

“What Jairus’ Daughter Saw in Her Father”

LUKE 8:40-56

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Certainly one of the greatest challenges in preaching is deciding on a topic and text to be covered from the pulpit on a weekly basis. For those of you who have filled in over the past several years, perhaps you know this from your own experience. When given the opportunity to preach, sometimes the greatest investment in time and effort comes in deciding what to preach. As you might know, the Bible contains 1,189 chapters, and most of those chapters are full of dozens if not hundreds of potential subjects (most of them very important) that need to be covered in sermon form. As you also might know, a majority of the sermons that I have preached over the past 20 years have been prepared in direct response to various questions and favorite passages that have been turned in by the congregation. But one thing that I always try to keep in mind is that most people who assemble each Lord’s Day morning are basically good and decent people who might be struggling to get through the week and who really just need a good word of encouragement. Generally speaking, we do not need to be beaten down, but we need a word from the Lord to challenge us and to help us keep on keeping on. On a typical Lord’s Day morning, we may have single parents who are just trying to do the best they can to bring up their children in the Lord. We might have kids of various ages who are doing the best they can to stay focused on their studies at school. At any given time, we might have several in the audience who are struggling with the various stages of grief. We might have families who are in over their heads financially who are struggling to make ends meet. We might have several who are struggling with various forms of addiction – from alcohol to gambling and everything in between. We might have several who are struggling with chronic pain. Others might be having a hard time with interpersonal relationships – within their own families or sometimes even with others within the congregation. All of us struggle in a wide variety of ways, but one thing we have in common is that all of us need to hear something from God’s word that will help us make it through the coming week.

With all of this in mind, I would like for us to study an encouraging passage that our family ran across in our daily Bible reading last week. And even though the passage might not directly apply to all of us, the passage has some amazing words of encouragement for all of us who may be struggling. I am referring to a passage in Luke 8 where the Lord reaches out to help a desperate father whose daughter is at the point of death (p. 1614). And again, not all of us are fathers and not all of us have daughters who are deathly ill, but as I read this passage again this week, it touched me – perhaps because the daughter in the story is the same age as my own daughter. And as I started looking into it, I was amazed that this is a passage that I have never preached on, even though it is found in three of the four gospel accounts. I might remind you that there is an interruption in this passage – we have studied the interruption before (a woman who was healed in the

middle of this passage), but we have never actually looked very carefully at the event that was interrupted. And I know we can learn quite a bit from the Lord's role in this, but as a father myself, I would like for us to try to look at this account from the daughter's point of view as we consider what this 12-year old girl saw in her father. By the time we're done this morning, I hope that the qualities we see in Jairus are qualities that all of us can develop in our own lives, whether we are fathers or not.

The passage begins in Luke 8:40. Up to this point, Jesus had been in this area before, he had crossed over the Sea of Galilee, he had cured the demon-possessed man on the other side, he now returns, and that is where we pick up with Luke 8:40,

⁴⁰ And as Jesus returned, the people welcomed Him, for they had all been waiting for Him. ⁴¹ And there came a man named Jairus, and he was an official of the synagogue; and he fell at Jesus' feet, and began to implore Him to come to his house; ⁴² for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. But as He went, the crowds were pressing against Him.

⁴³ And a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone, ⁴⁴ came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. ⁴⁵ And Jesus said, "Who is the one who touched Me?" And while they were all denying it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing in on You." ⁴⁶ But Jesus said, "Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power had gone out of Me." ⁴⁷ When the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before Him, and declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed. ⁴⁸ And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

⁴⁹ While He was still speaking, someone came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, "Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher anymore." ⁵⁰ But when Jesus heard this, He answered him, "Do not be afraid any longer; only believe, and she will be made well."

⁵¹ When He came to the house, He did not allow anyone to enter with Him, except Peter and John and James, and the girl's father and mother. ⁵² Now they were all weeping and lamenting for her; but He said, "Stop weeping, for she has not died, but is asleep." ⁵³ And they began laughing at Him, knowing that she had died. ⁵⁴ He, however, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Child, arise!" ⁵⁵ And her spirit returned, and she got up immediately; and He gave orders for something to be given her to eat. ⁵⁶ Her parents were amazed; but He instructed them to tell no one what had happened.

Now, even before we start looking at the actual lessons from this account, I want to point out something that has always been interesting to me about all of this, and that is: This particular account was written by a medical doctor. We have three accounts – in Matthew, Mark, and Luke – and all of them are accurate, but I would like to hear from the medical doctor on this one. In Colossians 4:14, the apostle Paul refers to Luke, his traveling companion, as the **"beloved physician."** And in the middle of this passage, we find what I see as a rather humorous reminder of this. When it comes to the woman who had been bleeding for 12 years, notice what Dr. Luke says in verse 43. He refers to, **"...a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone."** I would direct you back to Mark's account in Mark 5:25-26. Mark also refers to a

woman who had had a **“hemorrhage for twelve years,”** but then he adds that this woman, **“...had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse.”** For some reason, Luke, the **“beloved physician”** leaves all of that out! Mark points out that this woman had blown all of her money on doctors who only made her worse, and Luke says that she was a woman who **“could not be healed by anyone.”** Just a slight difference there! Both accounts are accurate. Both accounts are the truth. But we do have an interesting difference.

Today, though, I would like for us to focus on what happens on each side of this miracle – the healing of Jairus’ daughter.

- I. **When it comes to what Jairus’ daughter saw in her father, the first thing I would like for us to notice is that this little girl, this young woman, saw her father’s LOVE – she saw her dad’s GENUINE CONCERN as he went out desperately looking for Jesus (verses 40-42).**

If we could imagine this scene for just a moment: Here is a man who is a leader in the Jewish community. Dr. Luke tells us that Jairus was **“an official of the synagogue.”** The word he uses there refers to Jairus being the **“ruler”** or the **“president”** of the synagogue. In other words, Jairus was in charge. From history, we know that the synagogue officials were responsible for maintaining the facility, and they were also responsible for what happened in the synagogue. We are not talking about the temple in Jerusalem, but the synagogues were the local places of study and worship, similar to a church or congregation today – a local group. And we find in this passage that Jairus was in charge of this particular local group. He was the **“ruler”** of it. He was the man who would choose who led the prayers, who delivered the lessons, who did the various readings. Jairus was the **“official”** – a respected leader in the community, serving in a position of great influence.

However, as we discover in verse 42, Jairus has a daughter, and his daughter is at the point of death. Of course, as parents, we know that our little children have a way of getting sick all the time. We are always dealing with sniffles, and fevers, and ear infections – most children require some regular maintenance – but the situation here has become very serious. His 12-year old daughter (according to Mark’s account) is **“at the point of death.”** Or, as Dr. Luke says, **“she was dying.”** This was not something that could be fixed with a kiss on the forehead, this was not a situation where she just needed to stay home from school for a few days, but this young woman was quickly losing the battle with whatever very serious illness she was facing.

And so with that as background, please notice what happens in Luke 8:41. Jairus, the respected public official, pushes through the multitude of people, he makes his way through the crowds, and he falls down at the Lord’s feet and begins begging Jesus to come to his house. And I would emphasize here: This was a huge crowd. In verse 42, we find that the crowds were pressing against the Lord. Maybe you have had an experience like this. Normally we don’t get too crowded here in Madison – but maybe at a concert, maybe on a crowded city bus – we are talking here about a crowd so dense that people were actually pressing up against the Lord – there was barely any room to stand. And in the middle of that crowd, Jairus comes up and bows down before Jesus. Mark’s account tells us that Jairus **“entreated him earnestly.”** So here we have a respected community leader basically groveling in the dirt in the middle of this crowd of hundreds if not thousands of people.

I would suggest, therefore, that Jairus loved his daughter. Luke tells us that she was his **“only daughter.”** Putting all of this together, try to imagine what that prayer would have sounded like. This was not some kind of, “Oh, you know, if you have the time, Jesus, please stop by for a visit,” this was not some kind of well-worded flowery prayer with a bunch of fancy words, but this was more like, “Dear Lord, you have got to come save my daughter! My little girl is about to die, and you need to come and do something about it! Please, dear

Lord, come to my house!” Here was a father who was willing to do anything for his daughter. And most importantly for the purpose of our study this morning: Here was a father who was not ashamed to whatever he needed to do to bring Jesus to his daughter.

You might be thinking: Well, all he really did was go talk to Jesus. But what I haven’t pointed out yet is that the religious leaders from this area had already had some pretty serious run-ins with the Lord. Not too long before this, the Lord had healed a paralyzed man by saying to him, **“Your sins are forgiven”** (Matthew 9:2). That, of course, got the religious leaders all upset. On that occasion, they accused the Lord of blasphemy. Not long after that, the Lord called Matthew the tax collector as an apostle. You might remember that Matthew threw a party for his friends. The Lord attended that party, and in the aftermath, the religious leaders accused the Lord of eating and drinking with sinners. That was a pretty harsh accusation. It came from the religious leaders in Capernaum. I would point out that Jairus was a religious leader in Capernaum! He was the president of the synagogue. So, when Jairus fought his way through hundreds if not thousands of people and bowed down at the Lord’s feet, that was a big deal. He was not ashamed to do whatever he needed to do to get Jesus to come heal his daughter.

If we could think about that for just a moment: Fathers today are also responsible for connecting their children with God, even if the culture around us might frown on doing that. In modern times, sometimes we might think that the God stuff is mom’s responsibility, but according to the scriptures, the primary responsibility for religious training and instruction falls on fathers. We think of Paul’s words in Ephesians 6:4, **“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”** In other words, it’s not the mother’s responsibility, it’s not the church’s responsibility, but as fathers it is OUR responsibility to bring up our children in the Lord. Let us teach them to hate sin. Let us teach them to love God. By our example, let us teach them the difference between right and wrong. Let us teach them God’s plan for marriage. Let us not just teach them, but let us SHOW them the importance of Bible study. Let us show them the importance of prayer. Let us teach them and show them how to give. Let us take them to Bible class. As fathers, let us show them the importance of service – let us sign them up to prepare communion for a month or two. Let us take our children with us to visit those senior saints who might be stuck at home. Like Jairus, let us not be ashamed to do whatever is necessary to make that connection with the Lord. Our daughters may not be facing physical death right at this moment, but our love motivates us to be concerned about their spiritual life. Do you remember the father’s role in the first Passover back in Exodus 12? It was the father’s responsibility to kill that lamb and smear that blood on the doorposts of the house. If the father failed in that responsibility, the firstborn child would die. Again, the stakes for fathers today are so much higher. As fathers, we are responsible for the spiritual health of our children. First of all, then, Jairus loved his daughter enough to personally make sure that she was able to meet the Lord face to face.

- II. **There is something else that Jairus’ daughter saw in her father, and that is, she saw her father put his FAITH IN JESUS, even in what should have been a completely hopeless situation (verses 49-50).**

Going back to Luke 8, we have this other woman interrupt for a moment, the woman is healed, and as the Lord is still speaking, a messenger comes up and says to Jairus, **“Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher any more.”** This father obviously had faith that Jesus could heal his sick daughter, but now that his daughter had died, that obviously takes it to an entirely different level. Healing is one thing; raising someone from the dead is out of the question. If we could pause and think about something here for just a moment: We know from other passages that the Lord had the ability to heal people from a distance. With that in mind, why did the Lord hear the request from Jairus and then delay by dealing with this other woman long enough for

the little girl to die? In other words, why didn't the Lord heal this girl back in verse 42? If I am Jairus, I'm thinking: C'mon! My 12-year old daughter is about to die, and this woman has been bleeding for 12 years – what's another half hour! I don't know why the Lord didn't heal the girl first. But looking back on what actually happened, I am open to the possibility that God had something far better than a healing in mind.

But back to the text: When Jairus gets the news that his daughter had died, we don't have any of his words recorded. In my opinion, I don't think Jairus said anything. As I see it, Jairus had just been punched in the gut. Here he is in the middle of this huge crowd, he gets the message that his only daughter is dead, he is overwhelmed with emotion, and so the Lord steps in and says, ***“Do not be afraid any longer; only believe, and she shall be made well.”*** At this point, of course, Jairus has a choice to make. He can believe his friends and take the messenger's advice to leave the Lord alone, or he can put his trust in Jesus and bring the Lord into his home. Can you imagine the blessing Jairus would have missed if he had turned away at this point? He would have gone home to weep with his wife, and they would have spent the rest of the day burying their daughter. But thankfully, Jairus put his faith in Jesus, even in what should have been a hopeless situation. Yes, the situation got worse before it got better, but God eventually worked it out in the end. Jairus, then, was an example of faith, trusting in the Lord's words, ***“Do not be afraid any longer; only believe, and she shall be made well.”***

III. **There is something else Jairus' daughter saw in her father, and that is, she saw her father be AMAZED at something that God had done.**

So, Jesus and Jairus arrive at the house, there are all kinds of mourners outside, there is a huge crowd – Matthew refers to them as being in ***“noisy disorder.”*** Mark refers to them as ***“loudly weeping and wailing.”*** And when the Lord arrives, he refers to the child being asleep, and at that point the crowd breaks out in laughter. Jesus, though, enters the home with Peter, James, and John, along with Jairus, the mom, and the little girl. He then takes her by the hand and says, ***“Child, arise!”*** To me, it is interesting how Mark records this. Apparently, the actual words must have been so memorable, Mark gives us what Jesus actually said in Aramaic (the Hebrew dialect that Jesus actually spoke), ***“Talitha kum!”*** And I think there is a reason Mark puts it this way. As I see it, as the gospel was spread, those words remained untranslated. Those words became almost like a rallying cry, ***“Talitha kum!” “Child, get up!”*** The Lord did not use some fancy “abracadabra,” he did not use Greek (the language of commerce), he did not use Hebrew (the language of the synagogue), he did not use Latin (the language of government), but he used Aramaic, the common language of the people in this particular village. He used words, in fact, that this little girl had probably heard a hundred times before – while learning to walk, ***“Little girl, get up,”*** in the morning before school, ***“Little girl, get up.”***

We are told that Jesus took her by the hand, and in response to those words (and with the Lord's help), the little girl did get up! According to Mark's account, she got up and started to walk. What I love is how Jesus ***“gave orders for something to be given her to eat.”*** I guess being dead takes a lot out of you – you work up a good appetite being dead! I love that – I can see the parents just crying hugging this girl, and Jesus has to remind them – she is a growing girl, get this little girl some food!

And with that, the account closes with the statement in verse 56 that her parents were ***“amazed.”*** Mark says that they were ***“completely astounded.”*** Jairus' daughter saw her father be amazed! As parents (and as fathers in particular), I would suggest that we also need to let our children see us be amazed at God from time to time, in fact, on a regular basis. Our God is an amazing God. As Paul said in Ephesians 3:20-21, ***“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”***

Our children need to see us praise God and be amazed. They need to see us thank God for all that he has done for us. And that is certainly something that Jairus' daughter was able to see in her father.

Conclusion:

We do not know how long this little girl lived, but I would imagine that hardly a day went by without this young woman thinking to herself, "I am alive today because of my father. My father loved me enough to put his reputation on the line. My father put his faith in the power of Jesus to heal, even when I was already dead. And my father is a man who worshipped God in amazement for the rest of his life." For those of us who are fathers here this morning, loving our kids is not just giving them everything they ask for. Love is not providing them with all of the latest gadgets. Love is not a huge allowance. Love is not a new car on their 16th birthday.

But instead, according to God's word, love is bringing those children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Love is sitting down with our children and reminding them: In this family, we serve God. That means that God comes first in everything. Because we serve God, there are certain things we will and will not do. What a shame it would be to live together on this earth and then to be separated for eternity. In fact, I cannot think of anything worse than that, to be together here but to be separated there. Fathers, let us love our children by bringing them to Jesus. Let us put our faith in Jesus no matter what. And let us make sure that our children see us be amazed at what the Lord has done.

The Bible teaches that God sent his only Son as a sacrifice for our sins. His blood paid the price for our redemption. We accept that sacrifice, we accept that offer by turning away from sin and by allowing ourselves to be immersed in water so that our sins can be forgiven. This morning, if you are old enough to be held accountable for your sins, we are telling you: If you want to be saved, you must repent and be baptized. If you have any questions, please let us know. If you have something we need to pray about as a congregation, we would invite you to write it down and bring it to the front. We would be honored to go to God on your behalf. But if you are ready to obey the gospel right now, you can let us know as we sing this next song. Let's stand and sing...

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