

Truth for Today

The Bible Explained

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Luke's Gospel: The woman, issue of blood and Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:40-56)

1. Introduction

We pick up Luke's Gospel today at the point in Luke 8 where Jesus had been active in the land of the Gadarenes on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. The disciples, who had witnessed the Lord's triumph over opposition time after time, were now about to see further examples on the Capernaum side of the lake. The demons had already owned His superiority over them (Luke 8:26-39). Now disease and death were also to yield to His presence and power. As the poet John Nelson Darby wrote in his poem entitled "The Man of Sorrows":

*Disease, and death, and demon,
All fled before Thy word,
As darkness the dominion
Of day's returning lord!*

The removal of the demons had certainly been a blessing to the man involved (Luke 8:38-39). Sadly, the Gadarenes as a whole had rejected the Lord Jesus, and His ministry. Jesus accepted their rejection and returned to the opposite, that is, the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, to continue to show His grace there, where a crowd was already collected waiting for Him.

2. Jairus and his daughter (Luke 8:41-42)

Luke 8:41-42 introduces Jairus and his daughter. Among the crowd, Jairus, a ruler of the local synagogue, was waiting anxiously for the Lord. He prostrated himself at the feet of Jesus, and pleaded with Him to go back to his home with him. His daughter was dying. Her case was obviously considered to be hopeless, but her father had come to ask the Lord Jesus for His help. "Come and touch her", he said, "and she will live". He was evidently confident that the Lord's touch would be sufficient to heal the poor girl.

3. The woman with the discharge of blood (Luke 8:43-48)

In Luke 8:43-48 we read that a woman caused an interruption. It is clear from the text that she was timid, but desperate. She had been suffering pain and embarrassment for twelve years from severe blood discharges (Luke 8:43). Luke, himself a medical doctor, points out that during those twelve years she had spent all her life savings on doctors' treatment (Luke 8:43). She was now penniless. On top of that, she was now, in fact, no better, but worse. How sad, that there are now so many people who apply all their resources to satisfy their natural needs and desires, but ignore the only Person Who can give spiritual and eternal life, the Lord Jesus Himself.

When the woman came to the right conclusion that her only hope lay in the Lord Jesus, she decided immediately what she must do. "If only I can touch Him, even His clothes, I shall be completely healed" (see Mark 5:28). She came in faith, and her faith was honoured. Being convinced that the Lord Jesus could heal her, she worked her way through the crowd so that she could and did touch Him, or actually, the hem of his cloak (Luke 8:44). In His perfect divine omniscience He knew what was going on, and what was wrong with the woman, and He put it right. Immediately the blood stopped flowing (Luke 8:44). She knew in herself that she was completely cured. Luke records that the Lord Jesus knew very well that power had gone out of Him at her touch of faith (Luke 8:46).

Being, apparently, a very shy person, and not wanting a fuss, she tried to disappear into the crowd without being noticed, but the Lord Jesus recognised her touch of faith and cried out, "*Who touched Me?*" (Luke 8:45) The disciples evidently thought that this was a ridiculous question, considering the massed crowd pushing and shoving each other to get near Him. They did not realise that a miracle had taken place.

Of course, the Saviour was fully aware of what was happening, but He put His own disciples to the test by asking them, "*Who touched Me?*" (Luke 8:45) Their joint reply was understandable (Luke 8:45). "Come on. What do you mean? In a crowd like this, everybody is touching everybody. It's inevitable!" They should have known that the Lord

Jesus, the Son of God, was able to distinguish between accidental touching in a crowd, and the touch of faith that brought this woman into actual, personal contact with Him. When Jesus asked questions like this, it was not because He didn't know, but rather because He wished the person concerned to make an open confession for his or her own sake. It was also to acknowledge their indebtedness to the Lord by Whom the cure was made.

The four Gospels give several examples of people who came into touch with the Lord. It is clear that when the Lord touched them, it was the touch of power in Him that was effective. When they touched Him it was their touch of faith in Him. Of course, this principle is just as true for us, morally and spiritually, as it was true physically and literally in the Gospel records.

Realising that she could not hide any longer, the woman came trembling before him and admitted publicly that she had touched Him and what had happened (Luke 8:47). Her public confession of her faith was rewarded by a public commendation of that faith by the Lord Jesus, and a public pronouncement of His peace resting upon her (Luke 8:48). No one ever puts their faith in Jesus without His knowing it, and without receiving a blessing from Him. Likewise, no one ever confesses Him openly without being strengthened in their assurance of salvation. A point we should always bear in mind if we have an opportunity to witness to others of our faith in Him. Luke 8:48 gives us the detail. *"Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."* He gave her the assurance that she could be confident now that she was not only healed in body, but that she could also enjoy the peace of God in her soul. She could now go on her way, confident that she had been permanently liberated from her former suffering, both physical and spiritual. Her faith had been rewarded. She had been made whole, totally free from both the disease and also from the wrath of God for ever. Whoever comes to Jesus in faith finds blessing.

4. Back to Jairus and his daughter (Luke 8:49-56)

Luke 8:49-56 brings us back to Jairus and his daughter. Jairus requested that Jesus come and lay His hand on his daughter, that is, touch her (see Mark 5:23). Jairus obviously assumed that the actual physical presence and touch of the Lord were necessary for the healing of his daughter. Happily, he would learn that the word of the Lord in itself was sufficient to bring about the necessary remedy (Luke 8:54).

The healing of the woman with the haemorrhage probably had not taken very long, but caused a delay long enough for a messenger to arrive with the bad news that the daughter of Jairus had died (Luke 8:49). Outwardly, it would seem that there was no point in the Lord going home with Jairus. Everyone was wailing with despair. Apparently there was faith that Jesus could heal, but none that His power could raise the dead. But Jesus would not be dismissed so easily. He answered with words of comfort and promise. *"Fear not ... believe ... she shall be made whole"* (Luke 8:50). In other words, "Don't worry. I am here. All will be well with the girl. Have faith. Only believe".

Jesus told them to stop wailing (Luke 8:52). He said, "She is not dead. She is just asleep" (Luke 8:44). By that, of course, He meant that her condition was temporary. She was about to be brought out of the sphere of death, and take up her life once more. By the way, in the New Testament the word "sleep" is always used of the death of believers, to indicate the temporary condition of physical death for believers. This is another of those cases. Certainly, it was to be a test of faith for all present. The multitude chose to ridicule Him, because they knew that the girl was indeed actually dead, and that was the end of the matter as far as they were concerned (Luke 8:53).

As soon as Jesus arrived at the family home, He went to the room where the body of the girl lay, taking the parents and Peter, James, and John with Him (Luke 8:51). He said to her, *"Girl, I say to you, arise"* (Luke 8:54). Immediately her spirit returned to her and became reunited with her body, and she arose (Luke 8:55). After restoring her to her parents, Jesus told them not to tell anybody (Luke 8:56). He was not interested in cheap popularity, and did not wish to give rise to any mass hysteria. In Luke 8:53, the reality of the death of the girl is re-emphasised. Then Luke 8:55, which is also unique to this Gospel, says, *"And her spirit returned."* And this was Doctor Luke, professionally competent to say so, who makes the statements, confirming the reality of both the death and the resurrection.

Jesus gently reminds the onlookers of something that did not seem to occur even to the parents of the girl, perhaps because of all the excitement. Even the subject of such a tremendous miracle remains as dependent afterwards upon the ordinary natural sources or means of sustenance. The Lord points out with what we might well call 'sanctified common sense', "Give her something to eat" (Luke 8:55) Christianity is essentially practical.

In the Gospel miracles involving resurrection the length of time between death and resurrection varies considerably. Jairus' daughter had just died (Luke 8:49). The widow of Nain's son (see Luke 7:11-17) was being carried to his grave (Luke 7:12). Lazarus (see John 11:1-44) had already been buried for four days (John 11:17). The power of the Lord Jesus to raise the dead wasn't affected or diminished by the length of time the person involved had been dead.

5. A Few Further Thoughts

The two miracles of the raising of the daughter of Jairus and the healing of the woman with the discharge of blood, have often been linked together by the fact that "twelve years" are significant in both cases. The little girl had lived for twelve years (Luke 8:42), whereas the woman with the issue of blood had been suffering for twelve years (Luke 8:43). Certainly, to me, the two incidents must be linked, indeed, interwoven together, because they both involve the number twelve. Scripture consistently uses the number twelve to affirm the need for proper administration in the ways of God working towards the blessing of man.

6. A major query - What is vital, the Sovereignty of God, or the free will of the individual? Or both?

Up to now, we have been thinking about the persons involved as individuals, so I will take up that aspect first. Let us think about the two cases together.

The healing of Jairus' daughter demonstrates that God is sovereign. He rules. In grace, He does for the sinner what the sinner cannot do for himself. The little girl was dead and could do nothing towards her own salvation. Only God can give life to the dead, whether physical or spiritual. On the other hand, the woman who came to Jesus demonstrates that man, for his part, is responsible to God and must come to Him in simple faith.

Think about the facts of the two cases. The woman was now penniless (Luke 8:43). For twelve years she had been vainly seeking health at the hands of Jewish physicians. How sad that there are now so many people who try everything and everybody to gain salvation, but ignore the only One who can give us spiritual life, the Lord Jesus Himself. For her, it was only a touch, and it was only the hem of His garment, but yet the blessing was hers in full measure, thus illustrating the fact that the apparent measure of our faith does not determine the measure of the blessing that grace bestows. She was perfectly healed. We also see that the touch in itself brought nothing, for Peter's word of protest showed that many had for various reasons been brought into physical contact with the Lord. Only the touch of faith counted. In other words, on the responsible side faith was the all-essential thing, and that we may exercise today.

By His questions Jesus brought the woman to the point of confession. In accord with the spirit of the Gospel the faith of her heart had to be followed by confession with her mouth, and that brought her the blessing, "*Thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace*" (Luke 8:48). Apart from that word her mind might have been overshadowed by the dread of the recurrence of her plague. Her faith, expressed in the touch, brought her the healing. Her confession brought forth the word of assurance that set her mind at ease. Today, the open confession of His Name brings the full assurance of salvation (see Romans 10:9).

When the news of the death of the girl came, this furnished a fresh opportunity for the importance of faith to be emphasised. To men, death is the dispeller of every hope, yet the word of Jesus was, "*Fear not, only believe*" (Luke 8:50). To her parents and friends it was death, but it was only sleep to Him. Yet, the very unbelief of those who mourned for her enables us to see that she really was dead, naturally speaking. The mocking unbelievers were all put out and only a few who believed saw His work of power. At His word, her spirit came again and she was restored to life. The one incident, therefore, involving Jairus' daughter, represents the Godward aspect, the other, involving the woman, the manward aspect. God is sovereign. Man is a responsible creature. Both statements are true. I might not understand everything God states in Scripture, but I must act upon what God says if I am to receive the promised blessing of God.

7. Dispensational view of the two incidents (Israel or whosoever will?)

While the Lord is awaiting the fulfilment of His special declared purpose of restoring national blessing to Israel, the nation of Israel, whom the Lord came into the world to heal, is in fact but a spiritual corpse, like the ruler's daughter. While the Lord was on His way to heal her, the woman interrupted the Lord's dealings with the girl (Luke 8:43-48).

Dispensationally, this is a picture of those who today are seeking and receiving personal blessing while the Lord's dealings with Israel, as such, that is, as a nation, are suspended for the moment. The grace of God is being offered and exercised towards individual Gentiles during the present delay of "Israel's national blessing". Of course, the Gospel of the grace of God is also available to any Jewish individual who trusts the Lord Jesus as their personal Saviour, and confesses Him as their Lord. Praise the Lord for that!

The fact that the Lord stopped on His way to raise Jairus' daughter, to heal the woman, can be taken as an illustration of His work in this present dispensation while the blessing for Israel is still in abeyance until Christ appears in power and great glory.

Jairus was a representative of the nation of Israel. Death was invading his house. He appealed to the Lord, meeting with an instantaneous response (Luke 8:41-42). On the way Jesus was intercepted by this unnamed woman suffering from her distressing condition (Luke 8:43-48). Her touch of faith brought her instant healing (Luke 8:44). Though later in time in coming and a little irregular in her approach she was the first to experience the delivering grace of the Lord. This is a suitable analogy with the present ways of God. While He is still moving forwards on the way to raise up life and bring blessing to the nation of Israel, others, individuals, and mainly Gentiles, are applying the touch of faith and getting the blessing.

It is also worthy of note that the one who had the opportunity to approach the Lord first is not necessarily the first to receive the blessing. Again, perhaps a contrast between Israel and the Gentiles. But that's by the way.

8. Epilogue

You will probably have heard the words of that old hymn by William Cowper (1731-1800):

*"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform"*

And, as another poet (whose name I have not been able to discover) said:

*"God moves behind the scenes
And moves the scenes He is behind"*

Let us recognise that there are things that only God can do for us, in particular our personal salvation. On the other hand, let us apply our personal faith to demonstrate that we do really appreciate what He has done for us. And let us seek to encourage others to respond to His wonderful love in providing such a Saviour as the Lord Jesus. Amen.

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