

Jesus' Power Over Disease And Death

Luke 8:40-56

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It's evident that we live in a world of disease and death. And there is disease and death in the world because of man's disobedience or because of sin. Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, and sin, death and destruction came into the world.

But there is hope in Jesus the Redeemer. The Gospels were written to show us that Jesus is the promised Redeemer. I want you to listen to the words of Peter, in Acts 2:22, on the Day of Pentecost when he delivered his first Pentecostal sermon. He said, "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst as you yourselves also know."

Luke wrote his Gospel and the book of Acts. He, like Matthew, Mark and John, was writing to show us Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of the world; that He came to forgive our sins, to deliver us from Satan, from disease and ultimately from death. What Jesus did in His first coming will culminate in His Second Coming, when He eliminates disease, death and the devil forever.

We saw in Luke 8 that Jesus is Lord over nature—He calmed the wind and the waves; He is Lord of the demons—He delivered the demoniac of Gadara; and now we'll see He is Lord over disease and death. And when Jesus comes the second time, He will bind Satan forever. First He will throw him in the pit for a 1,000-year period when he will be bound, then loosed for a short season, then thrown into the lake of fire and Christ will reign in the new heaven and the new earth forever.

So the Gospels give us a little picture that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil; that Jesus is Lord over nature, Lord over demons and Lord over disease and death. And in the Gospel of Luke, this is happening in what is known as the area of Christ's Galilean ministry.

In our text, we will see a display of Christ's compassion and power. It is absolutely loaded with spiritual application and lessons, so it's a challenging to preach on. But I trust that God will use it to encourage us, that when we are going through sorrow, there is hope in Jesus. We go through sorrow, but Jesus comes to save us from sin, disease, death and even from the devil himself.

There is a contrast between the two, main characters, between Jairus and the woman with the issue of blood. Our text is two stories in one; one story with two movements in the story. It is about Jairus, who is an important synagogue officer and a woman who was an anonymous nobody. Jairus had position and resources and the woman had nothing. Jairus came pleading for his daughter; the woman came with a need of her own. Jairus' daughter had brought him great joy for 12 years, while the woman for 12 years had suffered with great need. Jairus' need was public while the woman's need was private. But sorrow and sickness had brought them

both together at the feet of Jesus.

That's a blessing. When sorrow, hardships and distress come into our lives, they can be blessings in disguise. We may not see them as blessings, but God can use them for our good and for His glory. If we come to the feet of Jesus and trust in Him, we will not be disappointed or let down.

This story speaks of both rich and poor; sorrow comes to us all. Money cannot save you from sorrow. You can have all the money in the world, be the richest person in the world, and still die of disease that's incurable. It levels us at the foot of Jesus. It drives us to Him.

As I said, our story is two stories wrapped into one. It's also recorded in Matthew 9:19-26 and in Mark 5:21-43. So all three synoptics—Matthew, Mark and Luke—record the story of the woman with the issue of blood and the raising of Jairus' daughter.

But the story moves around three encounters, so I want to break it up into three parts. First, we see Jesus and the desperate dad, verses 40-42. "So it was, when Jesus returned, that the multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him. And behold, there came a man named Jairus," which means "He will enlighten." So God would certainly use this to enlighten Jairus to who Christ was. "And he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him."

I have three daughters and five granddaughters and I grew up with all sisters. So before my son was born, I said, "I'm destined to live in a house full of women all my life!" But I wouldn't have it any other way. What a joy and what a blessing! So I know the love, care and concern a dad can have for his daughter. I thank God for my girls and for my granddaughters. When they talk to you and hug you, it's so amazing!

So I can't read this story without feeling the pain and distraught of this dad. When our girls were younger and got sick, I couldn't handle it. My wife had to send me out of the house, because I would get so upset and so distraught. I wished to God I could take their pain and sorrow when they were racked with a fever or flu. It just broke my heart! So I can enter into Jairus' pain and distress; how difficult it must have been for this desperate dad.

Let's go back over the text. "So it was, when Jesus returned" is a reference to the fact that He had just been in Gadara. He had just left the west side of the lake of Galilee at Capernaum and crossed over the lake to the southeastern side where Gadara is. In that area, Jesus encountered the demon-possessed man, delivered him and then the people who owned the swine told Jesus to depart from them. So "He got into the boat and returned."

So verse 40 is continuing the narrative and saying that Jesus returned from the Gadarenes. "The multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him." Coming up to the shore, there were hundreds, perhaps thousands of people waiting for Him. Probably some demon possessed, many sick and afflicted, wanting Jesus to heal them. And the disciples probably

said, "Turn this boat around. Let's get outta here! Let's find a place to rest somewhere."

But Jesus is available; He's the Good Shepherd, He's compassionate. Instead of turning the boat around and going to an isolated place on the lake, He went right into the thick of it. He met the crowd there.

Verse 41, "And behold, there came a man named Jairus." First it describes this distraught dad, this desperate dad. "And he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house." It could not have been easy for Jairus to come to bow and prostrate himself before Jesus' feet; it would have been humbling. But when your daughter is in need, you do whatever you can do to get her help.

Being "a ruler of the synagogue," he had a very powerful and prestigious position. It means he was a layman; he wasn't a rabbi. But he was in charge of the synagogue worship and instruction. He was in charge of the facility, the building, and would organize who spoke, who read from the Scriptures. So he was the superintendent or the overseer of the synagogue. It was an important position, but he had to come humbly and fall before the feet of Jesus.

There is no better place to be than at the feet of Jesus. Don't misunderstand me, but if sorrow, bereavement or loss is needed to bring us to the feet of Jesus—so be it. I've often prayed, "Lord, whatever it takes in my life to keep me humble, broken and dependent and reliant on You—so be it." That's because it's more important to me to be at the feet of Jesus than to prosper physically. I want to be found like Jairus: humbly at the feet of Jesus. And so should you.

the desperate dad had a dying daughter. Verse 42, "...for..." and he gives the reason for his petition "...he had an only daughter." Only Dr. Luke makes this clear. He only had one child, and it was a daughter. That adds to the emotion or pathos.

Think about it if you're a parent: he only had one daughter and she was 12 years old. That meant she was just blossoming and soon to be considered an adult. At 12 years and one day, she would have been able to marry and have children. She was just reaching womanhood at that early age at that time and in that culture. So Jairus and his wife had 12 years of sunshine that were now turning to darkness. They watched as her life was slipping away.

Perhaps Jairus had seen others healed. Being a ruler of the synagogue, he may have encountered Jesus or seen Jesus heal and deliver others, so he came as a result of need.

We come to Jesus as needy sinners. We come broken, weary and need His help and strength. Are you coming to Jesus today in need? How important that is. As parents, we come when our kids are suffering. When life is difficult, we find ourselves at the feet of Jesus.

In verses 43-48, we have the second story in our text. This is the interruption or parenthesis in the story of Jairus and his dying daughter. We had Jesus and the desperate dad and the dying daughter; now we have Jesus and the diseased woman.

Jesus was trying to move in the crowd as best He could, but He couldn't move very fast when He was surrounded by lots of people. "Now a woman, having a flow of blood...." That means that she was hemorrhaging and would have made her unclean ceremoniously and socially, based on Levitical law. She had it "for twelve years."

So we have a 12-year-old daughter, who is dying, and a woman who had this disease for 12 years. About the time Jairus' daughter was born, this woman was diagnosed with this hemorrhaging and had it for 12 years.

Verse 43, She "had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any." It's interesting that these words were recorded by Dr. Luke. She went to all these doctors—I wonder if that included him. And Mark 5:26 says that instead of getting better, she actually got worse. Dr. Luke omitted that part; he just said she couldn't get healed by anybody.

Verse 44, She "came from behind and touched the border..." of "tassel" "...of His garment. And immediately..." it wasn't a process "...her flow of blood stopped. And Jesus said, 'Who touched Me?' When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, 'Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, "Who touched Me?"'"

This woman didn't want to come publically and openly. And because she was ceremoniously unclean, she didn't want to come up to Jesus and say, "Would You please heal me." She thought she might be rebuked by Him. So she was going to do all this incognito, secretly. She wanted to come in the crowd and just touch some of His garment. Mark 5:28 says, "For she said, 'If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.'" So she was hiding from the Lord.

Verse 46, "But Jesus said, 'Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me.' Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately." She no doubt thought that she would be rebuked by the Lord. She thought she was in big trouble.

But I like what Jesus said to her, in verse 48: "And He said to her, 'Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.'" This is the only time in the Bible that Jesus had ever called a woman "Daughter." It's a term of endearment. It's very possible that she was older than Jesus, but He very respectfully, intimately and lovingly referred to her as "Daughter."

So we have Jairus' 12-year-old daughter dying, and you have this woman, called "Daughter" by Jesus, who had been sick for 12 years.

Jesus said to this woman, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace." In the Greek, it literally is, "Go into peace." It's a picture of how God saves sinners. Whenever Jesus healed people, it pictured salvation. How? By their faith. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

So when Jesus said, “Your faith has made you well,” it’s a word that conveys salvation. Not only was she physically well; she was saved spiritually. And “Go in peace,” is the same command in Luke 7:50, when He spoke to the immoral woman who wept over His feet. He said, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.” And Romans 5:1 says, “Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” So we see the salvation of this woman’s soul as well as her body.

Now look at this poor woman. She was diseased; she had been hemorrhaging for 12 years. She was ostracized socially and physically exhausted. She was socially, spiritually and ceremoniously unclean. And she was destitute; she spent all her money on doctors. Not only could she not get well, but she grew worse—until she finally came to “Dr.” Jesus.

Doctors are wonderful, and we should thank God for them. But our trust is to be placed in Jesus. And I know that the more we go to doctors, the more we trust Jesus.

Have you ever been in a thick crowd, maybe going to a sporting event, where people are jostling you and bumping into you? You may say, “Yes; every Sunday when I try to get outta here!” I was looking at the people leaving the sanctuary walking shoulder to shoulder trying to get out bumping into one another. But no one screamed, “Who touched me?”

But Jesus yelled out, “Who touched Me?” Wow! Peter, the spokesperson for the group said, “Everyone’s bumping into You and thronging You! What do you mean, “Who touched Me?” It’s like, “Peter, are you going to instruct the Lord?!”

Did Jesus know who touched Him? Yes. Whenever Jesus asks a question, you can bet that He knows the answer.

So why did Jesus deal with this woman in a public way? Number one, for her sake; she needed to make a public confession. “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9). Number two, it was for the crowd’s sake; to rebuke them for their lack of faith in reaching out and touching Jesus. When you come to church on Sunday, you want to reach out and touch Jesus. And you want Jesus to reach out and touch you. You don’t just come to church and leave; reach out and take hold of Jesus. She reached out and touched the hem of His garment. For Jairus’ sake, this was a disastrous delay, but God would use it to increase the woman’s faith.

Jewish men wore a shawl over their outer garments, and it had a blue tassel on each corner of the shawl. So this woman reached out and probably grabbed hold of one of these tassels.

I remember one time I was in a crowd, and I felt someone hanging off of my back pocket. I looked back and it was a four- or five-year-old little boy I had never seen before. He looked at me, and he had never seen me before, so he burst into tears and was scared to death. He must have thought I was his dad, so he grabbed onto my pocket and wouldn’t let go. Thankfully I found his parents, and they were apologetic; no need to be. But this poor little guy was hanging onto me in the crowd.

Jesus felt this tug, but He didn't say, "Who bumped Me?" or "Who bumped into Me?" He said, "Who touched Me?" This was a purposeful, intentional touch of faith. Matthew 9:21 says that "She said to herself, 'If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.'" So she had great faith. And Jesus wanted to encourage Jairus, as well as this woman, that He is able to heal.

Now what I want to focus on is what Jairus must have been thinking when his daughter lay at home sick and ready to die, and the urgency was of the utmost. He must have been thinking, Jesus, don't stop, don't slow down, don't delay! Get to my house before my daughter dies!

Have you ever been in a really difficult situation, and it seemed like God was taking His time, like God was delaying?

This is what you call a "divine delay." God can use them to strengthen and encourage our faith, to deepen our dependence and reliance on Him. Maybe you've just gotten a diagnosis of cancer from an MRI or some other difficulty. "Where are You, God?! Why the delay?" or "Why the answer?"

"Why would a 12-year-old girl get sick and die?" It's because we live in a fallen world full of disease and death. But we know that Jesus cares. When Jesus delays, He has a divine purpose. His delays are not His denials. And His delays and difficulties are only blessings in disguise.

Remember that when Lazarus was sick, Martha sent word to Jesus saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick" (John 11:3). She assumed Jesus would drop everything and immediately come to him. Yet there is not one place in the Bible where we read that Jesus hurried or panicked or was freaking out. But I do that.

Years ago I was to do a live, radio interview, and I was on the freeway stuck in traffic. I was about 20 minutes from the radio station, and I heard them announce on my car radio that "Pastor John Miller will be here in five minutes to do a live interview." I said to myself, No he won't! God, help me! But thank the Lord that I got there just in the nick of time!

Do you know that urgent feeling? "We need You now, Lord! Where are You?!"

So Jairus was probably mentally freaking out and thinking, Why are You talking to this woman?! Why are You letting her slow You down?! Why the interruption?! And we do the same thing. "Why did this happen?! Why the diagnosis?!" But God's delays are not His denials. God has providentially ordained them to strengthen our faith.

When Jairus saw Jesus heal this woman, he no doubt could have been encouraged that Jesus could do the same for his daughter. We used to sing this song:

"It is not secret what God can do;

What He's done for others, He'll do for you.

With arms wide open, He'll pardon you.

It is no secret what God can do."

I want you to remember that we never read that Jesus hurried anywhere. Your life is directed by the Lord, not only in its steps but also in its stops. God controls even the delays.

Now let's look at the third part of our story, at Jesus and the dead daughter, verse 49. "While He was still speaking..." It's all one, moving narrative; He's in the crowd and speaking to the woman with the issue of blood. "...someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house..." doesn't say if it was a servant or a family member "...saying to him, 'Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher.'" How Jairus' heart must have broken.

Can you imagine getting a message like that? But I like the next part: "When Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, 'Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well.'" It's actually, "Stop being afraid. Keep on believing." This is His word of faith.

Verse 51, "When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John and the father and mother of the girl." This is the first time that Jesus took His inner circle of disciples—Peter, James and John—and did something special with them. Why these three we don't know. But He would take these same three up on the mount of transfiguration and take these same three deeper into the Garden of Gethsemane from the others.

Verse 52, "Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, 'Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping.' And they ridiculed Him..." it was a scornful, mocking laughter toward Christ "...knowing that she was dead. But He put them all outside..." the scoffers "...took her by the hand..." This would have made Him unclean, touching a dead body, but she would be made whole.

It's an interesting contrast that when the woman with the issue of blood touched Jesus, she would have made Him unclean, but she was immediately healed. And Jesus touched the 12-year-old girl and He would have been made unclean, but she was immediately resuscitated or brought back to life, so He was not unclean.

I like this picture, in verse 54. Jesus took her by the hand and spoke to her "and called, saying, 'Little girl, arise.'" In Aramaic, it was "Talitha, cumi" (Mark 5:41). "Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately." It means she stood up and began to walk around the room. "And He commanded that she be given something to eat. And her parents were astonished." It means that they were beside themselves. We say they were "blown away" or "mind blown." "But He charged them to tell no one what had happened."

But again notice the picture here, as Jesus finally begins to move toward Jairus' house and the messenger comes and then disappointment, in verse 49. "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher." Maybe it was a servant coming through the crowd, with this horrible look on his face. Sometimes when people are coming to you and there's trouble, you can tell, even

before they open their mouth. I'm sure Jairus' heart just sank; he knew it was bad news. And the messenger dismissed the need for Jesus to come to the house. Where there is life there is hope, but in Jesus, there is hope even in death.

Then Jesus looked at Jairus and uttered these words of hope. In the King James translation it says, "Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole." Faith and fear are mutually exclusive. If you're believing you're not fearful; if you're fearful you're not believing. "She is not dead, but sleeping."

This word "sleeping" for death is a euphemism. It is a word used to explain something that is hard, difficult or painful in order to soften it and lessen its impact. Death is difficult, horrible when you say, "They're dead. They died." So the Bible uses the word "sleep" for the death of a believer. It conveys a temporary state.

I don't know about you, but I like naps. My grandchildren hate naps. When they are around the house and I start getting tired I say, "Let's play a game called 'lay on the bed.'" I hear "No!" But when you hear the word "sleep," you don't think, Bummer! Especially if you're old. You think, Praise God! Take me to my bed.

So it's not a fearful thing for a Christian to die; you're only sleeping. And sleep is only temporary. When you take a nap, you don't kiss everyone goodbye and say, "Grandpa's going to take a nap, I'll never see you again and I'll never wake up." No. You wake up from naps. And you go to sleep at night with the expectation that you'll awake in the morning. You say, "Good night. See you in the morning." So sleep is temporary.

And in the Bible it's only used for the physical body. That's very important. Nowhere in the Bible does it teach that the soul sleeps. The only part that sleeps is our body, and it will be awakened at the resurrection or rapture. Paul, writing to the believers in Thessalonica, said, "I do not want you to...sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14).

When Jesus comes back for the church at the rapture, the bodies of those who died in Christ are sleeping in the grave, but their souls are already with the Lord in heaven and come back with Him in the clouds. "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). So the dead in Christ arise first, and those who are alive are caught up next. The word is "raptured" or "taken up by force."

One of my favorite places to preach is at a cemetery. I like to stand by the casket of a believer who has died in Christ and tell those who are watching and listening that their loved one is not dead but only sleeping. I get some freak-out looks like these people did with Jesus.

The people who were wailing at the death of Jairus' daughter and laughing Jesus to scorn, verse 53, were most likely some of the professional mourners. In the Middle East at that time,

and even today, the more you loudly scream, yell, wail and cry when someone dies, the more you love them. So they actually had professional mourners that were hired at a funeral to come to weep and wail, whether you were rich or poor.

And the mourners probably were unbelievers, so Jesus “put them all outside,” verse 54, and took only Peter, James and John and the mother and father inside with Him (Mark 5:40). Then He speaks the word of faith, the word of hope: “She is not dead, but sleeping.” This is talking only about the physical body, because at the resurrection, the body will be brought back from the grave.

Then we have the word of power, in verses 54-56. Jesus said, “Little girl, arise.” And verse 55 makes that clear: “Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately.” Physical death happens when the spirit leaves the body. The word “death” literally means “separation.” So her spirit returned to her.

This was not a resurrection like Christ had, who rose in a glorified body and would live in that body for eternity, but it was a resuscitation. The little girl’s same, mortal body came back to life.

Some say that Jesus saw she was only asleep, so He didn’t raise her from the dead; He woke her up. No; “Her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given something to eat.” When someone is dead—and you’re sure they’re dead—but they start walking around the room and have something to eat, they’re most likely alive. So it’s clear that Jesus resuscitated her from the dead. It’s marvelous! And her parents were blown away by this miracle of resuscitation.

Jesus is the only one who has power over death. And there is coming a future day when those who are in the grave will hear His voice and will be resurrected. Those who have done good will be resurrected to eternal life; those who have done evil will be resurrected to eternal judgment or damnation.

What a beautiful picture of how God saves the sinner.

There are only three people recorded in the Bible who Jesus rose from the dead. All are recorded in Luke. They are the widow’s son of Nain, Jairus’ daughter and Lazarus. To all three, Jesus spoke the word and they came back to life. When Jesus comes back in His Second Coming, He will raise the dead and will reign on His throne forever.

I want to give you a wrap-up, and there is so much that could be said. In times of sorrow and grief—or delay—we never appeal to Jesus in vain. Both Jairus and the woman had Jesus meet their needs. They both were at the feet of Jesus broken, in need in a time of distress. And Jesus met their need.

We have also learned that Jesus is the Savior of the world. All power and authority is given to Him over nature, over Satan and demons and over disease and over death. At Jesus’ Second Coming, He will reign forever. And this miracle prefigures His millennial reign when there will be

peace, prosperity, righteousness on earth and Satan will be bound. There will be a new heaven and a new earth where He will reign forever.