

Luke 8:40-48 (1984 NIV)
Coming to Christ in Faith

40 Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. 41 Then a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house 42 because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying. 43 As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. 44 She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. 45 "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you." 46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me." 47 Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. 48 Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

Introduction

Our text today tells a story that is within another story. It is about how Jesus healed a sick woman as He was on His way to attend to a dying girl who was the daughter of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue.

Jairus evidently knew Jesus and had seen Him work wonders before. So he left his terminally ill daughter and found his way to Jesus with his story of sorrow. He "came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with Him to come to his house because his only daughter, a girl of about 12, was dying" (vv. 41-42).

Jairus had faith in Jesus whom he regarded as his hope for his helpless daughter. The Lord responded favourably to his plea because no human needs were beyond Him and His concern.

And so as the Lord went His way together with Jairus and His disciples, He had this encounter with an unnamed woman in our story today. She was suffering from a bleeding condition; she was in poor health.

This woman had spent much money to find a cure, but had not improved for the past 12 years. She realised that there were things that money could not guarantee, like health. She knew it was meaningless to have wealth but no health.

She was not allowed to go to any religious assembly because according to Jewish law, she was considered unclean. She experienced loneliness because of this ostracism not only by the Jewish community, but also by her own family.

However, this unfortunate woman stood out in our story today in very special ways.

- She stood out in the way she pushed her way to touch Jesus. It was a touch of faith—she came to Jesus with her need; touched Him in faith and was noticed by Him.
- She stood out in the way Jesus blessed her, perhaps with more than what she dared to hope for—she was healed physically AND spiritually.
- She stood out in the way she testified before others for the grace and power of the Lord upon her—she became a public witness for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The important thing for us to note in this story is that the Lord does not reserve His attention only to certain people, BUT to all who seek Him in faith. There is hope for the helpless because no human need is beyond the Lord and His concern.

Yes, Jesus is never too busy to notice us if we come to Him in faith. But on our part ...

I. There must first be a desire to come to Jesus in faith.

One way to make us desire this is not to allow our bad experiences to become bigger than Jesus.

- The woman had good reasons to be angry with life.
 - She had been sick for 12 long years. Doctor after doctor had come and gone, but none was able to cure her.
 - Her health was failing; her wealth had perhaps long gone; her fellowship with other Jews was missing because she was considered religiously and socially unclean.
- So this woman had good reasons to give up seeking for a cure; she might even have chosen to die than to live.
 - She could have allowed her bad experiences to blind her from seeing any more meaning or good in life.
- This woman also had good reasons not to trust Jesus.
 - Why should she believe that Jesus could heal her when so many for so long could not?
 - She had put her faith in so many others but they had all failed and disappointed her.
 - She could have allowed all these bad experiences to kill her desire to keep trying; to kill her desire to come to Jesus.
- However, one thing very special about this woman is that she didn't allow all her bad experiences to be bigger than Jesus.
 - She had heard of Him, and she heard He was passing through.
 - And she was willing to come to Him in faith.

There are many reasons why some people today are not coming to Jesus in faith.

- Suffering, fear, uncertainty, anxiety, disappointment, frustration, and unfulfilled needs are experiences that can deter people from coming to Jesus in faith.
- Some may think that if they have to go through such problems in life, then Jesus is not that caring of people and concerned about their life's challenges after all.
- Indeed, there are times when life can be so full of problems that we cry out, "Give me a break!"

Here is a story of a bricklayer who was hurt on the job and sent this email to his boss to request for sick leave. It reads:

I arrived at the job after the storm, checked the building out and saw that the top needed repairs. I rigged a hoist and a boom, attached the rope to a barrel and pulled bricks to the top. When I pulled the barrel to the top, I secured the rope at the bottom.

After repairing the building, I went back to fill the barrel with the leftover bricks. I went down and released the rope to lower the bricks, and the barrel was heavier than I and jerked me off the ground. I decided to hang on.

Halfway up, I met the barrel coming down and received a blow to the shoulder. I hung on and went to the top, where I hit my head on the boom and caught my fingers in the pulley.

In the meantime, the barrel hit the ground and burst open, throwing bricks all over. This made the barrel lighter than I, and I started down at high speed. Halfway down, I met the barrel coming up and received a blow to my shins.

I continued down and fell on the bricks, receiving cuts and bruises. At this time I must have lost my presence of mind, because I let go of the rope and the barrel came down and hit me on the head.

I respectfully request sick leave.

(<https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-4-confidence-crisis-2-chronicles-201-30>)

- Yes, there are times when problems do not merely trickle in, but seem to stampede into our lives. And when we allow our problems to become bigger than Jesus, we can only see these problems, BUT not the Lord.

Another way to make us desire to come to Jesus in faith is to exercise expectancy in Him.

- When the woman came to touch Jesus, she was putting her faith in Him, believing and expecting Him to do something.
- The word “touched” in v. 44 literally means “fastened upon”—i.e. she did not merely touch the edge of Jesus’ cloak, but she actually grabbed hold of it.
- It was a daring move on her part because she was forbidden by Jewish law to touch anyone in her supposedly unclean condition, lest she defiled someone.
- But in her agony and helplessness, she believed that if she could make contact with Jesus, she would be helped.
- And the Lord knew that she was coming to Him in faith.
 - He approved of her by calling her “daughter” in v. 48.
 - He addressed her like a father would to his child who came to him for help.

- A more important reason for calling her “daughter” was to declare before all that this outcast of society had been cleansed and accepted by the Heavenly Father because of her faith in His Son.
- This woman was not only healed physically, but also received God’s acceptance—she became whole in body and in spirit; henceforth, no one should call her unclean.

Like this woman, we need to come to Jesus with a sense of expectancy if we are to keep alive our desire to come to Him.

- If we come to Him expecting nothing to happen, we will get exactly that—i.e. nothing will happen.
- Of course when we come to Him expecting Him to do something, it does not mean He will always give us exactly what we ask.
- But He will certainly respond when we come to Him in faith according to His good and sovereign way.

In fact, often times Jesus meets our needs and blesses us not by first changing our situation, but by first changing us.

I once was in Thailand on a mission trip, and visited a woman who had been bed-ridden for 20 years. She had a bad fall when she was 19 and sustained a spinal injury.

I had expected her to be both angry and bitter when I first heard about her. So, I had wanted to comfort her with the hope of our bodily resurrection in Jesus Christ, using 1 Cor. 15.

To my surprise, I found her to be a very happy and peaceful person when we met. Though she had to stay in bed all these years, she worked hard at memorising the Bible verses that were pasted on the wall in her room. God’s Word had surely given her much comfort and peace.

In spite of her misfortune, she was able to accept her condition with the peace and hope that could only come from the Lord. In fact, when someone among us prayed that God would heal her and allow her to walk again, she looked somewhat confused. It’s as if she was trying to say, “It’s OK. I don’t need to walk again in order to have joy and peace.”

Yes, even though Jesus did not heal her disability, He did help her to live happily and peacefully. The Lord had not changed her condition, but He had certainly changed her and the way she viewed her disability.

Indeed, the Lord often acts this way because He wants us to be clear of what it means to come to Him in faith. It is to meet Him, not to manipulate Him. We are to come to Jesus with this kind of expectancy.

- We come with the expectancy of Him doing something in His way and time.

- We come with the expectancy to be blessed with eyes of faith that can see things as Jesus wants us to see them.

However, if we come to Jesus and expecting Him to do things our way all the time, we are not coming to meet Him but to manipulate Him. If we do so, then our desire to come to Jesus will only be as long as He is doing our bidding in our way all the time.

And this is one common reason why many have lost the desire to come to Jesus in faith today. We relate to the Lord as if we are entering a business, contractual relationship with Him—“Lord, I will do this if you will do that.” And when He does not do “that”, we see no obligation to come to Him anymore, or to commit in any way to Him anymore.

Jesus is never too busy to notice us if we come to Him in faith. We first need a desire to come to Him in faith. But having this desire alone is not quite enough. We need something else, and that is ...

II. There must also be a determination to come to Jesus in faith.

The woman in our text today had to push her way through the crowd in order to touch Jesus (vv. 24b, 27).

- It wasn't a very orderly crowd; people were pushing and shoving one another in order to get near to Jesus.
- In spite of her weak and sickly body, this woman fought her way through the crowd to touch Jesus—that's determination.
- The disciples themselves were also not very friendly since they wanted the Lord to hurry His way to save the life of Jairus's daughter. As far as they were concerned, Jesus had a more important task at hand—a human life was waiting to be saved.
- I can imagine them pushing and waving the people to back off so that Jesus would not be delayed.
- In spite of this unfriendly treatment from the disciples, this woman pressed on and managed to touch Jesus—that's determination.

We all need this kind of determination if we are to keep drawing close to Jesus. Our lives can be crowded with so many concerns that if we are not determined to fight through them, we face the danger of letting these crowd Jesus out of our lives.

What pressures or demands are pushing you and me further and further away from the Lord these days? We need to be determined to fight through them so that we can keep drawing close to the Lord.

Someone once wrote this little poem.

I got up early one morning and rushed right into the day;
I had so much to accomplish that I didn't have time to pray.
Problems just tumbled about me, and heavier came each task.
Why doesn't God help me? I wondered.

He answered, "You didn't ask."

I wanted to see joy and beauty, but the day toiled on, grey and bleak;
I wondered why God didn't show me.
He said, "But you didn't seek."

I tried to come into God's presence; I used all my keys at the lock.
God gently and lovingly chided, "My child, you didn't knock."

I woke up early in the morning, and paused before entering the day;
I had so much to accomplish that I had to take time to pray.

Drawing close to Jesus is often easier said than done, not because the Lord has no time for us. It is often that we do not make time for Him because of the many concerns that crowd our lives and demand our attention. Yes, you and I need the determination not to let these everyday concerns deter us from making our way to meet Jesus each day.

The woman was determined to fight through the crowd to touch the cloak of Jesus.

- There was nothing magical touching the cloak of Jesus.
- She did it in faith even though it was imperfect faith corrupted by some superstitious belief of that time.
- But Jesus even honoured her imperfect faith—He said to her in v. 48, "Your faith (not your superstition) has healed you."
- Unlike this simple woman, some people can be so cerebral in their faith journey that they say, "I must make sure that I can understand as much as I can before I come to Jesus in faith." These people often think that their faith must be fully and flawlessly understood by them before they can come to Jesus in faith because He only accepts those who come to Him in faith that is perfect.
- The woman in our text corrected this—she was determined to come to Jesus with the imperfect faith she had, and she did not escape the Lord's notice. The Lord knew she had come to Him with her need, even in her imperfect faith.
- Jesus asked in v. 45, "Who touched me?" This was not a question of ignorance, but a challenge to the woman to come forward boldly and proclaim publicly the Lord's grace and power in dealing with her and her need before all the people.
- The Lord was not too busy to notice her and attend to her needs because she was determined to come to Him, imperfect her life and faith might be.

What this means for us today is that we need not have to wait till we get our lives and faith straighten out before we can come to Jesus. In fact when that happens, we may become too proud and too self-righteous to come near to anyone, including Jesus.

You see, it is not so much you and I can come near to Jesus because of how good we are. Rather, we can come to Jesus only because of how gracious He is to accept us coming to Him just as we are—with our warts, brokenness and all.

Yes, we can come to Him just as we are now. And in His grace and power, we allow Him to work in and through us so that we can live out the life and faith that is pleasing

to Him. We can come to Him right now, just as we are; imperfect our lives and faith may be.

Conclusion

Jesus is never too busy to notice those who come to Him in faith. He is waiting for you and me to come to Him. Come to Him in faith with our needs and struggles, and be honest with Him today. There's nothing to hide from Him. In fact, it is futile to hide anything from Him. So might as well be honest with Him today with our needs and struggles.

There is hope for the hopeless and help for the helpless because no human needs and struggles are beyond the Lord and His concern. In fact, the whole of Luke 8 tells us of three persons who seem to have lost hope and help in life.

- The first is the man possessed by many demons (vv. 26ff). This man came to Jesus and found deliverance in Him.
- Then we see Jairus in our text today who came to Jesus in faith and seek Him to save his dying daughter.
- We also see this unnamed woman who came to Jesus, and found wholeness in body and spirit as the Lord honoured even her imperfect faith.

The Lord will always have time for those who come to Him in faith, even imperfect faith. He has room for you today; you will never be turned away because His time is never fully booked.

- If you are not yet a believer in Jesus Christ, will you come to Him today?
 - Expect Him to do something as He honours your act of faith in coming to Him.
 - He can change your situation, or He may choose to change you first so that you can see and deal with your situation with His hope and help for you.
- If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, will you ask Him to strengthen your desire and determination to come to Him in faith each day in the midst of the many pressures and demands in life?
 - Our journey of walking close to the Lord each day requires our devotion and commitment to make time and take time with Him.
 - Do not let the cares and concerns of the world crowd Him out of your life. You have so much to accomplish each day that you cannot afford not to make and take time to keep close to Him, even today.

Let's all seek to respond to the Lord as He speaks to us, calling us to come to Him in faith today. Amen!