

DON'T BE AFRAID; JUST BELIEVE

Luke 8:40-56

Key Verse 8:50

Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed."

In today's passage, Jesus helps two persons—a community leader named Jairus and a nameless woman with a bleeding problem. Jesus helps both of them to grow in their personal faith in him. We learn what kind of faith Jesus wants us to have. May God help us to learn what it means to just believe!

I. JAIRUS, A GOOD FATHER (40-42)

After healing a demon-possessed man of the Gerasenes, Jesus returned to Galilee. A crowd of people welcomed him, for they were all expecting him (40). They had all kinds of problems in life and were expecting Jesus to help solve them. In particular, a man had emergency at home and came to Jesus for help. Look at verses 41-42. *Then a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying. As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him.* A large crowd of people surrounded Jesus. He was like a rock star at a crowded concert or a pope visiting the city of Philadelphia. But Jesus noticed one man in the crowd and responded to his earnest plea.

Who was Jairus? He was a leader in his community, a ruler of the synagogue. He was wealthy, with many servants. He had a comfortable home and a lovely wife. The couple had only one daughter. So she was very precious to them. She was a girl of twelve, pure and beautiful, like a flower about to blossom. Jairus was very happy whenever she hugged him saying, "Daddy, I love you!" He called her "princess" and showered her with many things. He had a long day at work, but as soon as he saw the smiling face of his young daughter, all his tiredness disappeared. She was the apple of his eye.

One day, a tragedy struck Jairus' family. His daughter collapsed with a terrible sickness. She was getting worse by the hour and was now on the verge of death. Jairus wished that it were a nightmare and wanted to wake up. But it was reality. He called a local doctor who came promptly but only shook his head in despair. As Jairus watched his dying daughter, his heart sank. He could not bear the thought of living without his daughter. He was overwhelmed by fear. Satan seized the opportunity and planted fear in his heart.

In his sorrow, Jairus cried out to God. Then God helped him to remember Jesus. He had heard about how Jesus healed the sick as he preached the kingdom of God. Jesus had healed a man with leprosy, a paralytic, and Simon's mother. This Jesus could surely help his dying daughter. Jairus decided to come to Jesus and beg his mercy for

his daughter. However, it was not easy for him to come to Jesus. There were obstacles that he had to overcome. First, he had to overcome the peer pressure from the religious authorities. He was aware that the Pharisees had already branded Jesus as a law-breaking cult leader. His coming to Jesus would mean going against the religious leaders. We also face peer pressure when we try to come to Jesus. When you say that you are going to Bible Café or worship service, your unbelieving friends may look at you like you are strange. It takes courage for us to come to Jesus. Jairus overcame the peer pressure and came to Jesus by faith.

Jairus also had to overcome his pride. From a human point of view, Jesus was only a young preacher at this time, while Jairus was an established leader of the community. But Jairus curbed his pride. When he came to Jesus, he knelt down at Jesus' feet and pleaded with him to come to his home and heal his dying daughter. Jairus was a great man because he was humble. The Bible says, "*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble*" (Ja 4:6). Jesus accepted his humble prayer and went with him. May God help us to be humble before the Lord!

Most of all, Jairus was a good father to his daughter. He overcame the peer pressure and his own pride because he loved his daughter. Jairus loved her more than himself. There was nothing he wouldn't do for her. I am sure his love touched Jesus' heart, because Jesus is always moved by a person's caring and loving heart. Now one might say, "But isn't it natural for a father to love his own daughter?" It is true. However, the reality is that we live in a society where many fathers abandon their sons and daughters because of their sinful nature. Almost 4 out of 10 children in America do not live with their fathers. Statistics show that 71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes. 90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes. 70% of juveniles in state institutions come from fatherless homes. Having children does not automatically make men good fathers. They are only biological fathers. Good fathers are those who have a father's heart. Jairus was a good father. Most all, our Father in heaven is the best father. Because of our sin, we were dying, condemned in eternity. But our Father sent Jesus to die for our sins. This is the heart of God, the heart of our eternal Father. Jesus was happy to see Jairus' love and shepherd's heart for his daughter. He was on his way to Jairus' house.

II. WHO TOUCHED ME? (43-48)

Look at verses 43-44. *And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.* In the large crowd of people, there was a woman with a bleeding problem. She interrupted Jesus' trip to Jairus' house.

Who was this woman and how did she come to Jesus? According to Mark, she went to many different doctors and spent all her money, but no one could help her (Mk 5:26). Her bleeding problem continued for 12 years. Many things happened during those 12 years. All her high school friends got married and had several kids. But her bleeding never stopped. She had spent her youthful years, continually suffering from her chronic

disease. Her physical problem caused her to suffer many other problems as well. For one thing, her condition made her a social outcast, because she was regarded as ceremonially unclean (Lev 15:25). It meant that she could not go to any public places, because her illness would taint others, she was told. She suffered not only physically, but also emotionally, socially and financially. We can imagine how sorrowful and fatalistic she could have become. She had no hope for future. And we know that hopelessness kills a person from within. But one day she heard wonderful news that changed her life forever. She heard that Jesus of Nazareth healed a man with leprosy, drove out demons from a crazy man, and raised a widow's dead son. When she heard this news, a ray of hope glimmered in her heart. She realized that this Jesus could heal her sickness and give her a new life. She decided to come to Jesus.

However, as in the case of Jairus, she had to overcome many obstacles in order to come to Jesus. The Jewish law forbade her to have even casual contacts with others so as not to make them ceremonially unclean (Lev 15:27). Besides, they would be offended by the unpleasant odor emanating from her bleeding problem. But when she made a decision of faith to come to Jesus, God gave her the courage to overcome the obstacles. Her coming to Jesus was an act of faith.

So she came to Jesus by faith. Still she could not come publicly. So she came up with a secret plan. No one should know what she was about to do, not even Jesus. She believed that, based on what she heard about the power of Jesus, she would be healed with a fraction of his power. She said to herself, "I will come up behind him and touch the edge of his tunic. That will be sufficient. I will be healed of this debilitating disease. I can be normal again. I can even marry and live happily ever after." She was excited about her plan. In her mind, there was only one problem in her life—the constant bleeding. Her skin was dry all the time. Her complexion was bad because of the problem. She couldn't get a job because of that. She couldn't get married because of that. And so on. All her life problems would be gone if only she were healed of the terrible disease!

So she carried out her plan. She came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of his cloak. Then something wonderful happened. The bleeding inside her stopped immediately. She was made clean by the power of the Son of God. She received a new life. Jesus' divine power went out to her, and the suffering woman was healed completely! She was so happy that she wanted to run to her family and share the good news. But there was a problem with this "hit and run" strategy.

Look at verse 45. *"Who touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you."* Peter was puzzled by Jesus' question, "Who touched me?" because a large crowd of people was milling around him. But Jesus answered, *"Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me"* (46). Jesus would not allow the woman to slip away from the crowd unnoticed. Of course, Jesus did not intend to embarrass her. Instead, Jesus wanted to help her further. She was healed physically, but she needed a spiritual healing. In Jesus' eyes, the bleeding problem was not the most serious problem in her life. She needed to have a personal relationship with the Lord. If she had gone home without establishing a

personal relationship with Jesus, soon she would forget God's grace and become a woman of bitterness again.

There was a man who had suffered from paralysis for 38 years. By his mercy, Jesus healed the man. But after his healing, he forgot what Jesus had done for him. In order to please the religious authorities, the man reported Jesus to the Jewish police, telling them that he was the one who had violated the Sabbath law (Jn 5:15). The man was healed physically, but he was still sick with a spiritual paralysis. When people suffer from a physical sickness, they mistakenly think that everything will be okay only if they are cured from the disease. However, physical healing is temporary as people die sooner or later. Therefore, it was essential for this woman to receive a spiritual healing.

Jesus knew that it was not easy for the woman to come forward publicly. It was painful for her to talk about her shameful bleeding problem before many people. But it was necessary for her to make a confession of faith so that a spiritual healing process might begin in her deep wounds. Romans 10:9 says, *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from dead, you will be saved.*

What did the woman do? Look at verse 47. *Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed.* In her personal testimony sharing, the woman probably said, "You know, I was a woman with a bleeding problem. I had no hope in my life. I had no hope of getting married. But by God's grace, I am a new person!" Here we learn that it is important to share the grace of God publicly. Some people do not like the idea of sharing a personal testimony, saying that it should be private. But if we truly appreciate the grace of God in our life, we can't just keep it to ourselves. We want to climb on a mountaintop and shout to the world what Jesus has done. There is no shame in sharing our terrible past because we have new hope and vision for future in Jesus Christ.

Jesus was happy to see her beautiful act of faith. Look at verse 48. *Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."* Jesus admired her faith and blessed her with God's peace. She was not only healed from a bleeding problem, but received the peace of God. This is what happen to us if we come to Jesus by faith!

III. DON'T BE AFRAID; JUST BELIEVE (49-56)

While Jesus was talking to the woman, Jairus was waiting patiently for Jesus to go to his house and take care of his daughter. Time was very critical to his dying daughter. But the woman delayed the journey. Jairus' patience was growing thin. Finally, it happened. He got the news that he was afraid of hearing. Look at verse 49. *While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," he said. "Don't bother the teacher any more."* We can imagine how Jairus must have felt. This was the news that took away any kind of hope Jairus had. And the advice not to bother Jesus any more seemed a final nail on the coffin. It sounded reasonable, too. The messenger was saying: "You did your best for

your daughter. Perhaps Jesus could have done something while she was alive. Now she is dead and nothing can be done for her.” It was all over, and he should say goodbye to Jesus and go home to prepare for her funeral. Humanly speaking this was a reasonable assessment of his situation. But Jesus was still with Jairus. How did Jesus help him?

Let us read verse 50 together. *Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, “Don’t be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.”* Jesus understood what Jairus was going through. Jairus had real fear—the fear of living without his daughter. But Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.” Now Jairus had two conflicting words--the messenger’s advice and Jesus’ words of encouragement. He had a choice to make. On the one hand, the messenger’s assessment seemed objective and logical. But it was not based on faith in Jesus. It planted fear in his heart. On the other hand, Jesus told him not to be afraid. Jesus did not even acknowledge his daughter’s death. He said, “...she will be healed.” Could Jesus still help her even at this stage? A lot of things were going through Jairus’ mind.

In the course of our lives, we often face the same kind of choice that Jairus had to make. When we look at our human situation, we are tempted to throw our hands up and quit. Satan takes the opportunity and plants fear in our hearts. He says, “Jesus cannot do anything for you; just give up.” But we must hear the words of Jesus, who says, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.” Jesus wants us to have faith in him even when things look impossible.

What did Jairus decide? Did he follow the messenger’s advice or did he decide to put his trust in Jesus? The author Luke does not mention what he said. Perhaps he didn’t say anything. But his action spoke loudly. He followed Jesus. He made a decision to listen to Jesus instead of the messenger. He believed that Jesus could help his daughter. Faith is to believe in God when it is difficult to believe. Jairus had faith in Jesus. We learn three things about faith.

First, waiting on God by faith. Jesus’ trip to his house was interrupted by the woman. Jairus waited very patiently for Jesus. His conversation with the woman seemed to be interminable to Jairus. He felt that his blood pressure was going up and he was about to faint. Still, Jairus was waiting on Jesus quietly and patiently. It was an expression of his faith.

Second, decision of faith. Some people say they believe in God, but when it comes to decision time, they choose the world, not God. That is not genuine faith. Jesus said, “If you love me, you will obey what I command” (Jn 14:15). What we do, not just what we say, reveals our faith. Jairus had two choices—following the reasonable advice of the messenger or the promise of Jesus. He made a decision of faith. May God help us to make decisions of faith!

Third, “just believing” faith. At the news that his daughter was dead, Jairus could have given up and said, “It is all over.” Many people begin to panic in such a situation. But a person with faith holds on to God’s promise in times of difficulty. Jairus was a man of faith. When Jesus said to him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe,” he just believed

Jesus' words. What does it mean to just believe? A shoe company slogan says we should "just do it." Anti-drug campaigners say "Just say no." But Jesus says "Just believe." It means to believe in Jesus' promise despite our own feelings, despite our own logic, and despite what the advice of the reasonable people around us. In order to believe Jesus' words, Jairus had to fight hard against doubts that Satan was planting in his heart. His heart was becoming numb when he thought about his daughter. But he decided to believe in Jesus' word by faith. He listened to Jesus' word, "Don't be afraid; just believe." He could win the spiritual victory when he just believed in Jesus' words.

Look at verses 51-53. *When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother. Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. "Stop wailing," Jesus said. "She is not dead but asleep." They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead.* When Jesus arrived at the house of Jairus, he only allowed those who were prepared to witness his power over death. He took Peter, John and James, and the child's parents and went into the house. The townspeople were gathered there, mourning for the dead girl. They were overwhelmed by the tragedy that happened to the nice family and by their helplessness before the power of death. But Jesus told them, *"Stop wailing. She is not dead but asleep."* Jesus said this because he is the source of life and there is no death in Jesus (Jn 11:25).

At his word, people began to laugh at him—"Ha, ha, ha"—for they knew she was dead in fact. They had the girl's cold body to prove it. The unbelieving atmosphere hardened people's hearts and they became cynical and rebellious toward Jesus. But Jesus took the little girl by the hand and said, *"My child, get up!"* Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up (55a). In this way, Jesus revealed the glory of God. When Jairus overcame his fear by faith and just believed, he could experience the power of faith in God Almighty. Jesus knew that teenagers are always hungry, so he told them to give her something to eat.

Today we learned that we have to make a decision of faith to obey Jesus' word in order to live a victorious life. May God grant us faith that overcomes fear! May God help us just believe in Jesus in times of distress and experience the life-giving power of our Lord Jesus!