

I am not sure where I first heard the story that I am about to tell... but probably some of you have also heard it – before...

Chippie the parakeet never saw it coming. One second he was peacefully perched in his cage. The next he was sucked in... washed up... and blown over. ... The problems began when Chippie's owner decided to clean Chippie's cage with a vacuum cleaner. ... She removed the attachment from the end of the hose and stuck it in the cage. ... The phone rang... and she turned to pick it up. ... She'd barely said "hello" when "**ssssopp!**" ... Chippie got sucked into the vacuum.

The bird owner gasped... put down the phone... turned off the vacuum... and opened the bag. ... There was Chippie — still alive... but stunned. Since the bird was covered with dust and soot... she grabbed him and raced to the bathroom... turned on the faucet... and held Chippie under the running water. ... Then... realizing that Chippie was soaked and shivering... she did what any compassionate bird owner would do ... she reached for the hair dryer and blasted the pet with hot air. ... Poor Chippie never knew what hit him.

A few days after the trauma... the person who'd initially written about the event contacted Chippie's owner to see how the bird was recovering. "Well," she replied, "*Chippie doesn't sing much anymore. He just sits and stares*"... Ya think???! ... It's hard **not** to see why. ... Sucked in... washed up... and blown over ... That's enough to steal the song from the strongest heart.

Yes... trials can be traumatic. You may feel like Chippie sometimes... but as the psalmist stated... our problems can also draw us closer to the Lord.

**Psalm 119:67 (ESV)**

<sup>67</sup> *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word.*

**Psalm 119:71 (ESV)**

<sup>71</sup> *It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.*

Those verses indicate that the main purpose of any affliction... is for God to be glorified in it. He may allow a trial in your life so that the Lord would be glorified by you. That puts a whole new perspective on trials. Look how John 9:3 affirms that this is true... when the discussion centered around a man who had been born blind...

**John 9:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> *Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.*

God allows hardship in a believers life so that He can develop our faith by showing that His grace is sufficient for our most difficult trials. We must have certainty in knowing that nothing is too great for Him. ... We can believe that He will see us through **ANYTHING** that appears hopeless.

**Luke 8:40-56**

Today we come to two more hopeless situations (impossible conditions) that people brought to Jesus. Just before today's passage... we have already seen two situations (here) in Luke chapter 8... where Jesus challenged those who came to Him to believe in Him with their hardship. God is sufficient. He may not ALWAYS deliver us OUT OF the circumstances – but He will always walk us through them. ... Luke 8:40–56 gives us a wonderful portrait of this.

As Jesus came ashore from a trip to the Gentile region of the Decapolis... the needs of two very different women demanded His attention. One was the daughter of a **prominent leader** in the Jewish community - the other **an anonymous social outcast**. ... Would He *favor* the one promising greater social and political advantage? ... Or would He *assist the helpless* ... at the risk of alienating powerful friends? ... Would class distinctions carry any weight at all with Jesus? ... (And) How is Jesus going to prioritize which need comes first? Would Jesus address the most pressing need... and leave the less urgent for later? Does God ever prioritize MY needs above yours... or yours above mine? ... .. No!

Our text today is about God meeting the need of a woman who had been hemorrhaging for 12 years... and the meeting the need of a 12 year old girl by raising her from the dead. ... twelve years is a common element to them both – but perhaps even more significant is the common elements in both situations of – “*desperation*” and “*fledgling faith*.”

On the one hand... we will see Jesus focus on a woman who had been suffering from a disastrous hemorrhage for twelve LONG years. The hemorrhage had rendered her ceremonially unclean according to the directives of Leviticus 15 - which meant that she would make anyone unclean simply by coming in contact with her — or even by what she touched. ... If she had been married... she was likely now *divorced* from her husband. ... If she had any family – they could not be around her. She was ostracized from normal society and barred from worship in the temple and the like.

Her situation had driven her to pursue medical help... and as Mark's parallel account says, "*She had **suffered** a great deal under the care of many doctors*" (Mark 5:26). The Jewish *Talmud* lists no less than **eleven** cures for this specific illness. ... Some were potions... but others were superstitious folly. ... For example:

*"Take of the gum of Alexandria the weight of a small silver coin; of alum the same; of crocus the same. Let them be bruised together, and given in wine to the woman that has an issue of blood. If this does not benefit take of Persian onions three pints; boil them in wine, and give her to drink, and say 'Arise from your flow problem.' If this does not cure her, set her in a place where two ways meet, and let her hold a cup of wine in her right hand, and let some one come behind and frighten her, and say, 'Arise from your flow problem.' "*

Very likely this woman had tried some of these remedies... but nothing worked. ... The Gospel writer (Mark) says she "*had spent **all she had**, yet instead of getting better she grew worse*" (Mark 5:26). The poor woman was broke... cut off from home... society... and religion... and in declining health. ... She could not have been (or felt) any lower.

In marked contrast... was the prominent family of Jairus ("a ruler of the synagogue.") He was a powerful man of high stature... a man of **substantial prestige**. ... But he was in equally desperate need. His twelve-year-old daughter was dying. She was "his only daughter"... his joy — and now that sweet life was about to be snuffed out. ... We parents would do anything to save our children... and Jairus undoubtedly thought (like any loving parent) "*Take **my** life - not hers.*"

Here we have two desperate representations of life. One was well-off... the other poor ... One was accepted... the other was excluded. ... One was with family and loved ones... the other was alone. ... But **both** were

beyond human help. ... For twelve years the girl and the woman had led such different lives... but now... in their adversity... they would both be recipients of God's life-giving power. This would be true – even though BOTH situations involved a fledgling (IMPERFECT) faith... that we will see Jesus develop. ... This is a story about a man... his daughter... and a woman — but really it is a story about God.

### **Luke 8:40-42**

Jesus has just returned from a place where the people told Him to get out. (They were pretty upset about all those pigs drowning in the Sea of Galilee.) When Jesus returned to Capernaum... the people were thrilled to have Him home. They “gladly received” the Lord... (most of them) probably with the anticipation as if the circus came back to town. Word had spread that His show was pretty good.

Earlier in Luke chapter 8... we saw that Jesus had left the shores of Capernaum to escape the crowds... and in the interval He had calmed a raging storm... and then delivered a man from the grasp of a legion of demons. ... (Now) we see that He returned... and a vast crowd swarmed the shore to greet Him... and to see what other miracles He might do. It was a dangerous... jostling... noisy crowd. But it was silenced momentarily by an extraordinary spectacle. ... Prostrated before Jesus **was the leader of the synagogue**... (a highly honored man – who was groveling at Jesus' feet)) pleading with Jesus to come and heal his dying daughter.

Jairus had not been known to be friendly toward Jesus. He (no doubt) knew that Jesus had been accused of heresy by other synagogues. ... Controversy had already happened in this synagogue (here in Capernaum.) ... So Jairus' huge sign of submission and humility to Jesus

was indeed amazing! ... (And) please remember that (by this time) the rest of the Jewish religious leaders were plotting to **kill** Jesus.

So we cannot suppose that Jairus had become a sudden devotee to Jesus... or that he was a man of strong faith. The fact was... that he was desperate. ... No doubt... he had heard of Jesus' miracles (maybe had even seen some)... and possibly had met some who had been healed. He was (probably) not at all sure about Jesus... but Jesus was his only chance.

So with his bare flicker of faith... he fell prostrate before the Savior. Jairus was like so many who have come to Christ. It was not his love for Christ that brought him — it was **not** what he hoped to do for Christ — it was his desperation... and a glimmer of hope. ... Despair is commonly the prelude to grace.

Jairus' situation was dire... and Jairus' incipient faith would bring great rewards. Even if you have a flawed faith — you should still come to Jesus — and allow Him to make your faith stronger. Hebrews 12:2 tells us that Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith. ... Don't give a care to what your contemporaries... friends... or family members think or say. ... Place your focus entirely on the Lord and what **He** thinks.

Jesus responded to Jairus' urgent plea by immediately starting out to go with him. But as we see in the second part of verse 12... there was a huge crowd that impeded each and every step. ... The word for “pressed” (“pressed around Him”) is word ***sumpnigo {soom-pnee'-go}*** which means “to press around someone so as to almost suffocate them.” This was a

sardine situation. If you got stuck in this mob... you would have had difficulty breathing because of the pushing and shoving of the people.

I can just hear (and you probably can too) the inner voice inside Jairus that must have been SCREAMING. "*Step aside – step aside – we have no time to lose!*"

But we are about to see that Jesus was **not** so flustered. He would get to Jairus's house in God's good time. God is always right on time. His ways are perfect. He orders the sun... moon... and stars in their journeys with mathematical precision so that we can foretell to the very moment when the sun will rise... the phases of the moon... and the appearing of a comet.

### **Luke 8:43**

To Jairus' awful dismay... everything came to a halt... for there was another desperate person there that day - an unknown woman with a hemorrhage. As if his frustration with the multitude was not enough... now came another distraction.

Other Gospel accounts help us see more clearly that the timing of the delay was at a very critical time. The woman came just as Jesus began on His way for an urgent case. Humanly speaking... we would say "it came at the worst possible time for Jairus."

She has a serious bleeding problem that is related to her menstrual cycle. This would leave her physically weak... in pain... and disgraced from the embarrassing hygienic problems that would be apparent anytime she went out in public. Anytime... anyplace... she could have a mishap... and there would be no hiding it. ... Twelve years of despair... embarrassment... pain... and loneliness for this long-suffering woman.

Boy(!) how great her need was! **But so was Jairus'**. There was no time to lose – Jairus' home was still some distance away... and she was nearly dead. This woman's great need was an *interruption* to Jesus' solving another great need.

(Actually) what we would call an "*interruption*" was - for Jesus – always a springboard (or take-off point) for *the utterance of a great saying...* or (as here) for *the performance of a marvelous deed* - revealing his power... wisdom... and love. ... What for **us** - would have been a painful **INTERRUPTION** - is to Him a golden opportunity.

How easy it is to view interruptions as "*distractions from real life*" - when we are in a hurry! ... How often do you and I miss some of God's best opportunities. (Ouch! That hurts... doesn't it?) ... .. But since interruptions are unavoidable — as much as we hate to admit it — maybe it would be wise to build into our schedules some extra room for interruptions.

Oh! How urgently we need to learn and apply this truth!:

God's mission cannot ultimately be defeated; the twists and turns in your path are very often our opportunities to show the personal care for individuals that bears witness to God's care for each of us.

### **Luke 8:44-45**

She was determined to get to Jesus... even though she was taking a big risk of being caught by someone *who knew about her condition*. ... This would result in her being shamed and removed from the crowd. ... But she took her chances in her desperate desire to reach Christ. ... With a somewhat deficient faith... she believed if she could just touch the hem of His garment... then maybe she would be healed.



Not wanting to be noticed... she came up behind the Lord. How she got through this mob... we don't know. ... In some places she may have needed to crawl... but she got to Jesus and touched the border of His garment. ... What this woman actually touched was a **tassel** on the robe of Jesus. ... (And ) years of agony and embarrassment were reversed in that one brief touch.

The poor woman had done her best to escape notice. She would not touch Him; her touch was a contamination. And she would not even touch His garment... just the tassel. The moment she touched that ornament... she was healed! Power flowed from the Master to the woman. New life from Christ coursed through her veins.

The greatness of this woman's faith consisted in this: - that she believed that the power of Christ to heal was so amazing... that even the mere touch of His clothes would result in an instant and complete cure.

That this faith was (nevertheless) **deficient** (or by no means perfect)... appears from the fact that she thought that such an actual touch was **necessary** - and that Jesus would never notice it.

But imperfect though her faith was... the Lord rewarded it. And recovery was instant. ... In one brief moment the hemorrhage stopped completely. Health and vigor began to surge through every part of her body.

### **Luke 8:46-48**

In all this pushing... shoving... and crowdedness... Jesus all of the sudden makes an unusual statement: "*Who touched me?*" ... When the Lord made this statement... the people around Him sensed something was wrong.

Luke says that **all** denied touching Him. ... Peter thought the Lord's statement was unusual because of the mass of people. He was basically saying, "*Lord, with all these folks, what do you mean, 'Who touched me?'*" "

Jesus responds to Peter's question and stated that someone touched Him in an unusual way because (some kind of discernable) energy had gone out of the Lord.

Some folks may ask: "*I thought Jesus knew everything? Isn't He omniscient or all-knowing?*" The answer is "Yes." The Lord was not ignorant of who touched Him. He knew exactly when... where... and **who** touched Him. (But) the reason this question was asked was **not** for the Lord's benefit... but to encourage the woman who touched Him... to confess what happened to her. ... He wanted the woman to step forward and identify herself. Among other things... Jesus wanted to teach her that his cloak did not contain magical properties... but that her faith in Him had healed her.

But there are also other good reasons for why Jesus wanted this woman to publicly confess what she did. If she had anonymously crept away into the crowd... she would not have met Jesus personally or heard His words of assurance and comfort.

Her confession was also an encouragement to Jairus... who would soon hear that his daughter had **died**. (Perhaps he wanted to blame the woman for the delay!) ... The woman's twelve years of trial were ended... and the same Christ who helped her would help Jairus. ... She was a testimony to the power of faith. ... True... she did not exercise "great faith"... but Christ honored it and healed her body.

Finally... I think that Jesus wanted her to be identified... so that everyone would know that THIS WOMAN is no longer to be treated as unclean. “*You can allow her to rejoin society...*” (Just think... if Jesus would have allowed her to creep away)... could she be accepted as easily by society...? Probably not. ... Jesus was being merciful to her.

(And) Jesus was perfecting this woman’s faith. You see... she also had a selfish faith. ... She wanted health... but she did not especially care about the Healer. ... This is common to everyone when they start out with faith. ... We come to Christ because of some problem — we reach out in stumbling faith... amidst the press of the crowd. ... But recognizing a genuine yearning and trust... Jesus still touches us with His love... and He perfects our fledgling faith.

After Christ had coaxed the trembling woman forth and she made her confession... He said: “*Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.*” He was gentle toward her. This is the only woman He ever called “daughter” in the whole Bible. ... His explanation that her faith had healed her informed her that it was not her superstition... not some kind of magic... but her faith that put her in touch with God. (And) in establishing a personal relationship with her... Jesus demonstrated that we cannot be saved by the power of Christ - without coming into relationship with Him **as a Person**.

How beautiful our Lord is! ... By calling her forth... He announced her healing to her whole world. ... She was no longer unclean. She could visit others’ homes... the synagogue... and even the temple.

This desperate woman represents humanity—all of us. We are ill. We have spent our money for things that do not work. But when Christ comes to us... we need to touch Him by faith. We must not fear that He will not respond. We must not fear that we are too ignorant. We must not fear that we are too selfish.

We should fear only one thing — that we will let Him pass without responding in faith and reaching out to Him.

### **Luke 8:49**

Someone came to Jairus and told him she was dead and it was no use in bringing Jesus to the home. He was not to trouble or to annoy the Lord. People adopt the same attitude today. When they feel there is no solution to their problems, they don't feel that the Lord can do anything for them. They feel, "Why bother praying?"

Imagine how devastating this news must have been to this father. He was probably thinking that this would never have happened if Jesus was not delayed by the bleeding woman. Precious time was lost because of her. All this while... Jairus had been standing there on tenterhooks. His daughter was *dying*. ... "*Why all of this delay?*" ... He must have wrung his hands... paced on ahead... and then come back again... unable to stand still and barely able to stand the strain. Then came the crushing news that he had been half expecting. ... Someone from home came hurrying to him and said, "*Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Master.*"

Not only was his daughter dead but also all of Jairus's **hope** was dead. All that he could do now was arrange for the funeral. ... The Lord heard the

sad news and read Jairus's despair. "*Fear not,*" He said, "*believe and she will be well.*"

### **Luke 8:50**

Jesus heard the report to Jairus and the Lord responds with words of comfort. These were not empty words. The Lord knows more than you think He knows. ... He is very aware of your situation. When Israel was oppressed in Egypt... the Lord knew what was happening to them.

### **Exodus 3:7 (ESV)**

*<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings,*

Jesus tells this hurting father that everything is going to be OK. The tense of the phrase "*fear not*" means the Lord forbids Jairus to not be afraid anymore... but to believe in Him and his daughter would be made "**well.**" In other words... she would be totally restored to life and health.

Even today... we continue to enjoy the words of reassurance from the Lord... which gives us comfort and courage in scary times... when our gut is in knots... our throat feels like someone has a grip on it... and the tears from our eyes are like Niagara Falls. ... We have wonderful promises to cling to each day.

### **John 3:36 (ESV)**

*<sup>36</sup> Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*

### **Jeremiah 33:3 (ESV)**

*<sup>3</sup> Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.*

**Isaiah 65:24 (ESV)**

*<sup>24</sup> Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear.*

**Psalm 23:4 (ESV)**

*<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

**Philippians 4:19 (ESV)**

*<sup>19</sup> And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

The faith called for here is confidence about God's power... compassion... and capability to deliver the child out of death. ... It is such reliance that is commendable before God. ... Letting Jesus proceed will show that such faith is present.

We must not miss the providential arrangement here. Jairus came to Jesus with an uninformed... wishful... quasi-belief that Jesus could heal his daughter. ... That belief was being perfected and elevated through Jesus' delay in dealing with the woman who reached out and touched Him. But now Christ challenged Jairus to **not merely believe** in Him for a *healing*... but (NOW)... for his daughter's *resurrection* from the dead! ... Did Jairus believe? ... Certainly! ... Otherwise he and Jesus and the three disciples would never have returned to his home and entered the room of his daughter... where she lay mouth open... eyes half-open... pupils still and dilated... her color gone.

**Luke 8:51-55**

Luke tells us that no one was allowed to go into the house except the parents and Peter, James, and John. In fact, Mark tells us that Jesus “put them out.” This phrase is from the word **ekballo** {**ek-bal’-lo**} which means He cast them or drove them out of the house. The words mean He used force—He literally threw them out of the house. They would not be witnesses of the great miracle of the raising the dead. Mocking Christ does not increase your blessings but decreases them.

Mark also informs us that this noisy group laughed... ridiculed... and scorned Jesus when He told them she was sleeping. The tense of the verb indicates it was a continuous jeering and mocking. They made personal attacks. ... (That’s all right. Just be that way. Jesus is going to get the last laugh.)

The mourners failed to realize that Jesus had raised the widow’s son at Nain from the dead. ... The disciples of John the Baptist were told to tell him that they had seen the dead being raised by Jesus. (So Jesus had done it MULTIPLE times.) Apparently the mourners did not believe these reports and thought Jesus was a fool.

When Jesus said she was asleep... He was not referring to soul sleep. He was referring to the sleep of the body which lies down in the grave... still and silent. ... The language of Christ here about death is not the language of the world about death. It is the language of the One who sees the eternal future of the soul.

The world looks at death as the end... but the Bible makes it clear that death is not the end... the soul continues to exist either in Heaven or Hell.

“Sleep” is an image for death that is often used in the New Testament to describe the death of believers (John 11:11–14; Acts 7:59–60; 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thes. 4:13–18). Sleep is a normal experience that we do not fear. ... It is the body that sleeps... not the spirit... for the spirit of the believer goes to be with Christ (Phil. 1:20–24; 2 Cor. 5:6–8). ... At the resurrection... the body will be “awakened” and glorified... and God’s people will share the image of Christ (1 John 3:1–2).

Jesus was perfecting the imperfect faith of Jairus. ... God will do His work in His time. One can be amazed at how God works and the timing that He uses. Jesus’ power eventually honored Jairus’s *developing patient faith*. The timing may not have been what Jairus desired... but events were still in God’s control through his agent. Others may have thought all was lost—and by all appearances they were. Nevertheless, Jesus had—and has—the authority to reverse appearances and to render the delay meaningless.

### **Luke 8:56**

Why the charge to tell no one? Doesn’t Jesus want people to know Who He is... and what He can do? ... The short answer is: Jesus knows that he is headed for a different kind of ministry than people will want from Him. Excessive focus on His works of power will undermine the type of commitment He will ask from people.

Many followed Jesus for selfish motives or were swept up in the excitement His miracles inspired. ... He had already explained that discipleship is costly. Citizenship in the kingdom of God calls for radically countercultural thinking and behavior. ... It’s very possible Jesus wanted to deemphasize



the sensational in order to highlight the more sobering aspects of following Him.

But I also think that Jesus was probably protecting this little girl from the perils of publicity. So much attention would be placed on the girl from the telling of this resurrection. She would be an instant celebrity... and people sure can be cruel. (You know) John 12:10 says that when Lazarus was raised from the dead... knowledge of his resurrection inspired the enemies of Christ to want to kill Lazarus.

(LISTEN!) My time is up for today. In wrapping up all of the hopeless situations we have seen in Luke chapter 8... I will say that Jesus is the HOPE OF THE HOPELESS. He showed this to His disciples when they thought they would die in a storm at sea... and to the demon-possessed man who could not be tamed... and to the desperate woman who could not be cured... and to the father who lost all hope as he was told that he could no longer be helped – his daughter was dead.

Jesus can do anything! He is sovereign! Nothing is too great for Him. He can save your soul! He can restore your life! He can supply your most desperate need!