

“Talitha Cumi - Damsel Arise”

Luke 8:40-42, 49-56

This morning we are going to finish looking at this account found at the end of Luke 8 that we began last week. Last week we focused on the healing of the unnamed woman in verses 43-48. Today we will focus on Jairus and his daughter. Like last week, our focus will be on faith: the exercise of faith, the trial of faith, and the triumph of faith.

I. The Exercise of Faith (v. 40-42)

In verse 40, as we saw last week, Jesus returned from the other side of the sea of Galilee and the people of Galilee gladly received him. They had been waiting for him. They welcomed Him when He returned. With their mouths they honored Him, though we will soon see that their hearts were far from Him.

In verses 41 and 42 we are introduced to Jairus and his plight. Verse 41 begins, “there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue.” A ruler in the synagogue was an important position. He had various responsibilities related to the worship services that happened in the synagogues. The fact that Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue indicates that he was well-known and highly respected in the community.

It's also very likely that he had already had some interactions with Jesus. Archeology indicates that there was only one synagogue in Capernaum, and Jesus had ministered in that synagogue. Back in Luke 4:31 we read that Jesus "came down to Capernaum . . . and taught them on the sabbath days." This teaching would have most likely occurred, at least in part, in the synagogue. The synagogue is where the people would gather on the Sabbath days and the synagogue is also where copies of the Scriptures were kept.

Jesus also worked at least one miracle in that synagogue. Luke 4:33-37 tell us of a demon-possessed man who was delivered by Jesus in the synagogue in Capernaum. Because of his position as a ruler of the synagogue, it is almost certain that Jairus was present when Jesus performed this miracle.

This was a man who had first-hand knowledge about Jesus and his ministry. He had almost certainly heard Jesus teach and seen Jesus perform miracles because Jesus had come to his synagogue. But now in our text we see Jairus go to Jesus.

Verse 41 goes on to tell us that he fell down at Jesus' feet. Though he was a ruler in the synagogue, a very important man in that city, well-known and highly respected, when he came before Jesus to make a petition he fell down at His feet. The parallel account in Matthew 9:18 says, "There came a certain ruler, and worshipped him." There is no indication that Jairus would have been worshipping Jesus as God at this point. Rather, his behavior toward Jesus at this point shows respect and reverence for Jesus as a prophet of God.

Luke's account does not tell us what Jairus actually said to Jesus. The end of verse 41 simply says he "besought him that he would come into his house." And the reason for this request is found in verse 42, "For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying."

Mark's account tells us what he said: "My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live." (Mark 5:23)

Jairus' daughter was at the point of death. She may have been in the throes of death when he heard of Jesus' return and rushed to Him to beg him to come to his house. His daughter's condition was desperate. Without hope. But Jairus believed that Jesus could heal her. What all Jairus knew or believed about Jesus at this point is not clear. But this we know: he had faith that Jesus could heal his daughter.

Compare Jairus to another person we saw earlier in Luke's gospel: the centurion in Luke 7:2-10. In many ways they were very similar. They were both important, well-respected members of the community. They both had someone dear to them who was at the point of death. And they both believed that Jesus had the power to heal that person and restore them to health.

But notice also some differences. The centurion was not a Jew. He had helped the Jews build a synagogue, The Jews considered him a good man. You will remember that they told Jesus that he was "worthy" of a miracle. But he was

not a Jew. Jairus was a Jew. And not only a Jew, but a prominent man in the local synagogue. He was very devout. He would have been familiar with the Old Testament scriptures. And as we have already mentioned, he was much more likely to have first-hand knowledge about Jesus Christ and His ministry: the gospel he preached and the miracles he performed.

If you were to separate these two men from the accounts we have of them in Scripture, you would think that Jairus' faith would be greater. He appears more devout. He had greater access to the Scriptures. He most likely had first-hand knowledge about Jesus. Yet it was the centurion's faith that was remarkable.

Listen to what the centurion said to Jesus in Luke 7:6-8. He did not go to Jesus himself, but sent friends to Jesus with this message, "Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."

The centurion said to Jesus: "I am not worthy. You have authority. You don't need to come to my house. Just say the word and my servant will be healed." In response to this profession of faith Jesus marveled and said in Luke 7:9, "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Now compare that to Jairus in our text. He had faith that Jesus could heal his daughter. He said to Jesus, “Come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.” (Mark 5:23) But he didn’t talk about Christ’s authority or power. He didn’t say, “Your word is sufficient. Just say the word and my daughter will be healed.” He asked for Jesus to come and lay His hands upon her.

As we look at these events from a distance of 2000 years and analyze every nuance we might be tempted to look down our noses and berate Jairus for his lack faith. Shame on you Jairus. Why couldn’t you be more like Mr. Centurion? You should have been better. You had greater revelation. Didn’t you know that Jesus could simply speak and heal your daughter? He didn’t need to go to your house. He didn’t need to lay his hands on your daughter to heal her. What kind of pathetic faith is this? I’d be surprised Jairus if Jesus even gave you the time of day. I’m exaggerating to make a point. We might not be so direct, but this is often the way we think about people and faith and our relationship with God. Faith that is not marvelous, like the faith of the centurion, is it even worth having?

Look at how Jesus responded to Jairus. Jesus did not challenge him on this point. Jesus did not rebuke him for a lack of faith. Jesus did not correct Jairus and tell him about His power and authority: that He could simply heal with a word. What did Jesus do? The end of verse 42 tells us: “But as He went the people thronged Him.” Jesus went with Jairus to help him and to heal his daughter.

We learn from Jesus' response to both the centurion and Jairus that strong faith will be rejoiced in, and weak faith will not be rejected. You may not have all the faith you desire, but do not let that discourage you from prayer.

The Bible does not say, "Seek ye the Lord *when your faith is strong*," but rather, "Seek ye the Lord *while he may be found*." (Isaiah 55:6).

Jesus did not preach, "*Those with great faith*, repent and believe the gospel;" but rather, "Repent *ye*, and believe the gospel." (Mark 1:15)

Paul did not preach in Acts 17:30, "God . . . now commandeth all men *of great faith* to repent;" but rather, "God . . . now commandeth all men *every where* to repent."

The Bible does not say, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of *great faith*;" but rather, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of *need*."

If you feel your faith is weak or insufficient, do not be discouraged. Any true faith is a gift of God. Don't bury your gift. It is not the strength of your faith, but the object of your faith that matters. Look to Jesus Christ. Call out to Him.

Your faith may be weak, but a weak faith will not be rejected. In every area we are deficient, but Christ is sufficient. It is not the strength of our faith that saves, but the strength of our Savior so that in all things He would receive praise and honor and glory for all eternity.

So far this morning we have seen Jairus come to Jesus in his time of need. Jesus did not marvel at his faith, but Jesus also did not reject him. Though his faith may not have been as strong as the faith of another, yet it was fixed on Jesus Christ. He exercised his faith in Jesus Christ. But his faith would be tried. In verses 49-50 we see the trial of faith.

II. The Trial of Faith (v. 49-50)

In Luke 8:43-48 we have the account of the unnamed woman that we studied last week. As Jesus made His way through this crowd of people that thronged Him while He was on His way to the home of Jairus, this woman came up behind him and touched him. Then Jesus stopped and asked, “Who touched me?” And we saw last week the interaction that followed between Jesus and Peter, and then Jesus and this woman. But what we did not consider last week was that in the midst of all this Jairus was waiting for Jesus.

Have you ever been in a rush to go somewhere or get something done and there is someone who is slowing you down? Maybe you have had this experience with one of your children or a niece or a nephew. You are walking somewhere with them, you are in a hurry, but all of the sudden they stop to look at a flower or a bug or a stick or a rock. You didn’t even notice this thing because you have other things on your mind. But they have a whole other set of priorities and so they saw this thing and they stopped to look at it.

So it was for Jairus and Jesus. Jairus' priority was to get Jesus to his home quickly, before his daughter died, so that Jesus could heal her. Jesus' priority was to do the will of the Father, and the will of the Father was for Jesus to stop and have this interaction with this woman.

I wonder how Jairus felt when Jesus stopped. Imagine if you had a daughter who was sick to the point of death. The child was nearly gone. You knew that time was short, but you had Jesus with you. He was coming to heal your daughter. You rushed to get through this crowd to get back to your daughter, but then suddenly Jesus was gone.

Where did he go?

He stopped. And what's more, He stopped to talk to someone who has already been healed. Were we in Jairus' position we might be tempted to say, "Lord, I appreciate your concern, but this woman isn't dying. My daughter is dying. Time is of the essence. You can come back and talk to this woman later, but please, come and heal my daughter." We are not told what Jairus was thinking during the events recorded in Luke 8:43-48, but verse 49 tells us what happened while Jesus was speaking to this unnamed woman.

Jairus received the news that his daughter had died. (Read v. 49). If you have ever received news like that you know it can be hard to process. The faint glimmer of hope that Jairus had was snuffed out. His daughter was dead. He was too late.

He no longer needed to hurry Jesus to his home. As the messenger said, “Trouble not the Master.”

We need to guard against this attitude. How often do we go to Jesus in a time of need or crisis, but when the crisis is past or the situation seems beyond any remedy we think, “I won’t trouble Jesus with this any more.” We might not actually say that, or even form that thought in our heads, but it comes out in our actions. We stop praying. We stop seeking the Lord. Where we had been desperate and earnest, we become apathetic and resigned. I don’t know the details about every difficult circumstance you are facing, but I do know whatever your troubles are, you can bring them to the Master. “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” (I Peter 5:7)

What did Jairus say when he received word that his daughter had died? How did he react? We are not told. Maybe he cried out, maybe he was stunned, maybe he began to weep. The only indication we have of how Jairus responded is found in the words of Jesus in the following verse.

In verse 50 Jesus spoke to Jairus. Verse 50 begins, “But when Jesus heard it.” Though Jesus had stopped to speak to the woman who was healed, he was still attentive to what was happening with Jairus. As we saw last week, Jesus did not need to be informed about these events. He knew what was going to take place. And He knew that God the Father would use this for His glory.

Things that we see as tragedies do not surprise God and they do not derail His plans. Our view is so limited. There are so many things we don't understand and can't understand. We do not have the thoughts of God nor the ways of God. Isaiah 55:8-9, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

We don't need to understand what God is doing in all the circumstances of our lives in order to trust Him. We don't need to understand everything about God in order to trust Him. The gospel is enough. God's authority, power, goodness, righteousness, holiness, justice, mercy, love, patience, kindness: all these things and more are demonstrated in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If you are facing something in your life that you can't understand, don't make an idol out of it. Don't put it above God. Don't say, "Because I can't understand this or how God could use this or why God has allowed this, I can't trust God." That's making an idol out of your troubles.

The question of God's love for you is settled in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Don't look to your troubles. Look to the cross of Jesus Christ and be not faithless, but believing.

"When Jesus heard it." He heard about Jairus' troubles. He was aware, and He was in control.

Now look at what Jesus said to Jairus in verse 50: “Fear not.” This is the only indication we have of how Jairus responded to the devastating news that his daughter was dead. As soon as Jesus heard what was said, He turned to Jairus and said, “Fear not.”

So often fear is our first response to troubles and trials. Something bad happens and the immediate temptation is to give way to fear. Going back to the parable of the soils, this is one of the ways that the cares of this life try to choke out faith.

Jairus was at a critical junction at this moment. Would his faith stand the trial or would it be choked out? At this critical moment Jesus encouraged him with this command, “Fear not.” “Fear not” is the most common command in Scripture. We are by nature inclined to fear. Before the fall, there was no fear. There was nothing to be afraid of. Sin brought fear into God’s creation and fear is a powerful force. But once again, we are to look to the gospel and there we see a greater force: love. I John 4:18 tells us, “Perfect love casteth out fear.” Fear not.

Jesus continued in verse 50, “Believe only, and she shall be made whole.” Jairus had come to Jesus when the situation with his daughter was desperate. The situation now appeared hopeless, but Jesus encouraged Jairus with this promise: “Believe only, and she will be made whole.” If you believe, what cause have you to fear? What limit is there to the power of God? When we are resting in the promises

of God's Word we can boldly confess like the faithful Hebrews before King Nebuchadnezzar, "Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us." (Daniel 3:17). God delights in accomplishing the impossible on behalf of His people to demonstrate His power for His honor and glory.

We are not told what Jairus said to Jesus or how he responded. But we do know this: his faith did not fail. With Christ's command came the power to obey. Jairus did not give place to fear. He did not give in to despair. Though his daughter was dead and the cause seemed hopeless, he believed Jesus and we know he believed because he continued. He did not send Jesus away. They continued on together to his house.

Once again we see that true faith doesn't always look strong and impressive. Sometimes it is all we can do to put one foot in front of the other. But true faith persists. Believing the promises of God, trusting Him, we obey. This is a life of faith.

We have seen the exercise of faith. Jairus went to Jesus, believing that Jesus could heal his daughter.

We have seen the trial of faith. Jairus received word that his daughter had died. But he did not give way to fear or despair. Jesus said to him, "Fear not, believe only, and she shall be made whole." Though his faith may have faltered, it did not fail. True faith persists in the midst of trials and the faith of Jairus remained.

Now, in the last few verses of Luke 8 we see the triumph of faith.

III. The Triumph of Faith (v. 51-56)

Verse 51 tells us that Jesus chose witnesses for this miracle. Remember, a large crowd was pressing in upon Jesus as he made his way to this home, but when he arrived He sent them away. Most of the disciples also had to wait outside. Jesus only allowed Peter, James, and John to enter along with the parents of this girl.

Some critics have suggested that Jesus sent the crowds away because He didn't want to expose this miracle to their scrutiny, but there's no reason to believe that. Jesus raised both the widow's son and Lazarus in public, before crowds of people.

It seems that on this occasion, Jesus limited the number of people present out of care and concern for this family. Their daughter was dead. The mourning had already begun. You can imagine how difficult this time was for Jairus and his wife. They are still dealing with the initial shock of their daughter's death. Jesus had no interest in making a spectacle out of this family's tragedy. He was going to work a miracle on their behalf, but it was sufficient for the time that only a small number were present as witnesses. Jesus even instructed the parents in verse 56 not to tell anyone what had happened. 2000 years later we read this account and rejoice in the miraculous power demonstrated by Jesus Christ, but at the time these three disciples and the parents of this girl were a sufficient number of witnesses.

I also want to point out that this is the first time we see these three disciples: Peter, James, and John singled out by Jesus to witness something the other disciples did not get to witness. These three formed an inner-circle, even among the 12. Jesus would interact with these men separately several times throughout His earthly ministry. This is the first record of that special interaction recorded for us in Luke's gospel.

Another reason why Jesus may have turned some of the multitude away is seen in verses 52 through the first part of verse 54 where we see the hostile reaction of the mourners. Again, the mourning had already started. Verse 52 begins, "And all wept, and bewailed her." There may have been other family members and friends present who were mourning the death of this child. But from Matthew's account we know that there were also professional mourners present.

This was a part of Jewish mourning since ancient times. Professional mourners are mentioned in the Old Testament. These mourners were often musicians and would go to a home where someone had just died and some of them would play their instruments while others would weep and wail.

The professional mourners in our text had beaten Jesus to the home of the bereaved. By the time Jesus arrived, they had already started wailing. It is likely that news had spread that this little girl was sick unto death and they had been standing by to begin mourning as soon as she died.

When Jesus came he brought them good news. Look at what he said in verse 52, “Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.”

Jesus often used language like this to refer to people who were dead. Jesus said of Lazarus after he had died, “He sleeps.” Applied particularly to this little girl, what a comfort these words should have been. She would not remain dead. Jesus would soon restore her to life and full health. To those who knew her and loved her it would be as if she had only slept for a short time.

The words of Jesus could be applied to all believers who die: “Weep not; they are not dead, but sleepeth.” As Christians we do not sorrow as those that have no hope. To die is but to rest from the toils of this life and to be with Christ. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. And we will not remain dead. There is coming the day of resurrection. These mortal bodies will be raised immortal. Christ’s work of salvation will be perfected in every sphere. Jesus defeated sin and death. Not even our physical bodies will be left under the consequences of sin. Our bodies will be raised again, to the glory of God.

“Weep not, she is not dead, but sleepeth.” What comforting words from Jesus. How well they must have been received.

Look at verse 53, “And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.” They laughed him to scorn. Their mourning was turned to laughter. However it was not laughter of joy, but rather of derision. “What fool is this who says a dead person is sleeping?” They had seen the girl. They knew she was dead.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:6, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.” Jesus had cast these pearls of comfort and encouragement before this crowd of mourners, but they trampled them under foot and turned upon Jesus.

Jesus did not try to convince these scorers. He had not come for their sake. He had come to help this girl. He had given them good news. They rejected it and scorned the messenger. So Jesus made them leave. The first part of verse 54 tells us, “He put them all out.”

When the mourners had been put out, Jesus turned to the girl. Verse 54 tells us He “took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.”

Touching a dead body was a defiling act under the Mosaic law. If you touched a dead body you became ritually unclean. Numbers 19:11, “He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.”

Jesus touched a dead body. Under the Mosaic Law Jesus was now cut off from the ceremonial part of the Law for seven days. Under the Law to be unclean was to be separated from the ritual and ceremony of the Law. But those things were only a shadow. The substance of the Law had come and was standing in that room in the person of Jesus Christ. When Jesus touched this girl she did not make him unclean. When Jesus touched this girl He gave her life.

Once again, we see Jesus demonstrated by his actions that He was the fulfillment of the Law, and by extension He showed that the gospel He preached was the fulfillment of the Law. Superior to it in every way as substance is superior to shadow.

When Jesus said, "Maid, arise." What happened? Look at verse 55, "And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat." Jesus had told her to do what she had no power to do. She was dead. She had no ability to arise. But Christ's power accompanied the command. She arose. Not in her own power, but in the power of Jesus Christ who mercifully worked on her behalf.

Now look at the reaction of Jairus and his wife in verse 56. They were astonished. This is the triumph of faith.

We have seen the exercise of faith: Jairus came to Jesus, believing that Jesus could heal his daughter. We have seen the trial of faith: Jairus received word that his daughter had died. In that moment of crisis Jesus encouraged his faith and Jairus pressed on. And now we see the triumph of faith.

Jesus did what He had said He would do. He had made Jairus' daughter whole. In a marvelous demonstration of His power He restored life to this girl. And Jairus was astonished. Not at his faith, but at the work of Jesus Christ.

Look back over your life and consider what God has done. Can you join Jairus and be astonished? Not at your faith, but at the work of Jesus Christ? Be

astonished at your salvation. Be astonished at your sanctification. Be astonished at the the promises of God. Be astonished at the faithfulness of God. Our faith is never triumphant because of something we do, but because of what Jesus Christ has done.