

Authority Over Death

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[0 : 00] Luke chapter 8, verse 46 to 56. Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him.

And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about 12 years of age, and she was dying.

As Jesus went, the people pressed around him. And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for 12 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.

[1 : 11] And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling. And falling down before him, declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him and how she had been immediately healed.

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, and she will be well.

And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him except Peter and John and James and the father and mother of the child. And all were weeping and mourning for her. But he said, Do not weep, for she is not dead, but sleeping.

And they laughed at him, knowing 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.

[2 : 24] And he directed that something should be given her to eat. And her parents were amazed. But he charged them to tell no one what had happened. This is the word of the Lord.

If you survey people in different parts of the world about what the biggest problems facing humanity are, you will get a variety of answers depending on what part of the world you're in.

But there will likely be some common answers. Some might say natural disasters. Some might say demons. Some might say diseases. Others might say death.

In the ancient world, these four things were seen as the chief problems that beset humanity.

Disasters, demons, diseases, and death. And in chapter 8, Luke intentionally recounts events that systematically demonstrate that Jesus has mastery over all four of these things.

So in Luke 8, 22 to 25, Jesus calmed the storm at sea, showing his mastery over nature and over natural disasters. In Luke 8, 26 to 39, Jesus cured a demoniac, a demon-possessed man, showing his mastery over even the most powerful and stubborn demons.

[3 : 41] And then in today's passage, we see a double miracle where Jesus shows his mastery over diseases and even death itself. And Luke's purpose in telling us these stories is to assure us that no matter how desperate our situation is, whatever problems we might be facing in our world, we can trust in Jesus who can save us.

Jesus who raises the dead. That's really the main point of this passage. So first, we'll look at the disease, verses 46 to 48, verses 40 to 48, and then we'll look at death in verses 49 to 56.

So let's turn to verses 40 to 48 first and look at the disease that Jesus shows mastery over. When Jesus returned, it says, to the Jewish region of Galilee after the healing of the demoniac, in the Gentile region of the Gerasenes, it says at verse 40 that the crowd welcomed him.

So he's come back to the Jewish part of the region on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, and they're welcoming him. They were waiting for him. And there was also a man named Jairus who was a ruler of the synagogue.

The Jewish religious leaders, as we've seen throughout the Gospel of Luke, have generally been opposed to Jesus. But in this case, he's an exception to the rule. He seems favorable toward Jesus. [4 : 57] He seems open to him. And there's a good reason for that, because he's in a very desperate situation and needs Jesus' help. He's described as a ruler of the synagogue, which means he was the main elder of the local synagogue.

So the Christian equivalent would be the senior pastor of a church. And he functions as kind of a civic leader as well. So it's a little more than just the pastor of a church here. He's a leader of the synagogue, but also a civil kind of society leader for the Jews.

But notwithstanding that man's kind of elevated position, it says in verses 41 to 42, that falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house.

For he had an only daughter, about 12 years of age, and she was dying. Luke is fond of adding details like that, that add kind of this emotional weight to the stories.

This is Jairus' only daughter. He's so desperate that he forsakes all else and comes to Jesus and falls at his feet and begs him to come. And this is tragic, because this girl is described as about 12 years of age.

[6 : 05] That means, as the ancient world, and actually even nowadays people reckon it, she's just entering the prime of her life. 12 is the average age when women have their first period.

She is just entering the physical prime as a grown woman. And she is languishing and dying. And not only that, this is Jairus' only daughter.

This is the baby girl. And if you're a father of a baby girl, you know exactly what I'm talking about.

This is the girl that he's been doting on for his entire life. This is his darling.

And he's so desperate. And Jesus listens to Jairus' heartfelt plea. But as Jesus went, it says in verses 42 to 43, that the people pressed around him, and there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for 12 years.

And though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. This too is a desperate situation. This woman had been afflicted with chronic bleeding for so long.

[7 : 09] She had sought out all the remedies she could find that were available to her, but they were no help to her. And she had despaired of healing until she heard of this Jesus. And most people infer that from this story, that this woman's bleeding, it's a reference to a uterine discharge, a uterine hemorrhage, a condition that's not only embarrassing and ostracizing, but it would have also made her, in the Jewish world she was in, socially, basically, she was ceremonially unclean.

She was considered unclean, so unfit for religious inclusion and social inclusion. Leviticus 15.25 says this, if a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her impurity, all the days of the discharge, she shall continue in uncleanness.

So this discharge of bodily fluids rendered people unclean, according to Old Testament rules. And it's because these blood, in particular, signified life.

So the leakage of blood was a symbol, as well as of life leaving, of a picture of death, really. And so this was considered unclean, and the Jews would have excluded her, and would have refused to associate with her, because touching her, or being touched by her, would have also made them unclean.

And normally it just lasts a few days. But this woman has been unclean for 12 years. And people have avoided her touch and presence for 12 years.

[8 : 51] Perhaps it's due to her shame. It says in verse 44, she came up behind Jesus, and touched the fringe of his garment. And immediately her discharge of blood ceased.

The woman doesn't want to create a scene. She discreetly approaches Jesus from behind, and touches just the fringe of the garment. Right? The woman doesn't even get to touch Jesus himself. She only touches his garment, and she doesn't even get to touch that much of his garment, just the fringe of it. And yet immediately it says, the discharge of blood ceased, which had not stopped for 12 years.

This reveals the extent of Jesus' saving power. But Jesus doesn't let the woman get away without acknowledgement. He asks in verse 45, Who was it that touched me?

When all denied it, Peter said, Master, the crowds surround you, and are pressing in on you. So Jesus' question is kind of puzzling.

[9 : 51] It's even humorous to a degree. Because the word press, used earlier in verse 42, it's the same word that was described, that was used to describe in the parable of the seeds earlier.

The thorns that choke the seed of the gospel in the plant, so that it doesn't grow. So literally, he's being choked. He's being crushed by the crowd. They're literally pressing him all around them. And yet Jesus stops and asks, Who was it that touched me? And if Jesus' question is puzzling, the crowd's response is downright ridiculous.

They all denied it. Here they are. They were literally just pressing in all around Jesus. And then when he turns around, he stops and asks, So who touched me? They're like, I didn't do it.

It's like this childish, self-preserving instinct to avoid getting into trouble. You just lie right away. I didn't do it. It wasn't me. They deny it, even though they don't quite know what Jesus is talking about.

[10 : 51] And maybe Jesus is, because Jesus is stopping to ask the question, they assume that what Jesus is talking about is something more significant than just the physical touch. So they say they deny it.

And Peter kind of reads this, the absurdity of the scene. And then he says to Jesus, Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you. In other words, Jesus, are you seriously asking this question right now?

Look around. Everyone's touching you. And you ask, who touched me? Please get a grip. That's what he's really saying. But Jesus insists on getting an answer.

And he explains in verse 46, Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me. So this was not a normal touch. The significance of this touch is highlighted by the repetition of the word.

Four times in verses 44 to 47, we are told that this woman touched Jesus. Who touched me? She touched Jesus. Touched the fringe of his garment. Since many were touching, it's clear that touching Jesus in and of itself does not confer healing.

[11 : 57] Jesus was not this magical being that just walked around and while just radiating this healing power. So if you just get near him or touch him close, you get healed. That's not what's going on here.

This woman, this touch was different. Her touch was different. It was the touch. It was of faith. It was her reach of prayer. And God uses Jesus here.

And Jesus senses that of his power going out to heal her. It's a beautiful picture. Because from this woman flows defiling blood.

But from Jesus flows cleansing power. This woman is literally leaking life. And here when she gets into touch with Jesus, Jesus imparts life and healing.

And of course, when Jesus asks that question, who touched me, there's only one person in the crowd that knows the answer. And so Jesus really, and it's given his kind of prophetic knowledge that he's revealed throughout the gospel so far, it's likely he already knows who it is.

[13 : 03] But he asks because he wants her to come forward and share her testimony. He says in verse 47 that 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, all the people, why she had touched him and how she had been immediately healed.

So it appears that the woman's intention was to remain hidden. But when she realized that she was not hidden, she came trembling, fearful. And we don't know exactly why the woman came trembling in fear.

Perhaps she feared Jesus or the crowds, judgment and condemnation. Since she being a ceremonially unclean woman, likely made not only Jesus, but everyone in her vicinity that she had to get through to Jesus.

Unclean through contact. Perhaps she felt guilty that she received healing from Jesus without his express permission. Maybe she felt like she stole something. But regardless, Jesus does not let her stay hidden.

So instead, falling down before Jesus, the woman declared in the presence of all the people, why she had touched him and how she had been immediately healed. This is instructive for us.

[14:21] Some of you are Christians, but you might be naturally timid. You flee large groups. You diligently avoid being the center of attention. You don't like to speak in front of people, but if Jesus has saved you, it is not to remain hidden.

You must tell of how much Jesus has done for you. Jesus said earlier in this chapter in verse 16, It's easy sometimes for us, especially in this part of the country, to hide behind the facade of courtesy and politeness and refuse to share our Christian testimony.

But refusing to share the light of Christ is not polite. It's positive. It's positively unloving and selfish. It's natural to rave about what you're passionate about.

It's excited about. It's natural to tell people about the things that you love the most in your life. And it's loving thing to do to share the love of Christ that we have received to benefit our hearers.

And after this woman shares her testimony, Jesus graciously assures her in verse 48, Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace.

[15:47] This is wonderful kindness of Jesus. This woman has been a social outcast and a religious untouchable for 12 years. And Jesus graciously addresses this fearful woman as daughter.

And I don't think it's coincidence that in this passage, that this passage is preceded by verses 19 to 21, where Jesus explicitly teaches this truth. My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.

The spiritual family transcends the bond of the physical family. And Jesus is telling this woman, you are in my family. You are a daughter of God.

You are not alone. You are as precious to me as Jairus' daughter is to him. If you're not yet a member of the family of God, which is the church of God, then you can become one through faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus continues in verse 48, Your faith has made you well. Go in peace. In the original language, in the Greek, this is exactly the same sentence as Luke 7.50, where Jesus said to the sinful woman who washed his feet with her tears, Your faith has saved you.

[17:07] Go in peace. Sorry, that's a different passage. In Luke 7.50, Your faith has saved you. Go in peace. It's the same word. The word that's translated, made you well, literally means to save.

And I think this means, it's not just the physical healing, but it also has a spiritual dimension, because the physical healing is intended to function as a picture of the spiritual healing and salvation that comes through Jesus.

And that's why I think in the parallel in Mark, it includes both of those words, save and heal.

Daughter, your faith has made you well, or if your faith has saved you, go in peace and be healed of your disease.

Jesus mentions both physical healing and spiritual salvation. And so, some of you are here this morning with incurable diseases. And Jesus does have the power to heal.

And if you come to him with faith, and if it is in accordance with his good will, and his good and sovereign will, you will be healed. But even more importantly, Jesus has the power to save.

[18:08] Your physical disease, no matter how severe, is light and momentary compared to the spiritual disease of sin. Sin, unlike the other diseases that kill only in this life, brings eternal death in the afterlife.

And this woman's ceremonial uncleanness, her religious exclusion, is intended to function as a picture of the sinfulness of humanity. We are unclean, unfit to be in God's presence.

And the discharge of blood is a graphic picture of that. But Jesus heals this woman, and thereby removes her shame and her uncleanness. And later in Luke's gospel, Jesus will head to the cross to die for the sins of his people.

And that's where he interposes his blood, so that we might be forgiven and not condemned for our sins. So that we might live and not die.

It's what we sang about earlier in the hymn, there is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Emmanuel's veins, and sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.

[19:24] Have you been cleansed of your sins? It doesn't matter how deep your stain is, the stain of sin is, it doesn't matter how entrenched your sins are.

This woman had been bleeding for 12 years, and she had spent all of her money on physicians who are powerless to heal her, and here she comes to Jesus, penniless now, after having spent it all on the physicians.

She has no means to thank Jesus, or to compensate him for anything that he does for her. Yet all she needed to do was touch the fringe of his garment. Some of you are trying really hard to live a moral life.

But there is no way that you can meet God's perfect standard and save yourself. There is no spiritual guru or counselor or life coach that can save you.

They will take all your money and leave you no closer. To find the healing. Only Jesus can save. And if you open your heart to him, and if you stretch out your hand in faith, you will find that he is not out of reach.

[20 : 40] And saving faith is one that leads to action. It doesn't mean, look at this woman, she didn't say, oh, well, I believe that Jesus can heal me, and then stay in her couch. She ventures out and takes a risk to get through the throng of people to touch Jesus because she believes that Jesus can heal her.

So faith must lead to action. So do you have faith in Jesus that leads you to action to follow him? It's not enough that you said one day, oh, yes, I believe in Jesus in my head.

And then now you live the rest of your life for him. That's not saving faith. Do you believe him enough to leave all else behind to pursue him and to love him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?

That's true saving faith. It's an entrustment of your life. And if you have put your faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, that this assuring words that he speaks to this woman, you can store up in your own heart.

Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace. And the peace is not just an inner subjective feeling. It's a description of a new objective reality that now characterizes our relationship with God.

[21 : 55] As Romans 5, 1 says, therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We who were once sinners in rebellion against God are now reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and have peace. That's the peace that Jesus can impart to you today. Jesus' interaction with this woman is heartwarming and encouraging.

And we almost forget that this was an interruption as Jesus was on his way to heal Jairus' dying daughter. But we're reminded of this fact in verse 49.

Read with me. While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the teacher anymore.

Just imagine for a moment how discouraging and deflating this news must have been for Jairus. He had finally secured the help of the one person who could heal his dying daughter and they were on their way.

[23 : 06] They're on their way. But then this woman comes out of nowhere and touches Jesus and Jesus seemingly in no hurry to get to his only daughter who is moments away from death stops and asks a stupid question and then listens to the woman, her tale of woe and her miraculous healing.

You could just imagine Jairus kind of tapping his toes impatiently as this is happening. If he had a watch back then he'd be looking at his watch. While Jesus is still speaking to this woman, a messenger from his house approaches him and says to Jairus, your daughter is dead.

Do not trouble the teacher anymore. By intertwining the story of Jairus' daughter and the woman with the discharge of blood in this way, Luke is intentionally inviting comparison of the two scenarios, the two cases.

Notice that Jairus' dying daughter was about 12 years of age and that this woman who had a discharge of blood, she had it for 12 years. The first case is more urgent and time sensitive. Jairus' daughter is dying right at this moment but the woman has had the discharge of blood for 12 years. A few more days is not going to break her. Moreover, the girl is just entering the prime of her life.

[24 : 31] Remember 12 is the first, is really coming of age to womanhood. On the other hand, this woman has had the discharge of blood for 12 years, already having spent all of her youth, all of her prime.

And in verse 48, this is, this is the kicker. Jesus calls this woman daughter. And in verse 49, Jairus is told, your daughter is dead.

Oh, the disappointment and resentment that Jairus must have felt. Jesus, this woman has been bleeding for 12 years.

What's the delay of a few hours or even a few days? My daughter's only 12 and she's about to die. Jesus, this woman had already been healed. Why not just let her go quietly so you could hurry to my house to my precious child?

Jesus, you call her daughter? What about my daughter? She's my only daughter. Have you ever felt like God missed his timing with you?

[25 : 45] Have you ever felt like he got sidetracked caring for someone else so that you were neglected by him? Your friend has found a husband or a wife, but you're now in your 30s and you're still alone?

Your college roommate got that internship or that lucrative job and you are still scraping the bottom of the barrel for something to turn up? Your colleague's career seems to have taken off while your career seems to have run into a dead end.

Another church member seems to be receiving so many blessings and growing and maturing rapidly, but you feel stagnant. The bridesmaids from your wedding now have children, but you are infertile and childless.

Your neighbor's child seems normal and healthy developmentally, but yours seem sickly and developmentally delayed.

What about my child, God? What about my life, God? What about my career? What about my family? What about my future, Jesus?

[26 : 59] If that's you, then God has included the story of Jairus here to encourage you. It says in verse 50, but Jesus, on hearing this, answered him, do not fear, only believe and she will be well.

God hears your grief. God knows your fears and he says to you, do not fear, only believe and she will be well.

the level of fear in our lives is inversely proportionate to the level of faith and so Jesus says, do not fear, only believe. What do you fear this morning?

Maybe you fear incompetence or feeling like a failure. Maybe you fear rejection from others. Maybe you fear what they might be able to do to you or how they might make you feel.

Maybe you always carry this ominous feeling with you that something bad, something terrible is going to happen to you or your family. An accident, a tragedy, an illness.

[28 : 10] Maybe you fear death itself but Jesus tells us, do not fear, only believe. A Bible commentator, James R. Edwards puts it this way, the challenge of faith before Jairus and for everyone who meets Jesus is whether to believe only in what circumstances allow or in what God declares possible.

Do you believe in Jesus' power to heal, to save, to redeem whatever situation you're in? So, because of this, Jairus holds back his complaint, he holds down his tears, he accompanies Jesus back to his house and when Jesus came to the house, it says in verse 51, he allowed no one to enter with him except Peter and John and James and the father and mother of the child.

So, Peter and John and James were in the inner circle even among the twelve apostles. They were Jesus' earliest and most trusted disciples and three times in the Gospel of Luke, they're singled out as a group apart from the rest of the twelve.

First in Luke 5 when they are first called to be his disciples and then Luke 8, 51 when, right now in our passage when they alone are witnesses to Jairus' daughter's resurrection and then Luke 9 when they alone are taken to the mountain to see Jesus' transfiguration when he is transformed into a glorious and radiates glory, heavenly glory and he's joined by Moses and Elijah on either of his side.

And so, we don't know exactly why Jesus sought this more intimate setting but there might be a clue in verse 56 because it says that, and her parents were amazed but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

[30 : 12] Jesus doesn't want Jairus and his wife to publicize what happened after the resurrection which is the exact opposite of what Jesus told the garrison demoniac earlier in Luke 8 39 he told him return to your home and declare how much God has done for you.

And this is because Jesus shows throughout his ministry much more openness when he is ministering among the Gentiles but diligently avoids he diligently avoids popularity and acclaim among the Jews.

And the reason seems to be that Jews already have a messianic expectation. So when they see that Jesus might be the Messiah their religious fervor overflows into this political frenzy and that

impedes Jesus' ability to travel throughout the towns to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. His good news the good news of the kingdom of God and it jeopardizes his mission and we saw this concern earlier in Luke 4 41 to 44 and in Luke 5 12 to 16 and the second thing is that Jesus also knows that greater popularity among the Jews means greater jealousy of the Jewish religious leaders and in fact in John 11 and 12 after Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead and this happens in public unlike this incident when that happens because of that the Jewish leaders worry if we let him go on like this everyone will believe him and then they plot to kill not only Jesus but also Lazarus because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing Jesus John 12 9 to 11 so Jesus knows that it's not yet his time to go to the cross to die so he enters the house with only Jairus and his wife and Peter James and John and then it says in verses 52 to 53 and all were weeping and mourning for her but he said do not weep for she is not dead but sleeping and they laughed at him knowing that she was dead so Jesus arrives and he commands the mourners to stop weeping in first century

Palestine the Jews hired almost they hired professional mourners when there was a death in the family so these are trained they're trained to mourn in this heart wrenching way and they would follow the procession and announce basically to the town that there has been a death in the family and so these mourners were not called until there was uncertainty about this person's death so the fact that they're there already shows that the death is certain and not only that being professionals they know a dead body when they see one and Jesus tells them do not weep for she is not dead but sleeping so it's no wonder that they laugh at him knowing that she was dead everyone there knew that Jairus' daughter was dead and everyone knew that death is the end we all know that it's final there's no turning back you could try really hard to save them when they're dying but when they're dead it's game over so sadly and ironically these people who were hired to mourn start laughing at Jesus this is about as bad as it gets it's a hopeless situation it's a death yet even in this [33 : 32] Jesus commands do not fear only believe and she will be well and then it says in verses 54 to 55 taking her by the hand Jesus 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 Jesus takes the dead girl's hand into his hand which is another instance where Jesus would have been rendered ceremonially unclean because contact with the dead is considered unclean but Jesus does not hesitate he imparts life he embraces the unclean the untouchables and again instead of Jesus being rendered unclean this girl is revived and with new life and wonderfully just as he previously said that the girl is not dead but asleep like a parent waking up his or her child in the morning for school he just calls her child arise and the departed spirit responds immediately and then Jesus goes to direct that something be given to her to eat

Jesus is here like a physician that even cares for the girl's diet the seemingly unnecessary detail shows Jesus' tender care for Jairus' daughter and signifies the return to normalcy of Jairus' daughter and her family's life and the expression is curious right it's one that has been passed on through generations that we use to this day we use the expression falling asleep as a euphemism for death this was common among the ancient Greeks but Christians came to express their hope for the resurrection with that phrase because of this incident by calling death sleep Jesus highlights the temporariness of death and he removes the terror of death for those who trust in him Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15 20-21 in fact Christ has been raised from the dead the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep for as by a man came death by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead so it is through this miracle that Jesus demonstrates his mastery not merely over disasters and demons but also diseases and over death itself and I don't know if you have ever been confronted with the finality of death

I think most of you are young and I think as young people we don't normally think about death so much we feel like we're invincible and most people are too busy to come to terms with it until one of their loved ones die their friends start to die or when they are diagnosed with a terminal illness but death comes to us all and this is the consequence of sin because we have rebelled against God and we have sought to live for ourselves rather than living for him who created us and because we have violated the laws of God and we have marred his design for humanity and all creation we have been separated from God and the natural consequence of being separated from the giver of life is death but as the famous verse that you most of you know John 3 16 says for God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life

Jesus was already ministering here with the view to the cross knowing that he that's where he is ultimately headed and there he is crucified and he pays the penalty for our sins but death could not hold him down because Jesus was the sinless son of God and son of man and having accepted Jesus' sacrifice for our sins God the Father raises Jesus from the dead and therefore makes him the deposit the guarantee of the resurrection life that awaits all those who repent of their sins and entrust themselves to Jesus for salvation but those who die apart from Christ will not experience eternal resurrection life instead they will experience eternal death eternal separation from God that the Bible describes as the lake of fire but for those who die in Christ death is nothing to fear it's like sleep our soul will live eternally with God and ultimately when Christ returns our bodies too will be raised for resurrection life and our death and death our final enemy the last remaining vestige of sin will be undone once and for all and because we have a resurrected Lord when we believe in the resurrected Lord when we believe in Jesus Christ who raises the dead and redeems those who are dead and brings them to life even in the most desperate situations even in the face of death itself we can have enduring faith when we believe the Bible is actually what I wandered and my life should be precisely as I could we love you