and renders glory to God. Let’s remember Jesus’ words, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”