

Perfecting an Imperfect Faith, Part 1

Luke 8:40-48

October 14, 2018

We are coming into a section here at the end of Luke 8, if you'd like to turn in your Bibles there. The section that really does wrap up the chapter, verses 40 to 56. We have seen in this eighth chapter of Luke some I, really what, what could we call them? Dramatic displays of divine power in Jesus' ministry. We saw Jesus calm a storm at sea. He commanded inanimate natural forces like wind and waves, and those natural forces obeyed his command. It's absolutely incredible.

Then Jesus entered into the region of the Decapolis after calming the storm and he cast out a legion of demons from two men there on that shore. And that is demonstrating his power over malevolent, not just the natural forces on the ocean, but supernatural forces as well. Today, we're going to witness Jesus' power, once again, in really what you would say is the ruinous effects of the curse. Destructive power of disease and death. And Jesus' power over the effects of the curse.

When we see these, these miracles, it provides hope for us. Hope for us who struggle with things like disease and physical weakness and maladies of flesh and blood. Provides hope that Jesus can overpower and overturn the curse. And that he can nullify the power and the penalty and one day, even the presence of sin. So we're going to look at the text here starting in verse 40 of Luke chapter 8, follow along as I read.

"Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. There was a, 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, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. As Jesus went, the people pressed around him.

"And there was a woman who had, 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. She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. 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!'

But Jesus said, 'Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me.' 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. And he said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.'

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

Two miracles recorded here. And as you can see, the one is embedded into the other. They're really one single narrative as we read. And that's, that's exactly how the spirit of God would have us read these two accounts as blended together because they are teaching, they are teaching one single lesson. As I read through the account, you probably, probably noticed how many repeated words and themes are connecting and intertwined into these two miracles. Let me connect here for you or highlight some of the, some of the points that connect them together.

You may have noticed in verse 42 and then verse 43 the mention for both the woman and the daughter, twelve years. That's intentional. The woman suffered with her condition the entire time that this little girl had been alive. Both situations are desperate situations, and yet they're contrasting one another a bit. The woman's, the older woman's life has been ebbing away slowly for twelve years with a chronic condition. The life of the little girl, she's facing an aggressive illness that is actually killing her very, very quickly. Both conditions are desperate. Both conditions actually contribute to and lead to ritual impurity. The woman, she's afflicted with

a ceremonially defiling blood flow. When the little girl dies, this puts her family in the position of being in the presence and the defilement by contact with a corpse. So there's the theme of ritual defilement, uncleanness.

Then according to verse 42, 48, 49, both miracles, you can see the word repeated, daughters. "Daughter, your faith has made you well," and "Jairus' daughter," both involved the healing of daughters. Both petitioners come to Jesus Christ as believers. We're introduced to them as believers. Verse 41, verse 47, notice that each of them falls down before Jesus in a posture of worship at his feet. Both miracles, again, involve the element of human touch, significant. And Luke points that out a lot in his gospel, the element of Jesus touching. He touched a leper. He touched this woman, or she rather reached out, touched him, and then he touches the little girl. The emphasis on touch is repeated five different times actually in this account. Verse 44, verse 45, verse 46, verse 47, and verse 54.

All those elements connecting these two accounts. It's not just that the one miracle happened in the midst of him moving on his way to perform another miracle. It's not just that they

happened that way. It's not, just all these elements are beyond coincidental. These are providential connections. That is to say, God has ordained and designed every detail in these people's lives. And bringing them together, at this moment, at this time, and the Spirit of God has it written down for our instruction.

We need to stop and remember that. We need to stop and remember that God has decreed the end from the very beginning. And he providentially orders all things to conform to those purposes that he decreed. We should never forget that. Especially when we find ourselves struggling through things that are perplexing to us. Things that are unknown to us. Things that trouble us. Things like disappointment. Things like disease. Things like, that cause us to fear financial distress, whatever it is, fill in the blank. When we are confused, feeling afraid, uncertain about the future, or even about the present moment, we need to remember God has decreed the end from the beginning, and he's providentially ordering all things according to his perfect will for our good and his glory.

There's one more vital connection that I want you to see between these two miracles before we get into our outline. And this is a connection that helps us to see the main point of this narrative as a whole. I want to tell you the punch line from the very beginning. Both situations here, both sets of circumstances, notice their causes for fear, for worry, for anxiety. Which makes these two situations the perfect testing ground for the faith of these believers. God sometimes brings tests into our life that expose the reality of our faith, that purify our faith. That's what's happening here.

If you enter into this account as you, as you really should whenever you read Scripture, try to identify, try to put yourself into the moment and think about this on a human level. If you imagine yourself in the same situation, you could see how difficult of a trial either situation would be. In the case of this suffering woman, this is a, a chronic weakness that she has endured for twelve years. She comes into the account it would appear as a single woman. She's isolated by the condition she's in by the Levitical law.

She wants to remain anonymous. She wants to remain in that condition because she's been ostracized for a long time. She's got a pile of medical bills sitting on her desk that she can't pay. And at this point in, of her life, twelve years going by she doesn't know how she's going to pay any of those bills. She's feeling her physical energy depleted. Her life is literally draining out from her. Did she struggle with worry? Think she struggled with fear that she would never be healed? Did she wonder about dying alone?

On the other hand, in the case of Jairus and his wife. Imagine what it was like for them as parents to face the loss of their beloved daughter. And that in the prime of her life at twelve years of age. The doctors have no answers. The illness is so aggressive and fast acting that they had to, this had to hit them like a ton of bricks. They're feeling numb. They're feeling helpless, afraid. The gift to them that God gave of a daughter. She's an only child. I meant the potential for profound and unrelenting pain should she die without remedy. This had to be a terrifying moment for these parents.

All these believers here, all of them experiencing suffering, going through trial, facing a crisis of believing. To them in this text, Jesus conveys hope, by message of salvation by faith. Look down at the text. Again, look at verses 48 and verse 50. To the suffering woman in verse 48, Jesus said, "Daughter," what does he say? "Your faith has made you well, go in peace." And then look in verse 50, to the fearful parent. To Jairus, upon hearing the report of his daughter's, not just potential death, but now literal death. Jesus said, verse 50, "Do not fear, only believe and she will be well."

That's not what the Gerasenes of the previous account did when they feared, is it? Their fears, these Gentile Gerasenes. Their fears overcome not by faith. They're stuck in their fears. They're blinded by their fears. But here, the fears of these believers, going through difficult trial, going through what the world goes through, going through what unbelievers fear and face every day as well. Their fears are overcome by faith in God. Their fears are overcome by faith in God's Christ. But the Gerasenes? By succumbing to their fears, by refusing to believe. They're there trapped in a prison of unbelief, blind

to the truth that could save them and actually pushing Jesus away. Here, we see this count about saving faith. That's what this is.

We're going to see in both these instances of need, a very human faith. It's a faith though, that as we're going to see, is an imperfect faith. It's an immature faith, it's untested. But listen, the presence of genuine saving faith, if it's there. No matter how small, even if it's the size of a mustard seed. No matter how frail the faith, no matter how fledging and new and incipient the faith, and no matter how weak the faith. The presence of genuine faith creates a conduit from God to the suffering believer. A conduit through which the omnipotent, powerful grace of God rushes through to save to the uttermost. To drive fears away, to give hope in crisis.

The almighty power of God here, resident in Jesus Christ. It's a power that overcomes the destruction of nature in a fallen world. Overcomes the destructive forces of wind and waves. It's a power that binds and casts out demons, driving them away. It's a power that here, as we see, subverts and overturns the curse. This power is not limited by any weakness

in human faith. The power still comes through, shines through, accomplishing exactly what God intends it to accomplish.

In fact, when faith is present, all things are possible for him who believes. Jesus showers mercy and power and grace upon his people who trust him. Even when our faith is small, even when it's weak, even when it's imperfect. If faith is present at all, we find that the condition of our faith is not the issue. It's not about the size and the strength of faith, it's about the object of our faith. The God in whom, in whom we trust, who he is and what he does, what he's able to accomplish, it's God who makes the eternal difference. He makes the difference in the, in the eternal things, and he makes the difference in the moment by moment that are informed by eternal things. We, we simply need to trust him.

So if you're prone to fear and worry, or you know somebody that is, can you raise your hand if that's you? It's all of us, right? You need to listen closely and pay attention over the next couple weeks as we go through this text.

Let's look at the situation how, first point in your outline should be in your bulletin. Jesus, he has mercy for an unsettled faith. He has mercy for an unsettled faith. And we can see with Jairus, representing his wife and his household, his family. He is unsettled in his faith. He's rocked, he's rocked by this situation. But we start out with a little context that Luke, Luke gives us here in verse 40, says, "When Jesus returned, the crowds welcomed him, and they were all waiting for him."

And stop there for a second. In contrast to the fearful hardhearted people of the, the Gerasene region, like I said. The crowds of Capernaum, they provide Jesus with a welcome reception. The crowd is here welcoming him. They're rejoicing, they're receiving him gladly. They're gathered on the shore as soon as his boat hits the shore, his foot sets out on land. They are there, they're surrounding him. They're eager, excited, and glad. Why is that? Why are they expecting him? Why are they looking for him? Because they had witnessed Jesus and his disciples on the previous day get into their boat and head across the lake.

And on the night of their departure, if you remember a terrible storm descended upon the lake, it's a, chapter 8 verses 22 to 25 describes it. That's a kind of a storm that people don't typically survive if they stay out in it. So when they didn't see him return right away, like the rest of the boats on the Sea of Galilee would have returned to the shore, got out of the storm. All the people in Capernaum had to wonder, did they make it? Did they survive?

Jesus is a figure who brought quite a bit of attention to Capernaum. With all his miraculous healings, with his controversial teaching. No doubt there that some who were in the crowd there who welcomed him back because his notoriety drew crowds of people. Crowds of people are good for business, so they're probably just entrepreneuring types of people who are glad to see him back. Certainly, many others though, who are genuinely concerned about their fellow countrymen. They're concerned about their survival. Hoping they've survived the night, hoping they got off to shore.

So when they see them coming back, as this boat carrying Jesus and his disciples becomes visible out on the horizon.

Then nears the shore, the people notice, they know who it is. They gather around, they wait for him to arrive. The verb there actually, that they're waiting for them, involved a bit of tension. There's a bit of eager expectation, hopeful anticipation, kind of woven into that verb. There's one man in the crowd who is particularly keen to see Jesus return. He's a believer. He is a genuine worshiper and he's got a need and he's the one in this crowd who's got the need that is so significant and acute, he's screaming for Jesus' attention. Look at verse 41. "There came a man named Jairus, who's a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying."

So Jairus here, he's a respected elder in the community. He's elevated. He's admired. You understand that those people don't escape trials. Doesn't matter how it looks on the outside, doesn't matter how perfect everything may look on the outside, how much wealth a person has. Trials hit us all. The curse affects us all. He's a synagogue ruler. This tells us a lot about his status in the community. He's the lead elder in the synagogue, the, the place of corporate worship for Israel.

So as an elder, the lead elder in the synagogue, the ruler, he's, he's in charge of the synagogue and it's functions. He makes sure things are done decently in the synagogue, in order, proper order. In particular, Jairus oversees and organizes the weekly synagogue services. He selects the men who are going to lead the people in prayer. He selects those who are going to be readers of Holy Scripture from the law and the prophets, the writings. He's the man, he's the one who would select the, the person who's going to preach the sermon that week. In other words, he's, he's the one who makes sure that God's word is heard by God's people. Very important position. He's the one who protects the pulpit. He's the one who makes sure that whoever preaches in that synagogue, that's a person who preaches from God's word and God's word alone, not human opinion.

This means Jairus, he's a man of influence who's in charge of influence. He makes sure that his community is rightly influenced. Hears from the right people, hears the right word, that the rightly and properly instructed. He wants to make sure that God's word is not ignored in his community, not subverted, not set aside. This tells us something then about Jairus'

character, or at least his reputation, the reputation for his character. He's a man who is trusted in this community. He's a man who's widely regarded and he's highly respected. Somewhere along the way Jairus had become a disciple. He'd become a believer in Jesus Christ. He's probably been exposed to Jesus' ministry through his role as the rulers of the synagogue. He had learned through Jesus' teaching. He'd witnessed Jesus' power. He did, it wasn't just hearsay for him, he was there.

Back in Luke 4:31-37, we read about how Jesus taught in the synagogue at Capernaum, and it's very likely the synagogue where Jairus served. And during that time Jesus had cast out a demon from a man. When Jairus saw that whenever, whenever Jesus was in Capernaum and visiting between the times of his itinerant ministry, when he was away, he came back to Capernaum and he attended synagogue services. Jairus had numerous opportunities to hear Jesus, to see him, to hear his teaching, witness his power to heal, watch his compassion in action, and to believe in him.

There's another passage we've studied in Luke's gospel. It's a particular note, particular interest to us. Luke 7:1-10,

you may remember in that passage that there was a believing centurion. This guy's a Roman, but he's a God fearing Roman. He's a Roman soldier in charge of a number of troops, high responsibility. He's a God fearer. He's come to believe in Israel's God. And that Centurion had a servant who was sick. A servant who's at the point of death. And when that centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to Jesus, thinking himself unworthy to go himself, because he's a Roman. He sends to Jesus, elders of the Jews, asking for Jesus, pleading on his behalf that Jesus would come and heal his servant.

They came to Jesus, you may remember. And they pleaded earnestly on behalf of this God-fearing centurion, which most Jews would never lift a hand for a Roman. They're the occupying force. They're the invaders. They represent Roman, pagan power. Most Jews wouldn't lift a finger to help him. But these are Jewish elders, of all people. And they came to plead his case, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue."

It's quite likely that one of those elders was this Jairus. He'd vouch for that Centurion. And he's serving at the, the synagogue that that Centurion had funded and built. Mindful of how Jesus healed the Centurion servant, that had to encourage Jairus, didn't it? To come forward in his time of need.

We're not told here in the text exactly what ailed this girl. Whatever it was, it's an illness that seems to have struck suddenly. Perhaps it started out as something that seemed to have been benign. Not something to raise the parents' attention. Oh, she'll get over it. Couple of aspirins, little cold medicine, Nyquil, should be good. Then it progressed rapidly. Became aggressive. Became life threatening.

And now that death seems imminent, Jairus is understandably anxious, scared for his daughter. Jairus had trusted in Christ, as we said. He'd witnessed Christ's power, heard Christ's teaching. He believed in Jesus. But now that this death is visiting his home, threatening his family, killing his little girl, the cold edge of reality in a fallen world has become personal to him. It's a test of his faith. Jairus and his wife, they're facing a fear that every parent can identify with.

The premature loss of a child. Some parents have actually gone through the pain of losing that child. Some parents still live with the pain of losing a child before their time.

And like every father, Jairus' heart is tied to his, his little girl's safety, her well-being. Jairus is her protector. He's the one who's provided for her all of her life. He's always been a man who's been capable, able to take care of her and her needs, able to protect her when she's afraid. The situation now is beyond his ability to handle. He feels helpless here. He feels weak. It goes beyond him. He doesn't like that one bit. He's powerless though. He's, he's got to feel like he's failing her in some way. And they added to the fear and the helplessness here, this little girl, this little girl is their only child.

It's the word here, *monogenes*, just like the one and only son of the widow of Nain, whom Jesus raised from the dead. Listen, accounts like this one help us to think about Jesus, who is the *monogenes* of the Father in heaven. Helps us to reflect upon what our salvation cost. That God would love the world by giving his one and only son to save his people from their sins.

Here's their one and only daughter, and they're grieving. They're fearful. They're scared. She's twelve years old, so this is just now a time where she's entering in this time in life where she is maturing. She is turning into, before their eyes, I've watched this transformation, it taking place. I grieve the loss of the little girl who used to run around and get into things and color on the walls and cut her own hair. And you watch the girl now becoming a young woman.

So you grieve the loss of the little tiny girl and, but you rejoice in what this is meaning, you know, as she grows up, becomes her own woman. You also start praying very, very earnestly and fervently about the young man who might be her husband. It's a joyful time in these parents' life. Full of anticipation, full of joy, thinking about her marriage, thinking about her starting a family. Her parents are thinking about grandparenthood. Thinking about helping their daughter raise her children, watching her family grow up. This is Jairus.

Jairus, he comes to Jesus, and in this poignant moment, his insides are churning from anxiety. He's been hit with something that he cannot handle at all. His mind is preoccupied with his

daughter's rapidly deteriorating health. And yet, notice that he in this moment, he still has the good sense, the worshiping heart, to fall down at Jesus' feet. And we've been prepared for what that means by Luke, who tells us over and over those who fall down at Jesus feet, they are in the believing category. They are the worshipers.

He's fallen down at Jesus' feet. Means he's, even though in his high elevated status in the community, he's not proud. He's not considering the people around him and what they might think. He's not think, conscious cognizant of his place in the community. The need to maintain decorum. Have a proper comportment in front of others and how he handles the stress. No, this man is a believer. And in his time of need, he knows exactly where to go, and he knows exactly what to do. He seeks Jesus. That's what believers do. He implores Jesus in an attitude of humility and in faith. And even if it's a troubled faith, an anxious faith, he comes in faith.

His heart is unsettled here with fear. But Jairus implores Jesus in faith, come to my house. Come to my house. I like the way here Luke records this. How Jesus responds to the request.

You don't hear him say anything. He just does. He doesn't respond with words. He responds with action. You want to know what people believe? Don't just listen to what they say. Watch what they do. Watch how they live. The need of a believer is all that it takes to engage Jesus' concern, to mobilize Jesus' mercy.

Jesus is here the great physician. When he sees the plight of human sickness, when he sees suffering, human suffering under the effects of the curse, he feels compassion. It's his nature by, because he's God. He, he shows compassion and care and mercy. And I love this as I think about Luke as the author here. Luke is a fellow physician, isn't he? He's the beloved physician Paul called him. Luke writing this, he loves us because he understands exactly what's driving Jesus here. How this suffering mobilized his compassion, how it put his mercy into immediate action. That's how doctors act. Good doctors act. They're not in it for the money. They're in it because they love people. They're concerned for them. This had to have resonated deeply with doctor Luke.

So Jairus here, he's seeking Jesus in the midst of all of his fears, falling before Jesus. Notice how this sets Jairus in stark contrast to the way the Gerasenes treated Jesus. In the face of all evidence to the contrary, the Gerasenes treated Jesus like he's the threat. And they asked him to leave. Their reaction, verse 37, "Please leave," and in contrast, we see Jairus' invitation, "Please come." Listen, believers draw near to God. They draw near to Jesus Christ. Believers draw nearer to God's people. They draw near to the church. That's what Jairus does here.

So Jairus, or I should say, Jesus, rather, he leaves the Gerasenes. And he's willing now to go with Jairus. At this point, if Jesus is coming with him, Jairus has got to think, it's all good, right? His fears about his daughter's well-being have to be immediately erased because Jesus, the one with all power and authority to drive all things that, he is willing to come. Good to go. He should have been confident here. Cheerful, joyful, excited to watch this power in action on behalf of his daughter. His daughter's salvation in a town like Capernaum, well, it's going to be extended time because he's

crushed through the streets with the crowd, but minutes away. Maybe tens of minutes away, but close.

The Almighty Christ has the power and the will and the authority and the desire to heal. The healing is assured. Now, whether Jairus actually felt the way I've described, or whether he still struggled with some element of anxiety and fear, we don't know. We're not told here. What we do know is that his faith here is going to be tested further by an interruption along the way to his house, by a slowing down of the procession.

He's got to be wondering as time goes by, as Jesus is looking around for who was it that touched me? He's thinking, you know, we got time for this, Jesus? We got time? I mean my daughter, she's as I told you. Is he going to arrive in time to save his daughter? With that question hanging in the air, this is where we leave Jairus for the moment. We're going to come back and consider this further test of his faith next week.

But for now, we're going to turn our attention to this suffering woman whose furtive actions really steal the scene

here. We're going to see here another believer. We're going to see a woman whose faith is a mix of strength and weakness. Kind of like all of us, right? She's far from perfect. But we learn from her.

Point two, that Jesus has power for imperfect faith too. He has power for imperfect faith. And I'm so thankful because my faith is routinely imperfect. Well, how about yours? Just briefly, look at the backdrop Luke creates for us to see this woman. Last sentence in verse 42, "As Jesus went," notice just action, "As he went, the people pressed around him." Now, at first glance, that may just seem like a, like an incidental comment. It seems like Luke, he's just painting the picture for us of this procession of people moving through the narrow streets of Capernaum on their way to Jairus' house.

But on closer inspection, we see that this welcoming crowd of verse 40, has become a suffocating crowd. And that reminds us. The verb there translated, pressed around, that verb shares the same verbal root as the word in Luke 8:7. You can look back there in your Bibles in Luke 8:7. Where Jesus says that, "the thorns, they grew up with the good seed," and what did they do?

"They choked it." Same verbal root. Same verb form we read about in verse 14. Look at it there, how the seed that fell among the thorns, it's "choked in the heart by the cares and the riches and the pleasures of life."

When we went through that, we called those different idols that occupy the heart. That crowd out the worship of the true and living God. These are the only three places in Luke's writings that we find this verb *sumpnigo*. It's the verb for choking, so it's in verse 7, it's in verse 14, and it's in verse 42. Luke is making a point. He wants us to see that these welcoming, rejoicing, celebrating crowds, everything seems great on the surface. They seem totally opposite of those gentiles over in the Decapolis, who are the hard-hearted soil rejecting Christ, rejecting his word. Here are the welcoming crowds, celebrating, rejoicing, eager to have him come back.

Luke pictures them here like thorns that suffocate and choke out the good seed. In this sense, the Jews of Capernaum are no better than the Gentiles of the Decapolis. That is a theme, actually, that is going to resound through the rest of the New Testament. As Paul tells us that, "Both Jews and

Greeks, they are all under sin," Romans 3:9. "For," verse 10, "There is no one righteous, not even one."

Don't be fooled by what you see on the surface. Look deeper, look deeper. Look to action over time, not merely words, and applause, and excitement in the moment. Help that build your discernment.

But from the midst of this suffocating crowd, notice that there emerges here, a fledgling plant. A little offshoot, one that grows up here in this soil and from all appearances on the outside, she looks deficient. She looks weak. She is sickly, but she is going to prove to be a remarkable strength in believing. Look at verse 43, "There's a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, though she spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone."

Now, from the perspective of first century society in the Middle East, first century Palestine, the male and the female perspective, this woman sat at the opposite end of the social spectrum from Jairus. Think about the contrast. Jairus is a

man, she's a woman. He's a ruler, she's a virtual nobody, not even named in the text. Jairus is in charge of the synagogue. He maintains a lifestyle of ritual ceremonial purity. She, because of her condition, she's been ritually impure and rendered unclean during the whole time, the whole twelve years of her uncleanness. That had social implications for her.

Moses, in Leviticus 15:25, he wrote about the exact condition that she suffered, a discharge of blood and, "All the days of the discharge she shall continue in uncleanness." Very significant, socially. The commentator, Joel Green, described her situation as socially devastating. He wrote this, "Her hemorrhaging rendered her ritually unclean so that she lived in her perpetual state of impurity. Although her physical condition was not contagious, her ritual condition was. With the consequence that she had lived in isolation from her community these twelve years."

Jairus moved about freely. He enjoyed public discourse. He, he's widely regarded, highly respected. This poor woman, she'd been hindered from relationships in the community and, and not just by an unkind community, by an obedient community. By

Levitical law, she had to hold herself to those strictures. In addition to the ailment and the physical weakness and the embarrassing stigma that this was, the woman lacked the social benefit of the people she needed most. She needed this community. She needed the benefit of social discourse and normal interaction with the other, she needed synagogue attendance.

And for the last twelve years of her life, all the time Jairus enjoyed the blessings of his family and rejoiced in his daughter. Here's this woman outside the community suffering alone. Her condition of ritual impurity had added insult to her injury. But what made her situation even more pitiable here, is the desperation of material impoverishment. Luke tells us in verse 43, "She spent all of her living on physicians," "all of her living on physicians." The word is *bios* here, living. Literally the whole of her means of subsistence. This refers to her, her personal wealth, her personal property, her livelihood, all poured into physicians, doctors.

In other words, if she had had property, she sold it to pay the medical bills. If she had had inheritance, heirlooms,

things passed on to her, a savings account, extra income, whatever it was, spent. All the money, gone. Going to pay for physicians who, in the best of cases, had been trying to help her. Now, the beloved, beloved physician Luke wouldn't say it exactly this way. But Mark, he told his readers in Mark 5:26, that the woman quote, "had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but grew worse." Luke left that part out. He didn't want to throw his fellows physicians here under the bus.

But the fact is, as one commentator put it. In the first century, as today, not all physicians are like Luke, with the same character. One commentator says that the remedies that they tried in such cases were sometimes very severe and sometimes loathsome and absurd. Same thing today, isn't it? Another commentator summed up the options that were available, and really the effect on this poor woman. He said when her, whether her doctors had been celebrated physicians, whose exorbitant fees made them accessible only to the elite or the quacks that exploited members of a naive and needy public. The outcome is the same. Doesn't she know it?

This poor woman, she's physically weakened by the loss of blood. She's ceremonially unclean. She's socially isolated, so that she can avoid defiling others. And now she's, she's drained financially too. Having tried for twelve years to find a solution. She spent all her living on doctors. She suffered under their futile attempts to find a solution. Maybe, and perhaps, and probably very likely, she was intentionally taken advantage of by some. The situation instead of improving, it grew worse.

But then in her mind, opportunity comes knocking. Jesus, he's returned. And there's a crowd around. And she's been thinking about, you know what a crowd means? A crowd means "I have a chance to get close to Jesus and to reach out and touch his garment, which, touching his garment isn't the same as touching him. So I can avoid defiling him." And even better, she could do so while staying in the crowd hidden. She could she could remain anonymous here. She could hope to avoid public embarrassment of discovery.

Look at verse 44, "She came up," not in front of him, "she came up behind him," right? "Came up behind him and touched the

fringe of his garment." Actually, that's not the best translation, fringe. That's actually a reference there to one of the four tassels that hung off the, the four corners of Jesus' square outer garment. It's an outer garment. It's called a *tallit*. And she came up behind Jesus, and she touched not the fringe, but that tassel of that garment. Immediately, immediately, her discharge of blood ceased. Wow. Twelve years of suffering relieved in an instant. At the same time, twelve years of trained medical expertise, it set in sharp relief against the backdrop of divine power, which came through a touch. Look if she could have done that twelve years ago. Could have saved her a lot of money and grief, right?

She might have been involved in all kinds of social discourse, maybe even head of the women's ministry at the synagogue. But had she been relieved early, the timing would have been all wrong. Not her timing, our timing. She wouldn't have been in the desperate condition she was in, where she's willing to risk everything she has left. And at this point, everything she has left is what? It's her dignity. She's willing to set that aside too. Seek healing from Jesus Christ and at this very important moment, providentially speaking.

From the divine perspective, her health, her money, her social dignity, her standing, her status, all of those things are small prices to pay to bring this woman to this exercise of faith.

Let that sink in, beloved. As you think about things that you go through, you wonder why doesn't God help now? When I need it most. You think God knows what you need when you need it most? Certainly he does. Really presses us to, to trust him, doesn't it? Here she's come to a very important crisis of faith. Leads to her healing. Leads to an immediate healing conveyed through contact with Jesus Christ. So what could we discern here about this woman's faith? Is it strong faith or is it weak faith? Was she right to seek help from Jesus in this way? Surreptitiously, without telling him, or do we excuse her, since after all it had been twelve years and man, she's been through enough?

In some ways, this woman's faith seems rather strong, right? I mean, though poor, this woman appears to be rather rich in faith, wouldn't you say? I mean, she knows that this man has power to heal. She believes that personal contact with him, or at least maybe contact with something that has had

contact with him, like the tassel and contact with his garment, which is contact with an inner garment, which is in contact then finally with him, his body. She believes that's enough to heal her condition. Do you believe that strongly? She got what she desired, too. Her hemorrhaging came to a sudden stop. She's healed instantly.

But there's something that doesn't sit right with us about there, about that, right? It's not that her faith is inadequate. It's not that her faith is insufficient. It was sufficient for her to be healed. It was adequate for her to be healed. It's just that her faith here is in serious need of instruction, of maturity. Let me just list out a few deficiencies in her faith. First, right off the bat, this woman seems to have a bit of superstition worked into her faith, doesn't she? She's treating the tassel of Jesus like his clothing, like some today treat the Shroud of Turin, as if there are magical properties by coming in physical contact with the miracle worker, or that which came into physical contact with the miracle worker. You think of the whole Roman Catholic view of relics, as in this category.

We have time to, to go through all that we could go through here, but listen. She's, she's not, she does have a superstitious element in her faith. We know exactly what she is thinking at this moment, because Mark tells us, Mark 5:27-28. "She had heard the reports about Jesus and she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said," here's what she was thinking at the moment. "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well." She's a bit superstitious.

Second thing, is deficient in her faith. She believes that she can have access to God's power in Christ apart from relationship, apart from a personal relationship with Christ. Closely connected to that, third, is her belief that she should continue this privatized, anonymous form of religion she's been practicing for the last twelve years. She's gotten into a bit of a habit remaining apart from people. No, this is about personal relationship. God made us for relationship. First, relationship with God through reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ, his son. And second, a reuniting with God's people. All of those who are reconciled to God by union with Christ. So listen, her faith is deficient. She needs to realize no more anonymity. No more hiding out, no more hanging

out on the fringe. We're created for relationship first with God through Christ and then with believers also through union with Christ.

Fourth problem with her faith. Notice her aim here is too low, it's too immediate. Her perspective here is, is far too small and short sighted. I mean we can understand. We can sympathize. We can feel what she feels. We understand, we're human. But she's still too small in her thinking. She's come to Jesus for the healing of her body, and she, she truly does trust him. She really does believe him. But if she knew who Jesus really is. If she, if she knew what he really came to do. Is this the one who came to subvert, not just her, not just her twelve year flow? He came to subvert the curse itself, that which caused the flow. He came to deal with the cause of all disease and all sickness and to conquer death itself.

Look, had she known that, she might not have sneaked up from behind. She would have come to him from the front in plain view to know him, and to be known by him. Wanted to open herself up completely to this one, who came, came to save her from her sins. William Hendrickson summed it up well when he

wrote this, "The greatness of this woman's faith consisted in this, that she believed that the power of Christ to heal was so amazing that even the mere touch of his clothes would result in an instant and complete cure." Okay, we can commend that. And yet, Hendrickson also writes this, "And the imperfection of her faith, it's evident from this fact. That she thought she, that she thought that such an actual touch was necessary and that Jesus would never notice it." Interesting point.

Her faith is strong and weak at the same time. It's strong as titanium. But as thin as tissue paper in some ways. It's brutal. Needs to be strengthened. Have that titanium strength work all the way through it. But even the smallest, weakest amount of faith. I like what John Calvin said, "God deals kindly and gently with his people, accepts their faith, though imperfect and weak, and does not lay to their charge the faults and imperfections with which it is connected." It's very true.

Jesus here sees more deeply than she can. He wants more for her than she's able at this moment to desire for herself. And healing her medical condition, Jesus intends to go even further by shoring up the imperfections in her imperfect faith.

He's about to strengthen her faith by taking it from private to public.

Let's go to point three. Point three, Jesus has grace for uninformed faith. So thankful, aren't you? Jesus has grace for uninformed faith? Remember, this is a very large procession of people. A massive crowd here that is pressing in on Jesus. That's suffocating him, that's slowing his progress as they move through the narrow streets of Capernaum to Jairus' house. And you can imagine Jairus here, wishing he could clear the streets, kind of like we're driving in traffic, and we want that little button that just kind of lasers everybody out of the way. I always wanted that in Los Angeles traffic. Here, Jairus wishes he had a laser button just clearing the streets. Get the people out of his way and get Jesus into his house so his daughter can be healed.

And this woman for her part, she suddenly discovers that she has been healed, that she's been healed in an instant and, having successfully stolen a blessing, you could say. She's trying to get away quietly. She's trying to get out while the getting's good. She wants to get away secretly. She doesn't

want to be noticed. But the next words of Jesus slow the procession and they stop her in her tracks. Look at verses 45 and 46, "Jesus said, 'Who was it that touched me?' All we're denying it, and Peter said, 'Master, the crowd surrounded you and they're pressing on you.' Jesus said, 'No, someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me.'"

Look, here's Peter being Peter, right? He's just stepping right into the fray, saying whatever comes to his mind immediately. Common sense Jewish fishermen. He gets it. He's from Galilee. And once again, though, Peter is here misjudged Jesus pretty significantly. He's missed the point of Jesus question. Jesus is not suddenly becoming finicky about personal space. He's asking a much more pointed question here. He uses a verb about touching that talks about touching with intention. At the same time, it's Peter's gaff that draws more out of Jesus for our sake. Because of what Peter said here, Jesus reveals more about himself.

Two truths to coax this woman out of hiding. First, the divine power resides within him. Which he knew, she just experienced. That's why she came to him in the first place.

But secondly, we see that the exercise of divine power does not escape his notice. Jesus knows whenever that power has been effectual on behalf of a believer. When faith touches him and power goes forth, he knows it. We read in passages like 1 John 2:1-2, we read that Christ prays for all those for whom he died. Christ prays for all those for whom he died on the cross to satisfy the wrath of God. He knows them by name.

So if this woman is a true believer, which is the clear and obvious conclusion from verse 48, might it be possible that Jesus actually knows the one who touched him? Listen, it's not only possible that he knows. It's not only probable, likely that he knows. It's absolutely certain that Jesus knows the one who touched him. Jesus said, John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." He knows his sheep. He knows each one of them by name. Which means Jesus knows this woman too.

Think about that, beloved. When Jesus was hanging on the cross, dying for the sins of all those who believe. You know whose name he had on his mind? Yours. As Jesus has ascended to the father and he is there bodily at the father's right hand,

you know he is, who he is praying for by name? You. He knows you by name. You have been chosen from before the foundation of the world to be his. You've been given by the father to him as a gift of a redeemed worshipping people. He knows you. He loves you. He died for you and he even now prays for you.

Let that sink in. Let that deeply encourage you. Jesus knows this woman too. Why then, did he ask this question? "Who was it that touched me?" Why does he say and without identity, identifying her, someone touched to me? He doesn't name the one who stole the power. Why does he not name her? Similar to God calling out for Adam in the Garden of Eden, right? Adam had sinned. He hid himself from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Like, yeah, that'll work. We read in Genesis 3:9, "The Lord God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?'" Does the all-seeing, all-knowing God need information? No, he asked the question to gently confront Adam, to gently expose his sin, to draw out the confession from him. He's teaching Adam in that moment.

Same thing here. Jesus is not lacking information. He asked the question because he intends very gently to strengthen

her faith, to perfect her imperfect faith. He's drawing her out. He's drawing her forth. He wants her to come on her own. He wants her to, we want her to reveal her faith to others and to help her give testimony to the true grace of God in her life. Calvin put it this way, "Beyond all question, he, that is Jesus, knowingly and willingly cured the woman and there is little doubt that he drew her to himself by his spirit, that she might obtain a cure. But he puts the question to her that she may freely and publicly make it known."

Let me say it again. Jesus intends to publicize what was private to her in what she intended to keep private. Jesus intends to help her confess openly what she wanted to rejoice in quietly. She just wanted personal Bible study and Jesus says no, let's make this a corporate thing. He wants her to give glory to God before others rather than hide her light under a bushel. No, I'm gonna let it shine. What Jesus intends here, it's in accordance with what Asaph wrote in Psalm 50, verse 14, "Offer a sacrifice to God of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High." And then this, verse 15, "Call on me in a day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me."

The woman called upon him in her day of trouble. Jesus delivered her.

Now what's left to complete the circle, glorify God. Do it openly. Do it publicly. Let everybody hear what God has done for you. Look at verse 47, she knows the gigs up. "When the woman saw she's not hidden, she came trembling." Why is she trembling here? What's she afraid of? Jesus had just exercised power not to hurt her, but to heal her. What's she afraid of here? Perhaps it's a sudden realization she's being called to give an account, and not just an account before Jesus from whom she stole power, but in public in front of a gathered crowd. They say the worst thing, the worst fear that any of us have is what? Speaking in public, right? Perhaps it's public embarrassment, perhaps it's fear of, of shame, having to explain before a gathered crowd the nature of her condition. You can understand that.

Perhaps she's become concerned that she'd done something wrong here. That she's, she's violated Levitical law in a presumptuous way by touching the celebrated teacher's garment. In any case, you got to understand this is a bad moment for her.

Very difficult. But notice, Jesus intends to make her go through it anyway, doesn't he? He wants to push through her feelings of reticence. Push through her sense of embarrassment, her shyness. He wants her to be courageous, not cowardly, but courageous in her faith. This reminds me of some who seem afraid to testify publicly before the church in the waters of baptism. They're afraid to speak openly about the grace of God in their lives. And I think to myself, you know, I'm pretty sure that God knew that that command to be baptized would make shy people feel uncomfortable. But you know what? He issued the command anyway, because there's something more important in his plan than your shyness.

Jesus is not here too concerned about violating sensitivities. He's not concerned about making shy people feel comfortable. Letting them remain hidden. He is the one actually, who said something very opposite. He says, "Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I will acknowledge before my father who is in heaven." But, very sobering words, "Whoever denies me before men, I will also deny before my father who is in heaven." Listen, we had better get over our shyness when it comes to giving glory to God, amen?

Back to the narrative. "When the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, falling down before him, and she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had immediately been healed. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.'" All three writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke record Jesus words of encouragement to this woman. Very important, very heartening for this timid creature, for this beloved woman who had suffered so much.

If we piece together what we read in all three gospels, we kind of get the whole of what Jesus told her. If we piece it together, it kind of says this. "Take heart daughter, or take courage daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction." All those things Jesus said, the gospel writers have recorded different things. Several words of assurance though that Jesus gives this dear woman, all of them informing her faith. All of them strengthening her faith, perfecting her faith. And if she, and I'm sure on further reflection, she did imbibe his words deeply. She swallowed them down, really chewed on them, and learned them. She would be

confident, fully confident in following his blessed command.

"Go in peace."

Reasons for her to go in peace. Number one, Jesus tells her take heart or take courage. That is to say, no more anonymity, no more hiding out, no more shyness on your part. Come into the light. Take courage, daughter. Take courage. Come into the light. Tell publicly what God has done for you. There's no reason to fear.

Second, I love the fact that Jesus calls her "daughter." I mean, this woman who'd been struggling and suffering like this for twelve years is probably at least Jesus's age. He's not talking about a physical daughter. He's not talking down to her. Calls her daughter. What's that about? Very significant here. Notice back in verse 21, Jesus said, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

What is she? She's one who heard his word when he called for her, and she came back, which tells us she'd been leaving. She was, she was on her way out. She's getting away from the

crowd and, "Someone, hey, someone touched me. Someone touched me, for I perceive power's gone out." What's he doing? He's calling for her. She hears his word. She comes back. She falls down trembling. So look, obedience wasn't easy for her. But against her natural impulses, against her instincts to run away and hide, she obeyed his word. That is proof positive she's a daughter of the king in the deepest spiritual sense. Very encouraging word.

Third thing, your faith has made you well. Not the touch of a tassel on my garment, not magic flowing out from a miracle worker, but your faith. What a word of assurance that her healing, her salvation is not dependent on any mere physical connection. The blessing has been secured by the presence of genuine saving faith, and that's a faith that resides deep within. It's a spiritual reality that is never going to wither, never going to fade. But will, in fact, strengthen with the testing. As Peter wrote, "The proof of your faith, being more precious than gold, which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and honor and glory." So Jesus calls this woman out and does so, not unkindly. Not to push her into uncomfortable territory merely, but he does so to

fill her heart with courage. He does so to inform her that they're family now. He does so to assure her that her faith is genuine.

Fourth thing, your faith has made you well. And then the addition in Mark's account, after telling her to go in peace, Jesus adds, be healed of your affliction. What is that about? Well, Jesus had her testify publicly. Something her shyness and her desire for anonymity would have prevented her from doing. But it is, listen, it was vital for her to restoring her to the community. Allow her to attend synagogue regularly, to interact socially with brothers and sisters for her to publicly testify. For everybody to know. Listen, this is huge, allowing her to have a life after her illness.

You know who had a front row seat to her public testimony and to Jesus' validation of her healing? You got it, Jairus. Who's Jairus? Oh, he's the synagogue ruler. He's got a lot of authority. He's got a lot of influence. And after what's coming up in his life, just a few verses from now, Jairus is going to have no doubt in his mind that this woman is truly healed. Later after his ordeal, reflecting on the significance

of all this, he's going to say to himself, "Listen if Jesus pronounces her clean, she's clean, she is in. If Jesus called her daughter, I am honored to be her brother. She's my sister. She's one of us. We need to reinstate her. We need to welcome her back into community. We need to love this woman."

Fifth, finally, why did Jesus call her out? He says, "Your faith has made you well." This refers to a wellness that's deeper than flesh and blood. It's a wellness that's more profound than the healing of a blood flow. The saving efficacy of Christ's power goes deeper than physical healing. It heals the condition that caused the weakness in the first place. The verb here, you can't see it in your English text, but the verb is *sozo*, common New Testament word for spiritual salvation.

Jesus' promise to this dear woman, this daughter, this faith bearer, her sins, will be imputed to him, will be covered by his atonement, will be paid for by his death on the cross. His righteousness will cover her like a fine white linen, bright and clean, brighter than the fallen snow on the ground. She too is going to stand justified by God the Father. Glorified one day in the resurrection of the just. Her healing, her wellness

isn't superficial. It's not temporary. Her salvation is deep and full and final and permanent.

Listen, aren't you thankful? That the unsettled and sometimes anxious condition of our weak faith is something that mobilizes the mercy of Christ for us? Aren't you grateful that even in our imperfect faith, that God's power isn't diminished at all, or hindered, or too short to save? Aren't you humbled? That in our ignorance, and in our immaturity, Jesus has grace for us? To teach us, to train us, to disciple us and discipline us into strong faith. He puts us through these kinds of trials. These kinds of tests. He afflicts us, that we might endure and mature. Praise God for that, amen?

Listen, for those of you who are wired more like this woman, maybe somewhat fearful by nature, maybe prone to shyness, sense in yourself a tendency to shrink back, hold back, remain anonymous. Let this text be an encouragement to you to take courage, to testify boldly knowing that you're blessed by God and you can go in peace. For those of you who have a little bit more of the Peter in you, more prone to be bold, somewhat impetuous, outspoken. Or maybe someone like Jairus, you're

prone to go right to Jesus from the front. Perhaps you have a hard time bearing with the apparent weakness of others. You need to consider this account. See how tender Jesus is in dealing with those who are like this woman.

Got a verse for you from the apostle Paul, "We urge you, brothers," 1 Thessalonians 5:14, "We urge you admonish the idol," but then this, "Encourage the faint hearted." You know what it is to encourage? It's to give strength to. Someone who is faint in heart, give strength to them. Then this, "Help the weak," help them in their weakness. Don't just condemn it. Don't just ignore it. Don't set it aside. Don't say, "Aw that's too much trouble," help. You've got help, help. And then, "Be patient with them all." Patience, gentleness, help, encouragement, that's what we see our Lord doing here.

We're not finished with the account. When we come back next week, we're going to learn more about Jesus perfecting an imperfect faith, but this time in Jairus. Jairus' trial is about to get ten times worse. As what he feared, his worst fear comes true. But Jesus is there at hand to strengthen his failing faith, which will not fail. Will you bow with me?

Our Father, we thank you for what we've learned in this text, and we really are just, even in the time it's taken, we're still just skipping off the high points. There's so much more that we could learn. But Father, I trust your spirit to take the lessons of this text and work them into the heart of every believer. Whether weak or strong, whether shy or bold, father, we ask that you would do your mighty work, by your spirit to sanctify us all. To bring glory and honor to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

We pray for those who are here who do not yet know you. Don't know what it is to trust, don't know what it is to throw themselves completely upon you and to find your grace powerful to help in their sin and weakness. We just ask Lord, that you would draw them to yourself. That you would plough the fallow ground. That you would soften the heart and make their hearts good hearts that are going to receive the word and grow up and produce a yield, to bring glory to you. We love you. We thank you for what we've learned. In Jesus' name, amen.