

Peace to Those Far Off and Near

Introduction

The Text

⁴⁰ Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. ⁴¹ 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, ⁴² for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. As Jesus went, the people pressed around him. ⁴³ And there was a woman who 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. ⁴⁴ She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. ⁴⁵ 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!" ⁴⁶ But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me." ⁴⁷ 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. ⁴⁸ And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

⁴⁹ While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more." ⁵⁰ But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well." ⁵¹ 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. ⁵² And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." ⁵³ And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴ But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." ⁵⁵ And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. ⁵⁶ And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened. (Luke 8:40–56)

Two for One

- A. If you noticed, there are actually two miracle stories woven into our text for this morning—(1) the story of Jairus and his daughter; and (2) the story of this woman and her flow of blood.
 1. Now, I did not initially think I would deal with these two miracle stories in one and the same sermon, but as I investigated this text a bit further, I found that there is much insight to be gained when you keep them together.
 - a. Most of this will come out in the conclusion of this sermon and it's really the reason I titled it what I did: "Peace to Those Far Off and Near".
- B. When we move through the narrative here, I think four questions should start to rise to the surface as we consider ourselves in all of this: (1) Am I Desperate? (v. 43); (2) Am I Touching? (vv. 44-47); (3) Am I Hiding? (v. 48); and (4) Am I Waiting? (vv. 40-42, 49-56).

(1) Am I Desperate? (v. 43)

A Last-Ditch Effort

- A. Jesus has just finished up over on the east side of the Sea of Galilee in Gentile territory—where He healed that demonized man—and now He and His disciples have traveled back west to Galilee, where the crowds, we’re told, “were all waiting for Him” (v. 40).
- B. We first are introduced to this man Jairus, but then, in the middle Jesus’ attempt to help him, a woman breaks into the scene. And this woman, like Jairus, is desperate.
- C. Luke tells us that this woman has “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” (v. 43). Now let’s break that down a bit.
 1. Physically—She has “a discharge of blood”, or, in the Greek a “flow of blood”—probably referring to some sort of uterine hemorrhage that has her almost in this perpetual state of menstruation. So physically she’s sick, anemic, weak, perhaps even in pain.
 2. Financially—Luke tells us “she had spent all her living on physicians.” She’s bankrupted herself trying to get rid of this thing: “Is there anybody out there who can fix me?!”
 3. Religiously—Such a discharge would render her unclean by OT law (Lev 15:25-30), unable to participate in the things of the synagogue or temple.
 4. Socially—Because of this ritual uncleanness, there would also be social implications. According to Torah, no one could touch her—and not just her, but anything she touched.
 - a. It’s thought that, if she was married at one point, she’s likely been divorced by now. I mean the dude can’t put his arm around her, he can’t sit on the same couch as her, he certainly can’t be intimate with her. So it’s likely that he divorced her. And even if he stuck with her, everything about their relationship would have had to change.
 - i. This woman is the definition of social outcast.
 5. Emotionally—For starters, you’ve got to know she’s dealing with a strong sense of guilt and shame. “Everyone and everything I touch becomes filthy in God’s sight.”
 - a. And then we can only imagine the hopelessness of it all. “[F]or twelve years”. Sit on that for a moment.
 - i. And Luke tells us, though she spent all her money on physicians, “she could not be healed by anyone.” Mark, in his account, takes it a step further, writing that, at the end of it all, she “was no better but rather grew worse” (Mark 5:26).
- D. She’s as desperate as it gets. So desperate, it seems, she’s willing to make a run on the Savior even in the midst of this crowd. This is a daring move. This is a reckless move. This is last-ditch sort of move. “I’ve got one last shot. I’ve tried all the physicians. But I haven’t tried the Great Physician.”

E. And we should learn from her here. The poverty, the helplessness, the brokenness, the uncleanness—it's a reminder for us of where all humanity sits in relation to God because of our sin. We are more desperate for Him than we could ever know.

1. Do you come into this room aware of how desperate you are for grace?

(2) Am I Touching? (vv. 44-47)

Who Was It That Touched Me?

A. So this desperate woman makes a run on Jesus and we're told that "she came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased" (v. 44).

B. And then in vv. 45-46 we get this interesting exchange between Jesus and Peter. Jesus asks the question: "Who was it that touched me?"

1. And Peter finds it almost laughable: "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!" In other words: "Everyone is touching you Jesus. What do you mean: 'Who touched you'?!"

a. Then v. 46: "But Jesus said, 'Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me.'" "There is a difference Peter, between pressing in on Me, and truly touching Me."

Pressing or Touching?

A. Now we just need to say this: Some of us come in like this crowd. Maybe we're interested in Jesus, maybe we think He's kind of important or whatever, maybe we're just here because our mommy made us or daddy gave me that look and I don't want to be on daddy's bad side for the rest of the week.

1. But all this should cause us to pause a moment and ask ourselves: "I'm here, but am I really here?" Or to use the words of this text: "I'm pressing in on Jesus but am I really touching Him?"

B. Do you get the difference?

1. There is a whole lot of pressing in going on around Jesus but only one truly touched Him. Only one in the crowd was coming after Him like He was her only hope. Only one in the crowd felt desperate enough to lay it all on the line and grab hold. Only one in the crowd touched Him with what we might call the "touch of trust".

a. Mark tells us that she was having this sort of inner dialogue with herself as this was going on and here's what she was saying: "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well" (Mark 5:28).

C. Is anyone here with her this morning? Totally desperate and totally trusting. "I don't know exactly what Jesus is going to do here but I know He's going to do something."

Power Has Gone Out from Me

- A. Did you notice what Jesus says about this touch of trust? He says, in essence, it draws “power” (v. 46) out from Him. Now think about that for a moment.
- B. Sometimes I’m not sure we’re aware just how much power we have access to in Jesus. Faith, it seems from this text, can draw power from the person of Christ.
1. Now, I’m not talking about the name-it-and-claim-it brand of Christianity here, or the word of faith movement, like I should just be able to manifest in the name of Jesus what I want when I want it.
 - a. I’m not talking about opening up to my Wells Fargo account online, putting my hand on my computer and crying out: “In the name of Jesus, I declare right now, put a couple extra zeros at the end of my balance.”
- C. That’s not what’s going on here.
1. Sometimes God’s people go poor and live in holes in the ground (Heb 11).
 2. Sometimes they suffer and die (Rom 8).
 3. Sometimes we cry out to the Lord three times to remove the thorn in our flesh but He comes and says my grace is sufficient for you, my power is going to be worked out in your weakness (2 Cor 12).
- D. But there’s still “power” coming to us from Him through faith. Do we trust Him for that? Do we touch Him for that?
1. Jerry shared with you some of his story. I don’t have time to share with you mine. But know this: God brought me to Himself by breaking me physically. In mercy, He took me to that desperate place.
 - a. But here’s what I want you to hear: When I finally humbled myself and cried out to Him for help, He didn’t heal the physical stuff, but He moved in here—He was healing a brokenness I didn’t even know was there. And I was never the same again. Power went out from Him . . . and it saved me.
- E. And we have access to this power even now by faith. Am I touching Him this morning?

(3) Am I Hiding? (v. 48)

Hit and Run

- A. If you notice, Jesus doesn’t just let this woman hit and run. She was trying to sneak on Him, coming up from “behind” (v. 44), trying to stay “hidden” (v. 47), get healed and get out of there.
1. But He wouldn’t have it. His question—“Who was it that touched Me?” (v. 45)—calls her out of the crowd. And she comes back “trembling” (v. 47).

- B. My guess is she's afraid that she'll get in trouble. Unclean people don't touch others. How selfish could she be, transferring that stuff onto Him?
1. But this is not what Jesus is going to say. Quite the opposite. Her uncleanness hasn't transferred to Him, but His cleanness to her. And there's still more healing He hopes to transfer . . . to her heart.

Daughter?!

- A. I don't know if some of you might feel like you're destined to be a benchwarmer in the kingdom of God, second string, junior varsity.
1. You're content just getting a little grace and going home. You know God loves you, but you don't suppose He very much likes you. He certainly wouldn't want you near or to use you for great things.
- B. But this is precisely the sort of thinking Jesus is seeking to come against here with this woman. I just want to focus your attention on that first word: "Daughter" (v. 48).
1. Here we have the only place in the gospels where Jesus addresses a woman in this way. And, in light of where this woman has been, this word here ought to bring us to the floor.
- C. A word like this moves some things around inside of you does it not? When you come trembling before Him, loaded up with guilt and shame, sure you're going to get the back of His hand, and instead you're embraced as a cherished member of His family: "Daughter" (or "Son").
1. That speaks healing into your heart in a way nothing else can. No drug can get there; no career achievements; no amount of money; no relationship with some significant other. Nothing can do for your heart what this single word from Christ did for hers: "Daughter".
 - a. "You are in the family. Where you are broken, I will repair you. Where you are bankrupt I will provide for you. Where you are dirty, I will wash you. Where you are abandoned, I will welcome you. Where you are unloved, I will cherish you. Don't settle for mere physical healing. Don't just hit and run. I'm calling you into relationship with Myself."
- D. All of that and so much more is wrapped up in this little word: "Daughter." And He's saying it to us. There's no reason to hide anymore.

Reformation Sunday

- A. October 31, 2017 marks exactly 500 years since the beginning of what became the Protestant Reformation.
1. And, of course, one of the great gospel doctrines that was rediscovered for us during this exciting time was that of justification by faith alone—that I am made right with God, not in any way on the basis of my good works, but through faith alone in the good works of Christ.

- B. I can't think of a better illustration of this glorious doctrine than the text we have before us this morning. This forsaken woman, who has nothing to offer Christ but her own brokenness, is called by Him, "Daughter" and told in what follows: "your faith has made you well; go in peace" (v. 48).

(4) Am I Waiting? (vv. 40-42, 49-56)

Right on Time

- A. We can't forget that the story of this woman, as glorious as it is in and of itself, is actually a tangent, an interruption, a deviation from the task Jesus set out to do back in vv. 41-42.
1. While Jesus is healing this girl, Jairus has got to be getting a little worked up: "Calling this girl daughter, that's all well and good, but what about my daughter?! Did you forget that she's dying?!" And then word comes to him: "She's dead."
- B. Have you ever seen God doing stuff in other's lives and thought: "Come on Jesus how about a little bit of that in mine? What's up with that? I know I'm supposed to rejoice with those who rejoice, but what about me? Have you forgotten about me?"
1. No. He hasn't forgotten, no matter how distracted or distant He seems. He's always right on time.
- C. It looks like it's the end of the line for Jairus and his daughter, but Jesus keeps moving on towards the house. And when He arrives, He comes upon all these people that have gathered to mourn and He has the audacity to say to them: "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping" (v. 52).
1. They laugh. They think He's insane. But we come to find out that, for Jesus, even something as final as death is mere sleep.
 - a. I have a harder time waking Bella in the morning for school than Jesus does waking this little girl up from death. Everyone thought it was over and He's just like: "Oh, you're crying for that little girl? Well, let Me just go wake her up . . . 'Child, arise' (v. 54)."
- D. Keep waiting on Jesus brother/sister. He hasn't forgotten you. He's always right on time.

Tell No One

- A. The closing command He gives to the parents of this little girl might throw us a bit at first, but it actually directs our attention to something very significant: "He charged them to tell no one what had happened" (v. 56).
- B. Here's what we have to remember. Around Israel at this time, there was this excitement building around Jesus that maybe He was going to bring in the kingdom in their day, maybe He was going to make everything better for them here and now.

1. There was little conception of the cross or the deeper mission of the Messiah to save people from their sins. In fact, such a thing was an offense to them.
 - a. They like the miracles, but Jesus has come to be so much more than a miracle-worker. He's come to be Savior . . . of the world.
- C. All these miracles during His earthly ministry were meant to point people towards the greater work of salvation He could only bring in by way of the cross.
 1. The ultimate healing of this woman's flow of blood will require the Savior's blood to flow. The ultimate resurrection of this Jairus' only child will require the death and resurrection of God's only child.
 - a. If He doesn't go to the cross after this, He has effectively done nothing for these people. This woman will still die in her sin. This little girl may grow up to live for a few more decades, but she will fall breathless to the dust again.
 - i. It is only in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ that true and ultimate salvation is found.
- D. So He says: "Listen, if these miracles are distracting people away from what they really need. Keep it quiet for now. Until 'It is finished' (John 19:30)."

Conclusion

Peace to Those Far Off and Near

- A. Now I said back in the beginning that there was a particular insight to be gained by keeping these two stories together. It's this that I want to leave you with now.
- B. When we look closely here, what we notice is that these two individuals who have come desperate for Jesus' help, couldn't be more different from one another.
 1. Jairus, we're told, is: "a ruler of the synagogue" (v. 41). He's the man responsible for organizing and leading in the local place of worship. He is a man of standing in the Jewish community. He's likely a Pharisee. He is on the in.
 2. This, woman, on the other hand, as we've already clearly established, was about as far out as you could get.
 - a. But both are brought together in Christ.
- C. We have here, then, this wonderful picture of what Jesus is up to in the church. Paul would say in Eph 2:17 that Jesus "came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near."
 1. In the church, He's bringing a people together from all over the map.

D. Isn't that true of us in this room?

1. Some of us were raised in the church. You know the stories. You know the verses. You've just always been near to the things of God. And somewhere in that God broke you, brought you desperate to Himself, and saved you.
2. But for others of us, this is all new and, honestly, a little scary. You still struggle to feel like you really belong here. Your backstory is all dark and twisted. There's still guilt and shame for the places you used to frequent, the people you used to run with, the stuff you used to do. And yet, somewhere in that God broke you, brought you desperate to Himself, and saved you.

E. You see, Christ, in this room, is preaching peace to those who are far off and those who are near. He's bringing the most unlikely people together, and gathering us as one around the cross.