

ENGAGE

- This is the second of a three week mini-series on the Theology of Healing. I will be covering the topics of suffering as well as biblical criteria for bold prayer.
- We will be looking at the story of two daughters of Israel. One dead and the other not living. One not experiencing life due to death at a twelve years of age and the other not experiencing life due to twelve years of illness which removed her from community.

EXAMINE

COMMENTARY NOTES:

8:40 Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him. This picks up the references to the “crowd” of 8:4, 19. Their positive response contrasts with that of the people of Gerasa (8:34–37). In general crowds reacted favorably toward Jesus. Attempts to find reasons for the crowd’s positive reaction toward Jesus (because of having witnessed the previous miracles or because of a desire to see additional miracles) are purely speculative. In the Lukan setting the Evangelist sought to underline the crowd’s positive attitude toward Jesus.

8:41 Then a man named Jairus. “Jairus” is the Greek form of the name “Jair” (Num 32:41; Deut 3:14; Josh 13:30; 1 Chr 20:5). Some scholars have sought to find symbolism in this name because *Jair* means *he [God] will awaken*, which fits Luke 8:52 nicely, but none of the Evangelists made any allusion to this. If Luke wanted Theophilus to see such a symbolism based on this Hebrew meaning, he would have needed to do something similar to what we find Matt 1:21. **A ruler of the synagogue.** There is a slightly different wording in Luke 8:49. Jairus most probably was the official in charge of arrangements for synagogue services or a synagogue board member (cf. Acts 13:15; 18:8, 17). If Jairus’s specific position is unclear, his general status as a synagogue official and a representative of the Jewish establishment is not. **Came and fell at Jesus’ feet, pleading with him.** Like the hemorrhaging woman, Jairus revealed his faith by coming to Jesus. Earlier a centurion (a Gentile) manifested his faith by *not* coming directly to him (7:1–10). Jairus’s action showed his desperation as well as his faith in Jesus.

8:42 Because his only daughter. The term “only” is found three times in the Synoptic Gospels and all are in Luke (cf. also 7:12; 9:38). Here and in 9:38 Luke added it to the parallel material in Mark. As in the other two examples, Luke emphasized the tragedy of the situation by this comment.

8:43 The scene switches now to a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years. The exact nature of this bleeding is uncertain, but it may have been some sort of uterine hemorrhaging. The woman’s plight is highlighted by the length of her illness (twelve years) and the hopelessness of her situation (no one could heal her).

8:44 She came up ... and touched the edge of his cloak. Luke’s abbreviated account omits what the woman was thinking as she sought to touch Jesus’ garment (cf. Mark 5:28). The “edge” of the cloak (Matt 14:36; Mark 6:56) may refer to either the hem or a tassel on the corner of his

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garment (Num 15:38–39; Deut 22:12). **And immediately her bleeding stopped.** The “immediately” heightens Jesus’ miracle-working power. His power and might is such that a twelve-year sickness, which no one else could heal, was instantaneously healed.

8:45 Who touched me? Was this an actual question or a device Jesus used to bring the woman before him? The question and what follows in 8:45b–46 suggest that Jesus did not know who touched him (cf. Mark 5:32). Luke in his orderly fashion (Luke 1:3) placed Jesus’ question before the explanation of why he knew he had been touched (cf. Mark 5:30). **Peter said.** Peter spoke for the disciples (cf. Mark 5:31). **Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.** For “Master” see comments on 5:5. Peter assumed that Jesus’ question was somewhat foolish because Jesus was being jostled by the crowd around him, but he also assumed that Jesus was seeking an answer.

8:46 I know that power has gone out from me. The “mechanical” sound of this statement, suggesting an “automatic” transfer of power, is modified by Luke’s statement that many were “pressing against” Jesus; yet only one of them drew on his “power,” and he was immediately aware of what had happened. It was not the physical contact in itself that conveyed healing, but rather the faith that prompted it and to which Jesus will attribute the healing in 8:48.

8:47 Seeing that she could not go unnoticed. Luke did not explain how she came to this conclusion. Perhaps she saw that Jesus would not rest until what had happened to him had been explained. **Came trembling and fell at his feet.** No reason is given for her fear. In the original situation it may have been because in touching Jesus she caused him to become ceremonially unclean (cf. Lev 15:19–27; Ezek 36:17) or because the experience of God’s power and might in her healing caused her to have a reverent fear or awe. Perhaps she feared rebuke for her presumption of touching Jesus. Luke was not interested in pursuing this. For him fear was an appropriate response to the experience of God’s presence. **She told why she had touched him.** Luke referred here to why the woman touched Jesus, even though he omitted the explanation earlier (cf. 8:44 and Mark 5:28). Did Luke assume that his readers knew the story well enough to supply the reason in such instances?

8:48 Daughter. By the affectionate term “Daughter,” Jesus immediately reassured the woman and assuaged her fears. **Your faith has healed you.** “Healed you” is literally *saved you*. It was not simply the woman’s touching of Jesus’ garment that healed her, for others pressed against Jesus as well; it was the faith that caused her to touch Jesus that brought healing. Yet something more happened than the cessation of her bleeding. She experienced physical healing but even more. If Jesus’ concern for her involved physical healing only, what occurred in Luke 8:45–48 could have been omitted. Luke reported that Jesus sought out the woman because something greater than physical healing was taking place. Through faith the woman also received spiritual healing. **Go in peace.** This was a common formula for dismissal, as 7:50 and Acts 16:36 reveal (cf. Judg 18:6; 1 Sam 1:17; 20:42; 29:7). But these words from Jesus contain a blessing as well.

8:49 While Jesus was still speaking. The scene now changes back to Jairus. **Your daughter is dead.** Luke wanted his readers to believe that the daughter was dead, not ill and sleeping (cf. also Luke 8:53). As a result what Jesus said in 8:52 should be interpreted in light of this statement, not vice versa. The rationalist attempts of the past to reinterpret this story as a healing rather than a raising of the dead are contrary to the Lukan intention. **Don’t bother the**

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teacher any more. This must be understood as a further indication that the daughter had died. The messenger had a limited view of Jesus' power. He thought: *If the daughter were still alive, Jesus might be able to help, but no one can bring the dead back to life. Therefore it makes no sense to trouble Jesus about this.*

8:50 Don't be afraid. As with the woman in 8:48, Jesus gave a word of reassurance and sought to allay Jairus's doubts and to strengthen his faith. What happened to the woman could happen to his daughter. **Just believe.** The object of this faith is not described, but Luke expected his readers to know and to add "in the Lord Jesus" (Acts 16:31). Luke used the aorist imperative, in contrast to the present imperative in Mark 5:36, to emphasize the act by which persons place their faith in Jesus (cf. Acts 4:4, 32; 8:12; esp. 16:31). **And she will be healed.** "Healed" is literally *saved*. Luke added this. As elsewhere such healing or resuscitation from the dead represents the greater salvation that faith brings. See comments on 8:48.

8:51 He did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James. This great miracle of God's grace was to be observed by his chosen witnesses only (cf. Acts 10:39–41). The inner group of the disciples is mentioned here in Luke for the first time.

8:52 All the people were wailing and mourning for her. "Mourning" literally refers to the beating of one's breast in mourning. Among this group would have been relatives, friends, and official mourners. **She is not dead but asleep.** This should be interpreted in light of the comments made in 8:49, 53. It was not a denial that the girl was dead but a recognition that the girl's death was, like sleep, of limited duration. Jesus' statement "is prognosis, not diagnosis."

8:53 They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. Again Luke made clear that the girl was dead. The mourners knew the girl was dead and thus laughed at Jesus because they believed he was using the term "asleep" in ignorance rather than as a metaphor.

8:54 Get up! The same term is used in the raising of the widow's son in 7:14 and of Jesus' resurrection from the dead in 24:6. Luke omitted Jesus' use of the Aramaic phrase *Talitha koum!* that Mark 5:41 mentions, for Luke's readers would not have understood it.

8:55 Her spirit returned. Compare 1 Kgs 17:21–22. The girl returned to her former earthly life, not to the final resurrection state. The girl's "spirit," not the Holy Spirit, is seen as distinct from and surviving the death of the physical body (cf. Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59). Questions such as where the girl's spirit was during the time of death or what she experienced were of no interest to Luke. His primary goal was to teach about Jesus, not about death. **And at once she stood up.** This immediate response and her subsequent eating underline the reality of the miracle.

8:56 Her parents were astonished. This verb is also found in Luke 2:47 and 24:22. **But he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.** This command stands in sharp contrast with the command to the healed demoniac in 8:39, but the people's scorn in 8:53 may reveal they were unfit recipients for the gospel message. Or perhaps Jesus did not want the little girl to become a public curiosity. For Luke, however, this might have exemplified the secret of God's kingdom (8:10). Yet how could such a fact be concealed? As Marshall observes, "The command itself should not be regarded as historically impossible: so long as the parents said nothing, the scornful Jews could ... [believe] that the girl had been merely asleep."

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OPENING DISCUSSION:

What is your first response when you hear stories of people dying (or “flat-lining”) and then coming back to life? Do you err on the side of skepticism or do you generally believe these accounts? What about all those miraculous stories of people being healed of different diseases or ailments? Do they make you think of the preachers on television, or do you marvel at the supernatural power of God in this world? Have your group members share any similar stories, or describe their usual reaction to hearing these types of occurrences. This week’s passage points to how God’s power can and does overcome both sickness and death.

BIG PICTURE/MAIN IDEA:

Synopsis: Jesus’s extraordinary power to heal extends even to someone who has just died.

These two intertwined miracles are very different, but in each a hopeless situation (an incurable and isolating illness, and death itself) is overcome by the life-restoring power of Jesus, exercised in response to “faith” (8:48, 50). Faith is frequently mentioned, and is probably always presupposed, in accounts of Jesus’s physical healings. Any impression of “automatic” or “magical” healing, such as the story of the woman with the hemorrhage might otherwise suggest, is thus excluded.

Jairus’s daughter, like the widow’s son (7:11–17) and Lazarus (John 11), was resuscitated only to die again subsequently; this was not “resurrection.” But Jesus’s words about death as “sleep” can, with hindsight, have a relevance beyond these exceptional cases. His own resurrection (not just resuscitation to die again) opens up a new view of death, not as the end of everything but rather as a “sleep” followed by awakening into a new life.

KEY POINTS IN THE PASSAGE:

- Jesus’s healing power operates even without his conscious intention.
- Healing comes as a result of faith.
- Jesus is able to reverse the process of death.
- Death is described as only a “sleep.”
- The danger of ritual impurity through contact with discharge and death does not deter Jesus from bringing restoration.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

READ Luke 8:40-56, as well as Matt. 9:18-26** and Mark 5:22-43, then answer the questions below:

*Who welcomed Jesus when he returned from the land of the Gerasenes?
Who came up to Jesus with a request? What does Luke tell us about him?*

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What was wrong with the man's daughter? What does Luke tell us about her?

What happened to him on the way to visit Jairus's daughter? When did Jesus realize someone touched him?

How did the woman respond to Jesus after it was discovered that he touched him? How did Jesus respond?

What happened to the girl while Jesus was attending to the woman? What was his response?

Who was in the room with Jesus when he saw the girl? What was their response when Jesus said "she is not dead, but sleeping"?

What did Jesus tell the girl's parents to do after he raised her from the dead?

The Lukan version of this incident differs from that of Mark in a number of ways. First, Luke stated that this was Jairus's "only" daughter (8:42), whereas in Mark 5:23 the daughter's condition is described by Jairus himself. Second, Luke mitigated the criticism of the doctors who treated the hemorrhaging woman. (Cf. Luke 8:43 with Mark 5:26. Some have suggested that this may have been due to Luke's desire to defend his profession.) Third, Luke changed the statement about power proceeding from Jesus from indirect to direct discourse (Luke 8:46). Finally, even though Luke's abbreviated version (280 words from the 374 in Mark) eliminates the reason the woman sought to touch Jesus (cf. 8:44 and Mark 5:28), it explains why the people laughed at Jesus (Luke 8:53) and describes the resuscitation (8:55).

** According to Matthew's account, the same two miracles are described; however, Matthew states that Jairus approaches Jesus stating that his daughter has already died. This apparent discrepancy is explained by the fact that while Jesus was speaking to Jairus, someone came from his house to tell him the girl had died. Matthew did not mention that detail, and therefore included the report of the girl's death in Jairus' request.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Use the information from the text and the commentary notes below to help discern responses to the following questions.

- **Why do you think Jairus asked Jesus to come see his daughter? What did he know, or what had he heard about Jesus that made him worth seeking out?**
- **Why do you think the woman touched Jesus? Do you think she believed that by touching him she would be healed, or do you think she was trying to get his attention? Read Mark's account to determine the woman's motives for touching him.**
- **Why do you think it was so important for Jesus to raise the girl from the dead? In other words, why did Luke think this incident was worth mentioning in his Gospel account?**

Two further miracles of healing add yet more weight to the impression of unlimited power that characterizes the whole of the Galilean phase of Jesus's story and that form the basis for the key question of 9:18–20: Who is Jesus? After his authority has been asserted over the natural elements and the supernatural powers of evil (8:22–39), he now restores two women to life:

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one literally, from a recently fatal illness, the other metaphorically, in that she is rescued from a long period of ostracism and misery. In these incidents Jesus acts alone, but these further demonstrations of his power provide the background for his subsequently sending his disciples out to extend his ministry of proclamation and deliverance (9:1–6; 10:1–17).

Cultural/Historical Background

Two of the standard sources of ritual defilement in Old Testament law were through contact with someone with a bodily discharge and, more seriously, through touching a dead body. For defilement through touching a corpse, see Numbers 19:11–16; for the law regarding a woman with an abnormal flow of blood, see Leviticus 15:25–30. The latter condition led to social exclusion (a Qumran text prescribes segregated areas in a town for menstruating women as for lepers.) Each of these two incidents raises at least the possibility of ritual defilement for Jesus.

HOW DOES IT APPLY?

Do you struggle with understanding why God allows people to develop certain illnesses? Moreover, do you have a tough time discerning why He does or does not heal them? *(It is important to point out to your group that God never promises to protect His people from the sin that permeates this world. Both believers and unbelievers are susceptible to disease and illnesses. In other words, just because someone is a Christian does not mean they won't experience hardships in life, including illnesses or death. However, God does promise us that our true reward is in the eternal life, not in this one.)*

Do you think miraculous healings (or the lack thereof) dictate a person's belief (or disbelief) in God? How might you respond to a person that rejects the notion of God based on something like illness or death?

What can you learn from this passage about God's power over sickness and death? How can you look to him for help with power overcoming sin in your life?

How does this passage help you deal with issues like sickness and death in your own life, or in the lives of others? In other words, what can we learn from this passage that helps us handle the realities of sickness and death in this life?

Questions

1. Where had Jesus been? (40a) Why did the crowd welcome him? (40b) Who was Jairus? (41a) What was his attitude? (41b) Why did he come to Jesus? (42a) In what way is he a good father?

2. Describe the woman who slipped up behind Jesus in the crowd (42b-44a, Lev 15:25, 31).

What happened when she touched him? (44b) How did Jesus know that someone had touched him? (45-46) How did all the people answer to Jesus' question? (45)

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3. How is she a contrast with Jairus? What was one similarity with her and Jairus? Why did Jesus accept and help them? (Jn 6:37) How did the woman come to Jesus and confess? (47) Why did he insist that the woman come forward? (Ro 1:21) Can you confess to his healing grace? (Ro 10:9-10)

4. How did Jesus call her? (48a) How did Jesus bless her? (48b) What is the distinction between this woman and the crowd of people? (Heb 11:6)

5. What happened while Jesus was talking with the woman? (49a) What was the messenger's bad advice? (49b) What did Jesus say? (50) Why is fear the enemy of faith? (Heb 2:15) How can we overcome fear? (50, Heb 11:1)

6. How could Jairus accept Jesus' words when he had just heard the tragic news? (1Pe 2:6) Share some examples of those who kept their faith in a hopeless situation. What kinds of fear do you have and how can you overcome? (Jn 14:1, Mt 6:33)

7. What happened next after Jesus' words to Jairus? (51) What did he say to the mourners? (52, Heb 9:27, Jn 5:28-29) What was their response? (53) How did Jesus call her? (54) What did he do? (54b) What does this event reveal about Jesus? What can we learn from today's passage?

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