



JESUS HEALS A WOMAN AND A GIRL

Part 35 of Luke's Gospel: Investigating the Man Who Is God

Pastor Mark Driscoll | Luke 8:40-56 | July 04, 2010

Luke 8:40-56

⁴⁰ Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. ⁴¹ And 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, ⁴² for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

As Jesus went, the people pressed around him. ⁴³ And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. ⁴⁴ She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. ⁴⁵ And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!" ⁴⁶ But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me." ⁴⁷ And when the woman saw that she was not 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. ⁴⁸ And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

⁴⁹ While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more." ⁵⁰ But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well." ⁵¹ And 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. ⁵² And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." ⁵³ And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴ But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." ⁵⁵ And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. ⁵⁶ And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

INTRODUCTION

Well, Happy One-Third, Mars Hill. It will take 106 sermons to get through Luke, and today is number 35. We are one-third of the way through Luke, and today we are in Luke 8:40-56. Jesus heals a woman and a girl. As you're turning there, you're going to see Jesus absolutely transform the lives of an older woman and a younger girl, as he loves and serves them both exceedingly well.

JESUS CLEANSSES (LUKE 8:40-48)

We'll start with the fact that Jesus cleanses in Luke 8:40-48, and jump right into the story. Luke 8:40, "Now when Jesus returned—" returned from where? Casting demons out of the demon-possessed man. Let me just unpack Jesus' succession of Jack Bauer days. Jesus has large crowds coming to him. He's healing, performing miracles. He needs a break, so he gets in a boat, and he's so exhausted that as they row across the Sea of Galilee, an enormous storm comes upon them. And he is so tired that though their life is in danger, he's asleep on the boat. That's how tired he is. They wake him up and he calms the storm. He commands creation to obey him. They row to the other side of the lake. He gets off the boat and here comes the demon-possessed man, naked, crazy. The guy who broke shackles, and lived in the graveyards. That's the welcoming committee. So this is no day off or day at the spa for Jesus.

He cast the demons out of the man, ministers to those people, gets back in the boat, goes across the lake, gets out of the boat, and here's an entirely new crowd of needy people. Jesus is unbelievable in his outpouring of love, affection, and service for people, and there are seasons of ministry that feel like this. I would say on behalf of your elders, it's been one of those seasons for the past month or two.

Grace recently asked, "Did you have a hard day?" "No, I've had a hard life. But yes, that would include a hard day." There are just seasons like that where the needs are so great that everywhere you go, and everyone you talk to, and everything you see just reveals greater needs for love, and care, and compassion, and teaching, and prayer, and service, and funds, and help. And Jesus is having this succession of experiences.

"Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him." So everybody took the day off of work, and got out of school, and they're all just waiting on the shore. You see it? Here come the disciples, rowing, "Oh, here they are." And Jesus is coming, and they're first, second, third, they're all like the DMV. Everybody's got a number, lined up, waiting for their appointment with Jesus, their lists of needs, "for they were all waiting for him."

Verse 41, "And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue." So he is a known, respected, spiritual leader. In the old covenant equivalent, this would be like a church. That's what a synagogue was like, where the people of God gathered to hear the Word of God and worship the God of the Word. And he, being one of the leaders, was kind of like a pastor. So think of him as a pastor or an elder, like one of the men who serves at Mars Hill, and the place where he ministers like one of our campuses.

"And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house." Grown men tended not to do this. You didn't run. You didn't throw yourself at someone's feet, especially if you're a religious and spiritual leader. But this man is humble, and he's desperate, and he's begging Jesus to leave this crowd, and to come to his home. Why?

"For he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying." Jairus' story resonates with me personally because he's essentially a pastor, as I am, and he has a daughter who's the same age as my daughter, Ashley. His daughter was about twelve years of age. My daughter Ashley's twelve, she'll be thirteen in a few months. This is his only child. We don't know if they struggled with miscarriage or infertility or what happened. My assumption is they would have liked to have had more children. Larger families were common in that day, but for whatever reason, God graced them with only one child, a girl.

And this man loves his daughter like I love my daughter. How do we know? Well, he's done everything he can to help her to be healed, and she is dying. And he leaves her on her deathbed with her mother who is tending to her, and he runs to Jesus, hearing that Jesus is in town, throws himself at Jesus' feet, is desperately begging Jesus to come to his home and heal his daughter. This is a man who will do anything and everything to see his little girl get better.

DAUGHTERS ARE GIFTS FROM THE LORD

How many of you men are fathers of daughters? It is such a tremendous honor and gift to be the father of a young woman. For those of you men who are a little scared of becoming fathers of daughters, I assure you of this, it's amazing. It's wonderful. People say silly things like, "Oh, wait till they hit the teen years, wait till they hit junior high." We're there, it's incredible. You can, by the grace of God, have a daughter who's making that transition from girl to woman, and you could be there to love her, and encourage her, and bless her, and support her, and adore her, and protect her, and enjoy her, and be close to her.

Jairus seems to have that kind of relationship with his daughter. She's about twelve years of age. I can still remember when Ashley was born. I was convinced we were gonna have a boy. And she came out, and it was not a boy. And I remember being shocked, like, "This is a girl. I think I know what to do with boys. Girls, not so much. I have a lot to learn." And then I prayed, "God, thank you for giving me a little girl. Help me love her, and protect her, and enjoy her, and make her years many, and make her life fruitful, and make her heart filled with love for you."

Seeing her grow up has been amazing. She started talking very early, very verbal. I remember when she was walking, and I'd follow her around terrified she's going to fall over. Snuggling with her, reading to her, praying with her. Singing songs with her at night was one of my favorites when she was little. I don't sing well, so I would intentionally sing very silly and ridiculous, and she found it cute.

Ashley's more introverted, a little more private and quiet. I asked her to come on stage to meet you, and she said no. So I'll tell you about her, and I love her, and I want to respect her. Growing up, what I've really enjoyed is that her heart has never closed to the Lord, or to me, or to her mom. It's always been open, ever since she was a little girl. I used to read the Bible to her, and then as she got old enough, she started reading the Bible to me. Now, she reads the Bible for herself, and she has her own love for God, and a relationship with God.

I respect Ashley very much. I enjoy her. I like her. I like having her around. She's wonderful to have around. I know someday she's going to leave, but I'm really dreading that, and I'm glad it's a long ways away, 'cause it's gonna take me years to emotionally prepare for waking up, and coming downstairs, and not seeing her, 'cause she's wonderful.

Ashley has been a gift of God's grace in my life. She has softened me and caused me to be more affectionate, and tender, and considerate, particularly of women. She has caused the defender, protector part of me to go into warp speed, and to do all I can to keep her safe and loved. She's a girl who I've gotten to know by observing her. I can tell when she's sad, or lonely, or hurting, or needs something. I love paying attention to her, and trying to be attentive and serve her.

We've had a lot of important conversations, and some sacred moments, some sacred moments with my daughter that I'll cherish for the rest of my life. And my entire future includes pictures with Ashley in it, with Ashley in it.

I mean, just yesterday we were going into the hotel as a family. There were little league tournaments for Calvin and Zac, and so we stayed at a hotel as a family, and then split up to go to the two tournaments. And I was walking into the hotel, and Ashley took my arm, and I was walking into the hotel with her, and I thought, someday I'm gonna walk her down the aisle, and then I'm gonna officiate her wedding as her dad and her pastor.

We've had conversations about what kind of man she needs to save her heart for, and she understands that. And he's going to get a tremendous gift of a woman, and she will be a tremendous blessing to him. Thankfully, I don't think that will be soon because she's not boy crazy, and I rejoice in that.

We've talked about it. I think when girls have brothers, and when they don't have brothers, things are different. When a girl doesn't have brothers, she finds boys fascinating. And when she does have brothers, they're just annoying. And I rejoice in that.

Ashley's very creative. She loves cooking, and she loves fashion, and she loves painting, and she loves drawing, and she loves literature. She loves to travel. She's been to Greece, and Israel, and Turkey, and Australia, and Scotland with me and with us. I love showing her the world. She loves going to

galleries. She loves creativity. She loves the Food Network. I love that. I love snuggling with her, just sitting with her, even if we're just watching the Food Network. I don't really like the Food Network, but I like Ashley, and Ashley likes the Food Network, so I watch a lot of Food Network. And then Ashley cooks things for me. I came home from a trip recently, there was a nice note and macaroons, gluten-free macaroons as a gift to Poppa Daddy, which is what she calls me. I love that. Enjoy her, adore her. Appreciate her.

She makes me cry all the time. I'm not much of a crier, but Ashley's got the shortcut to my heart. If she's sick, I cry. If she memorizes a verse of the Bible, I cry. If she tells me she loves me, I cry. I cry all the time. It's kind of embarrassing, and I've told you men before, don't be a crier. If you have a daughter, that's the fine-print exception clause. You can cry all you want, out of love for your daughter. It's good for her, she knows that you have affection toward her.

When I'm snuggling up with her, or watching the Food Network, like the other night, we were snuggling up watching a show, and I always ask her, "Hey, when we're both old, like I'm really old and you're pretty old, we're still gonna snuggle, right?" "Well, yeah." "We're still gonna go on daddy dates, right?" "Yeah." "We're gonna still go out for tea and hang out, and you're still gonna visit with me, and be my daughter, right?" "Yeah. Why do you always ask?" "Cause I'm trying to schedule these appointments for the next fifty years, and I want to make sure that this is all set up, because for the rest of my life, I want to hang out with you. I want to be with you. I love you. I enjoy you."

See, men, daughters are gifts from the Lord to be encouraged, to be cultivated, to be protected, to be adored, and cherished, and nurtured. It is so important to me that we be a church of masculine, strong, godly men who adore, snuggle, pursue, pray for our daughters. That's what's on my heart. And back to the story—and I'll say this too, every time I see a daddy at Mars Hill holding his baby girl, honestly it's one of the great delights and highlights of my ministry. There's another girl who has a dad who loves Jesus, and loves her. And he's adoring her, and kissing her, and bringing her up for when he comes for communion. Those kinds of things mean the world to me.

THE DEMANDS OF MINISTRY

Now, back to the story, Jairus is a pastor, and he's got a daughter who's about the same age as my daughter, Ashley, except for his daughter is sick. It's his only child, and she's on her deathbed. Fathers, go there emotionally. Your daughter is dying. Whatever pictures you have in your mind of your future together, they're all in jeopardy. So he runs to Jesus, throws himself at Jesus' feet, and he begs Jesus. "I know there's a lot of people here who want to meet with you, but Jesus, could you please come to my home? My daughter is near death."

"As Jesus went," verse 42, "the people pressed around him." The crowds encircle him. Everyone has a need, a request. This is how ministry is. It's constant disruption and interruption. Jesus loves Jairus, and his daughter, and surrounding him are other people that he loves. She has cancer. He is sick. They are depressed. This person has demons. These critics want to argue. These people just want to be friends, and get a Facebook photo. Jesus has all of these demands, and sometimes one of the hardest things in ministry is discerning, "Okay, I can't serve everyone. I want to, but I need to decide how to best utilize my time with so many legitimate needs, and how to ignore some of those that are just people who are critics, or just people who want to hang out, and they're not of most urgent, strategic importance for time." Not because you don't love them, but because people are in crisis, and time is of the essence.

And I would tell you this, on behalf of your pastors, and elders, and deacons, and community group leaders, and redemption group leaders, there are seasons of ministry that absolutely feel like this. Jesus, at this point, is God become a man. He has taken upon himself humanity, so in this instant, he can only be one place at one time. He only has so many minutes in an hour, and so many hours in a day. And all of these needs are collapsing and crushing around him. And Jairus' daughter is some ways away, and the requests of these crowds are legitimate, and Jesus has this very difficult moment where he has to choose whom he will serve in that instance.

Pray for your leaders, and if you don't feel like we got back to you quickly, or, perhaps, somehow you were not tended to, accept my sincere apology, and please don't grow weary in letting us know how we can love better. But I would also say, please also be understanding that sometimes it is five crises to get to your crisis, and sometimes we're overwhelmed.

And Jesus, in this instance, is surrounded with need, and so what will he do?

DESTITUTE, DESPERATE, AND LONELY

Verse 43, "And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for," how long? "Twelve years." This woman had chronic bleeding, possibly a uterine hemorrhage for twelve years. As long as the little girl, Jairus' daughter, had been alive, this woman had been bleeding.

"And though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone." That is the clinical diagnosis of our author, Luke the physician, the doctor. This woman is desperate, and she's destitute. She's desperate in that she has tried every form of treatment. She's gone to the doctor. She's undergone alternative therapy. She has prayed. She has fasted. She has gone to the healing center. She has done everything that medicine would make available to her. She is also destitute in addition to desperate. She has spent all of her money. She is now absolutely impoverished. This is what happens to those who are suffering, who have physical ailment, even in our own day.

Some of you are in that condition; some of you know and love people in that condition. They have spent their life savings. They have sold their home. They have unloaded their possessions. They have cashed in their retirement account. They have maxed out their credit cards. Their friends, family, and coworkers have hosted benefits. They've thrown all the money they can pull together toward that need, and nothing changes. And they're without hope, and they're without help. And they're desperate, and they're destitute. This woman is in a horrible condition, and here she is before Jesus.

Now, whom will Jesus serve? Will he serve this woman who has a very legitimate need, or this daughter of Jairus who, likewise, has a very legitimate need? And this is the constant weight and burden of ministry for those who tend to God's people and love them.

The story tells us, as well, she had been in this condition for twelve years. Now, let me say, then, Leviticus 15, this would have made her ceremonially, ritually, under the old covenant, unclean. Here's what this means, friends: no one has touched her in twelve years. No one has hugged her. No one has laid a hand on her to pray for her. No one has kissed her on the top of the head, which is what I like to do when I go to a hospital visit, and somebody's hurting and bedridden. No one has held her hand. She has not had physical contact for a dozen years. She's very isolated and lonely in her suffering. She can't be in crowds. She's not allowed to go to the temple or to synagogue to join God's people in worship. The only thing worse than suffering is suffering in isolation. There's no one to be with you, to talk to you, to share with you.

And see, we don't see a lot of this yet at Mars Hill because we have hundreds of weddings for every funeral. Older people are coming to Mars Hill, and the people here, like me, I'm pushing forty, are getting older. But there will be a day as our congregation ages and more older people come that the number of weddings and funerals will start to balance, that the list of people with cancer, and debilitating illness, and untreatable trauma, or injury, or sickness, that that list grows. And you need to know that those people, oftentimes, are destitute, desperate, and lonely.

Grace and I first saw this when, in college, I was a new Christian. And as most college students, I'm just hanging out as a new Christian with a lot of college-age friends and some families who love the Lord. And we were in a fantastic Bible-teaching church. It was my first church, and I rejoice that God brought me to that church. And the invitation was given by an organization in town to deliver meals to people who were shut-ins. They were either elderly and couldn't venture out, or were suffering and sick, or traumatically injured, or battling cancer, something of that nature, to where they couldn't come to church and they couldn't come out into the community. And so meals had to literally be delivered to them. So they asked who could deliver meals and sign up to cover particular days.

So Grace and I, we were dating, and working toward marriage, and we had school and work Monday through Friday, and church on Sunday, and Saturday was open, so we decided to volunteer together and to make that one of our first ministry experiences together. And with a number of people on the list, and the distance between them, my assumption was, this will take about an hour to go drop off these meals for everybody, and it took something like five hours because it would take a long time for people to get to the door to open it or for their care workers—this is why we love people who are in hospice and nursing. Those people are amazing. Sometimes it would be a care worker who would come to the door.

And once the door was open, you'd walk in to deliver the meal, and the person who was there would spring to life, and they just wanted to talk. It was obvious that many of them hadn't had visitors in a long time. We got to develop friendships with some elderly people, and some dying people. Started hearing about spouses they had buried, children they had raised, wars they had fought in, suffering they had endured and loneliness. Loneliness. People whose children hadn't been to see them in years, people who hadn't been out of the home, apartment in months, people who didn't have visitors.

This woman lives a life like that. She eats all her meals by herself. She worships God by herself. She lives by herself. Additionally, Leviticus says that she would have been forbidden, because of her condition, from any marital intimacy. What this means is she had either never married, or she was likely divorced. She has no husband. She has no children. She has no money. She has no church. She has no community group. She has no redemption group. She has no hope. And she hears that Jesus has come to town.

REACH OUT TO JESUS

"She came up behind him," verse 44, "And touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased." This is Luke, the doctor, giving us a medical diagnosis. She's not supposed to be near the crowd. She's not supposed to touch anyone because she will make them ritually unclean, and somehow she presses through the crowd. She gets to Jesus. She must be on her face as an act of worship because she reaches out and touches the hem of his garment.

And I want you to see that that is an act of faith. And for some of you, this concept of faith, that we're saved by faith, that we live by faith, that we're kept by faith, it may be a difficult abstract concept, but I want you to see it here as reaching out to Jesus. Friends, that's what faith is. She has faith in her heart, which is a gift of God, and she reaches out in faith, trusting, knowing, believing, "If I could just touch the tassel on the end of his robe, I could be healed." She has great faith, saving faith in Jesus.

And in that instant, her soul is healed—she becomes a worshiper of Jesus—and her body is healed, and the power of God is unleashed in her life through faith. You need to know that this is how it works. The power of God is unleashed in our life through faith, trusting, believing in Jesus. This is amazing. Not everyone who touched Jesus was healed. Luke doesn't extrapolate and give us the exact reasons that this happens. But by faith, the power of God is unleashed in her life.

And let me say this, and this is beautiful: She does not make Jesus unclean. Jesus makes her clean. She was not to touch anyone because she was unclean, and she would make them unclean. But because Jesus is pure, Jesus is sinless, Jesus is good, Jesus is God, when she touches him, he does not become unclean, she becomes clean.

And I need you to know this. And in your heart, I need you to today, by faith, believe this, that whoever you are, and whatever you've done, or however dirty, and disgusting, and defiled your life has been, you reach out to Jesus in faith, and you don't make him unclean. He makes you clean. And the power of God is unleashed in your life to give you new life. She's a picture of all who are saved by faith, reaching out to Jesus, and receiving new life.

“And Jesus said,” verse 45, “Who was it that touched me?” I think this might be a rhetorical question. Do you have kids? Say you walk into the kitchen, and the lid is off the cookie jar, and cookies are all gone, and one child’s clean, and the other’s covered with fudge and crumbs. You say, “Okay, who got into the cookie jar?” It’s not that you don’t know, it’s that you’re giving them an opportunity to repent. They say, “I don’t know, we have no idea. The cookies disappeared. It was a cookie rapture. They’re just gone. We don’t know what happened to the cookies.” Jesus here is inviting her to come forward and publicly confess what she’s done. “Who was it that touched me?”

Now, what’s going to happen next is Peter’s going to speak. Peter has this fantastic ability to fill silence with stupidity. When it’s a good moment to not speak, that’s when Peter leaps into action. I love Peter because there’s hope for me as I look at his life. There are times that Peter should just be quiet and instead, he will proceed boldly. That’s why we love Peter. I love that Jesus makes him the leader of the disciples. Who’s in charge? That guy who always ruins it. Awesome, I can definitely join this team. There’s room for me too. I’ve actually made a career out of this art form.

“When all denied it, Peter said, ‘Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!’” “Really, Peter? Thank you, I had no idea that these were all people around me, and that the pushing was from the people. What would we do without you, Peter, and your tremendous insights? You’re so helpful.” You kind of get the idea that ministry happens in spite of the disciples, not because of them. “Thank you, Peter, you really made a difference.”

“But Jesus said, ‘Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me.’” The power of God is unleashed in the life of this woman by her reaching out in faith to Jesus, and I would encourage you today, reach out in faith to Jesus so the power of God might be unleashed in your life.

Verse 47, “And when the woman saw that she was not hidden—” For whatever reason, she couldn’t hide this. Perhaps she’d been very sick, and ill, and frail, and now she’s healed, and happy, and fine. And she’s excited because her bleeding has stopped for the first time in twelve years, and everybody’s looking at her, saying, “I think it’s her. She looks a lot better, and she’s dancing, and smiling. She’s pretty excited today, and she’s not even supposed to be here, so we think we know who it is.”

And she realizes, “I’ve been found out.” What will Jesus do? “She came trembling, and falling down before him.” She’s scared. She’s wondering, “Will Jesus reject me? Will he publicly shame me? Have I made him unclean? Will this crowd cast me out? I’m not supposed to be here. Will I be brought up on charges for defiling a whole group of people?”

“DAUGHTER”

“And she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. And he said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.’” Let me say this, she is the only person that Jesus ever calls “daughter.” Powerful words. She may be older than Jesus. If she’s been bleeding for twelve years, and he’s in his early thirties, it is not unlikely that she’s, in fact, older. What is Jesus doing speaking to, perhaps, an older woman and referring to her with this affectionate title of daughter? Daughter.

Well, it is this: this woman does not have a Jairus. She doesn’t have a dad to do what Jairus has just done for his little girl. She doesn’t have a dad who says, “Sweetheart, wait here, I’m gonna go get Jesus, and I’m gonna beg him to come and heal my daughter that I love, and adore, and cherish.” See, instead, she needs to take care of herself. She needs to pay her own medical bills. She needs to go on her own journey toward Jesus. She needs to risk her own well-being to meet him.

Some of you ladies are like this woman. You’re not like Jairus’ daughter. Some of you ladies are blessed. You have a dad who loves Jesus, and loves you, and he’s always trying to get you and Jesus together. Some of you don’t have a dad like that. Some of you don’t have a dad at all. Some of you ladies, you don’t even know your father, or he doesn’t love you, and he doesn’t love Jesus, and he’s not trying to bring you and Jesus together. That’s this woman’s story.

I’ve met a lot of woman like that recently. I mean, I’m kind of cried out. I’ve cried a lot today praying for different women, but I’ve had women come up to me, teenage girls say, “Pastor Mark, could you pray for my dad?” “Sure, what would you like me to pray?” “Pray that he will talk to me.” “Okay, do you not live with him, your parents divorced?” “No, I live with him. He just looks at porn all the time, and he doesn’t even talk to me.” See men, if you’re not right in your thinking, then your daughter’s gonna think there’s something wrong with her because you’ve rejected her. You’re not there for her, loving her, serving her, protecting her, encouraging her. Sometimes then the worst men come in and fill that void.

I recently prayed for a young woman who’s actually being seduced by a man who’s quite a bit older than her, and he’s grooming her. He’s married. She wants a father figure in her life. She’s willing to exchange herself for a man who pretends to be a father, but really is a predator. I’ve prayed recently for a couple of women who lost their virginity to their father. I mean, fathers, you need to know, men, we are powerful for good or evil in the lives of our daughters. Powerful for good or evil in the lives of our daughters.

That we actually share—and this hit me the first time I held Ashley, my oldest—she’s gonna call me “Father,” and she’s gonna call God “Father.” And I’ve been entrusted with this sacred responsibility, and this sacred name, title, and I know I’m not sinless, and perfect like our heavenly Father, but I want her to see an echo of his love in the affection of her Poppa Daddy. I want her to be safest with me, most loved, cherished, adored, pursued by me. I want her to know that she is beautiful, and treasured, and valuable to me.

And see, some of you ladies, you’ve never had that. You don’t know who your father is, or you’re ashamed of who your father is. The question is, well, what hope is there for you? And Jesus would say to you, as he says to this woman, “Daughter.” That Jesus takes that fatherly place in your life. He becomes that man who gives you identity, and affection, and security, and protection. He becomes that man you go to in time of need, and he lovingly, affectionately cares for you.

Some of you ladies identify with this woman. Your life has had a lot of suffering, and my encouragement would be to, like her, reach out to Jesus in faith, have the power of God unleashed in your life, and have Jesus call you “daughter,” to be like a father to you, that desperate, needy father figure in your life.

THE DOCTRINE OF EXPIATION

It’s amazing that Jesus would do this, and he does this in the midst of a crowd, to honor this woman with dignity and affection, to restore her to the congregation of God’s people. This is a life-changing day for this woman. There’s a total healing that is happening here. And everything changes for her.

At this moment, the people can hug her to celebrate. Can you imagine what that felt like, not being embraced for twelve years? People can lay a hand on her and pray for her. She could hold a baby. She’s not held a baby in twelve years. She could lay hands on other people, and pray for them as they’re in need. She can attend the congregation of God’s people, and worship as one of them. If she wants, she can get married. If she’s physically able, she can have children and become a mother. Her whole life is radically, instantly changed by power that is unleashed in her life through faith in Jesus. That’s why she’s a portrait and a picture of salvation for us all. Does your heart go out to this woman?

What is happening here is that she was unclean, and now she’s been made clean. That’s what’s happening. And it’ll take me a moment, but let me explain to you, the biblical doctrine of expiation. I’ve got a whole chapter in *Death By Love*, chapter 7, I think it is, is designated to this title. And here’s the big idea: that there are roughly a dozen words in the Bible that speak of us in terms of, as sinners, being defiled, unclean, filthy. Isaiah actually uses the illustration that our religious righteousness, our works apart from faith, our efforts to please God are like a bleeding woman’s rags. It’s a disgusting condition called religion.

And so the Bible uses this continual analogy and metaphor that sin is like uncleanness. And this woman is unclean because sin is in the world. The Bible doesn’t connect cause and effect, that she committed this sin so she has this condition. But when God was finished with the world, he said it was all very good, and there was nothing but life. And because of human sin, and rebellion, there is now suffering, and sickness, and death, and those things would not exist except for sin. And so sin is in the world, and it has infected and affected everyone and everything, including this woman’s body, and her health, and her spiritual condition before God.

And so for us, sin is like this woman in that we have this debilitating condition. We live with this condition of sin every day. It makes us unclean in the eyes of a holy and righteous God. It makes us cast out from the worshiping congregation of his people. And it ultimately leads to suffering and death. And that there is no hope. It doesn’t matter what we do, who we see, or how much we spend, unless we reach out to Jesus, that debilitating condition of unclean sin that leads to death is ever present, and there’s no help or hope for us apart from Jesus. And it means that we are guilty of sin, and we’re unclean as well.

And people who are sinners, they feel defiled, unclean through sin that is committed against us when we are made victims, and for sin that we commit as we sin against others. Some of you feel this way. You just feel damaged, dirty, degraded, and disgusting, to use the language of the Bible, unclean. Unclean. Nearly every abuse victim that I’ve ever spoken to says that after their abuse, they went and took a, what? A shower, because they feel unclean. And that water might cleanse the body, but it doesn’t cleanse the soul. It doesn’t go deep enough.

If you’ve been around Mars Hill for a while, you know that I like to explain the most important day in the Jewish calendar, a day that would have been celebrated by this woman as a foreshadowing of the coming of Jesus, that was Yom Kippur. The Day of Atonement, the High Holy Day, the Day, the day when our debilitating, deadly, disgusting condition of sin was dealt with by a holy and righteous God through the work of a mediator, a high priest who was foreshadowing, symbolizing the coming of Jesus, our great high priest.

And on that day, the people would gather for worship, and this woman could not attend those services. It’s amazing, she couldn’t go to Yom Kippur, but Yom Kippur comes to her, in the person and work of Jesus.

And on that day, two goats would be chosen, without spot, blemish, or defect, symbolizing the coming of Jesus without sin. And the priest is the intercessor, and the mediator, and the advocate of the people would name their sin over the sacrificial goat, and then that goat would be treated as a substitute, and its blood would be shed, and it would suffer and die in their place for their sins, showing what Jesus would ultimately do on the cross.

And the second goat was not the substitutionary goat. It was the scapegoat, nomenclature we still use in our culture. And again, likewise, similarly, the sins of the people would be confessed over the animal, and instead of being sacrificed, it would be sent away. And history records that people would chase the animal, showing that they want to be forgiven and cleansed. They want their sin atoned for and taken away, forever. They want to be made clean.

And this High Holy Day would include ceremonial washings, and bathings, and wearing of white, and cleaning out of your home, all showing the need for expiation, for cleansing. We need to be forgiven and made clean. And Jesus, this man is going to be her Yom Kippur. He is going to be her great high priest, and his death on the cross is going to be her day of atonement.

And so he forgives her, and cleanses her, and he ultimately is going to the cross, and perhaps my favorite verse in all of Scripture, 2 Corinthians 5:21 explains what transpired in that moment in this way, “God made him who knew no sin to become sin so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God.” You’ve heard me say it a lot if you’ve been at Mars Hill for any length of time. Luther calls it the great exchange. All of my uncleanness and filth goes to Jesus.

I want you to see yourself reaching out to Jesus with all the sin committed against you, and all the sin that you've committed, and all your filth, and all of your defilement, and all of your disobedience, and all of your uncleanness, all of your idolatry, and I want you to see yourself touching Jesus, fearful that you're going to make him unclean.

And the most amazing thing happens. He's not made unclean, you're made clean. You're forgiven and cleansed. And his righteousness is imputed, granted, reckoned, given to you, and you're made clean; that he forgives and cleanses, just like he did this woman. That's why 1 John says, "If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us of all of our unrighteousness." He's our sacrificial goat. He is the one who forgives sin. He's our scapegoat. He's the one who cleanses us from unrighteousness, and makes us clean in his sight. And this is this woman's Yom Kippur. This is her high holy day. This is her day, by faith she is saved, physically and spiritually. She's forgiven and made clean.

And what does Jesus say? "'Daughter, your faith has made you well: go in peace.'" "Go live a new life. Go live to God's glory and your joy." I am desperate for you to receive new life through Jesus, new life through Jesus, to leave here going in peace and being called a child of God. That's her story, that Jesus cleanses.

JESUS RAISES (LUKE 8:49–56)

The second half of the story is that Jesus raises. Back to the initial point, what about the little girl? The twelve-year-old whose daddy loved her with all of his heart. She was on her deathbed being tended to by her mother. Jesus has been interrupted from going to her because of this need of this woman. This is Alexie, my six-year-old daughter's favorite Bible story. I have read it a lot, and now she can read, and she's read it to me a lot. And it's a great honor on behalf of Alexie to share it with you.

Luke 8:49, "While he was still speaking," that is Jesus, "someone from the ruler's house came and said—" hear these words, Mars Hill, "'Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more.'" Whoever brought this news has no tact or pastoral affection at all. The man, Jairus, is waiting as Jesus heals, and loves, and serves this woman who's been suffering as long as his daughter's been alive. And he's hoping and praying, "If I can just get Jesus to my little girl, she may live." And someone comes, "Jairus, you can stop bothering Jesus, she's dead." You daddies need to feel that. We need to feel that, dads.

I can't think of anything worse than preaching my child's funeral. I can't think of anything worse than that. I'm blessed with five children on earth and one that was miscarried and is with Jesus, I believe, in heaven. Imagine having one child. Infant mortality rates were high. Children often died, sometimes they didn't name the child until after the first week because death was so common. Your daughter's a young woman. She's twelve. In a few years she can marry. That means you're almost there to being grandparents in that culture. Take a deep breath, "Oh, our child is healthy and alive, praise God. It's a beautiful girl. We adore her. She's sick. She's not getting better. She's getting worse. She's on her deathbed. Please go get Jesus, I'll stay here with her," mother says.

What kills me in this story is that the man was not there to see his daughter die. See, as a daddy, you want to be there in the last moments, if this should ever happen, you want to be there kissing your daughter on the forehead, and holding her, and just bawling your eyes out, telling her you love her, and you're thankful for all the years God's given you, and that she was a joy, and a delight, and to say your good-byes. And he wasn't there. Not 'cause he didn't love her, but because he was trying to save her. Not only that, his wife—I can only imagine Grace being there without me, just praying, and crying, and hoping, and watching Ashley breathe her last breath. And me not being there to be the strong one, and the head of the household, and to love, and lead well. This man is destroyed. His life is in shambles. And his daughter's dead.

Yesterday was—I told you I cry with Ashley. Yesterday, Ashley and I were at Calvin's baseball game hanging out all day, and I asked her, I said, "Ashley, could you help me with this sermon, sweetie pie?" She said, "Yeah," so we talked about this text of Scripture. I said, "What do you think about this story?" She said, "Well, you would be traumatized." That's true. "You would be angry that people got in your way." That's true too. "And you would not stop crying." That's true.

I'd be traumatized at the loss of my daughter, whom I adore and is a real gift to me from the Lord. I'd be angry that others had gotten in the way, and prevented Jesus from getting to her swiftly. And I would not stop crying for the rest of my life. I don't even understand how a parent, in general, or a father with his daughter in particular—and let me say this, it's a sin for any parent to have favorites with their children. You are to love and serve all of your children equally. So when I talk about Ashley, it's because she relates to the story. But let me say this, there is a particular affection that a firstborn daughter has for her daddy. There's something sacred and special I can't even explain. You have to be a horrible human being for your oldest daughter not to love you, men. You have to work at it because even men who are bad men still have daughters who love them. And this girl, I am assuming and inferring, adored her dad because he sure loved her, and he would do anything for her, and now she's dead.

Verse 50, what will Jesus do? Can you see how hard ministry is? These are the decisions Jesus has to make: the woman who's been bleeding for twelve years, or the dying twelve-year-old? Okay, pray for your elders that we'd have discernment and Holy Spirit supernatural capacity emotionally and physically because this is what ministry's like. And if you are not tended to, and served, and loved, please don't give the enemy ground and assume, "Mars Hill doesn't care, and they didn't love me." Please, forgive us, and understand that sometimes we're trying to get through all the emergencies to get to yours, and we're doing the best we can. And we do love you, and this church means the world to us.

FAITH VERSUS FEAR

"But Jesus," verse 50, "on hearing this answered him, 'Do not fear, only believe.'" Both of these stories that Luke weaves together are about faith versus fear. When suffering, crisis, trauma, tragedy occur, it is possible to respond in fear. "Nothing will change. Don't go to Jesus. Don't try. Don't

care. Don't help. Give up. Give in." That's fear. Or faith, "I gotta get to Jesus. I have to get to Jesus, and I believe he will make the difference." And it is in both stories, 'cause Jesus told the woman who had been bleeding for twelve years, "Daughter, your faith has made you well, go in peace." She chose faith over fear. Here, Jesus is inviting Jairus to have faith in him over fear in circumstance.

"Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well." And 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." He clears the room where the little girl is dead, probably laying in bed, and he brings three of his disciples—there is a chain of command: these are his leaders—with him. To what?

To learn, because ministry is often caught, not taught. And ministry is about being invited into the sacred moments of people's lives where they're repenting, or they're growing, or they're changing, or they're dying, or they're suffering. These are sacred moments where people open their heart and their life to their pastor. Very sacred moments. And Jesus is bringing the disciples with him so that they can observe. This is part of their training. This is what happens in community groups. We go into people's homes and lives. This is what happens in redemption group. We do life and community together. If you want to learn how to care for people, then those are the vehicles by which you'll be observing before doing, learning like Jesus taught, how to care for hurting and suffering people.

And he clears the room, and then in walks Jesus with his three disciples that he's training, the father, Jairus, and the mother. Ladies, can you emotionally feel where this woman is at? Can you see her leaning over her dead daughter? I mean I can't even—and thinking of Grace and Ashley, I just can't even—can't even go there. That the mother has been there with her daughter, and she's seen her die. She's holding her daughter's lifeless body, and she is weeping, sobbing, heaving bitterly. And in walks Jesus, three men she does not know, and her husband who's a pastor.

"And all were weeping." You can hear it outside of the room and the home and outside, family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, members of the congregation. There's ten-, eleven-, twelve-, thirteen-, fourteen-year-old girls that are her friends, and they're emotional, and they're distraught, and they're hugging each other, and everyone is weeping, "and mourning for her but he said, 'Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping.'"

Sleep is a euphemism. It's a metaphor that the Bible uses to speak of those who die in faith as believers. See, death, ultimately, is not just physical death, but it's spiritual death, which is separation from God. Some of you are physically alive, but spiritually dead, living apart from Jesus. You're dead in your trespasses and sins, the Bible would say. And that because of your sins, you will die, and upon death, you will experience eternal death in hell. That's the worst death of all. That's the ultimate death.

Those who have faith in Jesus, and belong to Jesus, and are believers in Jesus, when they die physically, they do not experience ultimate death because their soul goes to be with Jesus. We have a physical body and an immaterial soul, and upon the death of the physical body, the immaterial soul goes to be with God. That's why Paul says, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." That's why Paul would say elsewhere that "to live is Christ and to die is," what? "Gain."

And so the Bible uses the language of sleep when the believer dies; that the body goes into the ground, and the soul goes to be with the Lord until the day that the Lord Jesus returns, and he commands the soul to reenter and occupy the body; that the soul and the body are rejoined in a glorified resurrected body patterned after the resurrection body of Jesus.

What this means is that, for God, the raising of a dead person is no more difficult than the parent who raises a child from a nap. Gideon is four, and occasionally he still naps. Walk in, rub his back. "Good guy, Gid." That's what we call him. "It's time to get up, buddy." One eye open, "Okay, Dad." For God to resurrect a believer is no more difficult than for a parent to awaken a child from a nap. It's just asleep.

And what do they do? Verse 53, "They all laughed at him, knowing that she was dead." People still laugh at Jesus. "You think we have a soul? You think after we die we go to be with God? You think that one day our soul will reenter our body? You think that Jesus will defeat Satan, sin, and death, and lift the curse? That we'll live forever in a new kingdom? What a joke." People still laugh in Jesus' face.

A PORTRAIT OF OUR ETERNITY

Verse 54, "But taking her by the," what? "Hand." I love this. Luke is such a master storyteller by the power of the Holy Spirit. Friends, did Jesus need to go to her house to heal her, yes or no? No. Previously in Luke's Gospel, we've seen that a man came to Jesus, said, "I need you to heal someone. No need to come to my house. You can do it from a distance," and he does. Jesus doesn't need to go to the house. Does Jesus need to touch the girl, yes or no? No. So why is he there? Because he loves her. Why does he touch her? Because he loves her.

And he says to her, "Child, arise." He calls the older woman, "Daughter." He calls the younger woman, "Child." And she opens her eyes, and who's the first person she sees? Jesus. What's the first voice she hears? Jesus'. What's the first touch she feels? Jesus'. This is a picture of the resurrection of the dead for all of the children of God, that when we die, and because of sin we all will, for those who belong to Jesus and are the children of God, on the other side of death, you will see the face of Jesus, you will feel the touch of Jesus—Revelation assures us that he will wipe every tear from our eye—and you will hear the voice of Jesus. Jesus will be there to meet you on the other side of death. Jesus will be there to meet you at the day of resurrection as he was there for this young girl.

Can you imagine what this meant to Jairus as a dad? I get very emotional thinking of Jesus holding Ashley's hand. To this point in her life, I'm the only man who's ever held her hand, and to see Jesus take her hand, "Child, arise," and she returns to life. And Jesus smiles at her, and she sees Jesus' face, and she feels Jesus' touch, and she hears Jesus' voice. Majestic, perfect. What love. Mars Hill, this is our Jesus. I want you men all to be tender with women in general, and your daughters in particular, like this, Amen?

“And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something be given her to eat.” He’s considerate. She’s hungry, she’s been ill. This is also a foreshadowing that on the other side of resurrection, which this young woman has enjoyed, there will be a feast for the children of God. Revelation 19 calls it the wedding supper of the lamb, that we will go through death as this woman did, and if our faith is in Jesus, and we are the children of God, then one day our body and soul will reunite. We will resurrect from death; sin, and suffering, and sickness will be no more. We’ll be forgiven and cleansed. We will see Jesus’ face. We will hear Jesus’ voice. We will feel Jesus’ touch, and we’ll sit down to feast with him. This is a portrait of our eternity.

“And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.” We do not know why. This would be an interesting discussion point for your community group. It may be that Jesus’ primary ministry is preaching and teaching. His secondary ministry is the casting out of demons, and the healing of those who are sick. But he does not want his secondary ministry to overtake his primary ministry. He wants to still be able to preach and teach.

Sin results in suffering and death, we see that in both stories of the older woman and the young girl. Some of you would hear this story and you would identify with the older woman. You would say, “My lot has been many years of painful suffering.” My encouragement to you today would be to reach out to Jesus in faith, so that the power of God might be unleashed in your life. And some of you, in fact, can and will be healed in this life by Jesus. It is true physically for some. It is true spiritually for all who trust in him.

Some of you would identify with the parents and you would say, “It is not I who have suffered, but I know and love someone who has, and it’s been very difficult to watch them suffer or perhaps even die, as they lost their daughter.” And I would say that Jairus’ example is a good one, run to Jesus, cast yourself upon him, and invite him into your home, and into your life, and into your family to minister to you, and he will.

And we all, one day, will be in the place of this young girl. We will all die. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, therefore all die. And one day death will come for us all, and you and I will die. And if our faith is in Jesus, we will die in him, and we will rise like him, forever to be with him. And our Jesus is the one who bled like the woman. Our God came and bled and suffered like the woman, and our Jesus suffered and died like the girl, and he rose that in him, we might rise to be together forever with him, Amen?

Father God, I pray for us as a church that when we read the Scripture, that you would send us the Holy Spirit, first to compel us to read the Scripture, but then also to give us the mind of Christ that we might understand what is being said, and then to give us the heart of Christ that we might weep with those who weep, and mourn with those who mourn, and rejoice with those who rejoice. Lord Jesus, we rejoice that the woman who bled for twelve years by faith was healed. Pray for healing for those who are suffering, and we believe that you can and do heal. God, as well, we pray for the young girl who died and her family that, Lord God, you would comfort those who are living and lost those that they love, and that you would enable us to trust, by faith, in the resurrection of the dead that she experienced, that we will as well. God, I thank you that you call the first woman, “Daughter,” and the second woman, “Child.” And God, I pray for us all in general, but the women in particular. For those who don’t have fathers, I pray that Jesus would be the father figure in their life. And for those who do have fathers like Jairus who love and serve them, that they would love and honor their fathers, and that Lord God, they would know that through Jesus, you as well call them children, children of God. God, please enlarge our hearts, and I pray a particular prayer today, Lord God, for my daughters, Ashley and Alexie, and I pray for all the daughters that have been and will be born in this church. And I pray for us fathers that we would love them like Jairus. And for those girls who don’t have dads, that we would serve them like Jesus, in whose name we pray, Amen.

[End of Audio]

Note: This sermon transcript has been edited for readability.