

Perfecting an Imperfect Faith, Part 3

Luke 8:40-48

We are coming into a section here at the end of Luke 8, if you'd like to turn in your Bibles there. So we're going to look at the text here starting in verse 40 of Luke chapter 8, follow along as I read. "Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him." There was a, "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, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. As Jesus went, the people pressed around him.

"And there was a woman who had," 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. She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. 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!' But Jesus said, 'Someone touched me, for I perceive that power

has gone out from me.' 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. And he said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.'

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

Point three, Jesus has grace for uninformed faith. I'm so thankful, aren't you? Jesus has grace for uninformed faith? Remember, this is a very large procession of people. A massive crowd here that is pressing in on Jesus, that's suffocating him,

that's slowing his progress as they move through the narrow streets of Capernaum to Jairus' house. And you can imagine Jairus here, wishing he could clear the streets, kind of like we're driving in traffic, and we want that little button that just kind of lasers everybody out of the way. I always wanted that in Los Angeles traffic. Here, Jairus wishes he had a laser button just clearing the streets. Get the people out of his way and get Jesus into his house so his daughter can be healed.

And this woman for her part, she suddenly discovers that she has been healed, that she's been healed in an instant and, having successfully stolen a blessing, you could say, she's trying to get away quietly. She's trying to get out while the getting's good. She wants to get away secretly. She doesn't want to be noticed. But the next words of Jesus slow the procession and they stop her in her tracks. Look at verses 45 and 46, "Jesus said, 'Who was it that touched me?' All we're denying it. Peter said, 'Master, the crowd surround you and they're pressing on you.' But, Jesus said," No, "'someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me.'"

Look, here's Peter being Peter, right? He's just stepping right into the fray, saying whatever comes to his mind immediately. Common sense Jewish fishermen. He gets it. He's

from Galilee. And once again, though, Peter is here misjudged Jesus pretty significantly. He's missed the point of Jesus question. Jesus is not suddenly becoming finicky about personal space. He's asking a much more pointed question here. He uses a verb about touching that talks about touching with intention. At the same time, it's Peter's gaff that draws more out of Jesus for our sake. Because of what Peter said here, Jesus reveals more about himself.

Two truths to coax this woman out of hiding. First, the divine power resides within him. Which she knew, she just experienced, that's why she came to him in the first place. But secondly, we see that the exercise of divine power does not escape his notice. Jesus knows whenever that power has been effectual on behalf of a believer. When faith touches him and power goes forth, he knows it.

So if this woman is a true believer, which is the clear and obvious conclusion from verse 48, might it be possible that Jesus actually knows the one who touched him? Listen, it's not only possible that he knows, it's not only probable, likely that he knows, it's absolutely certain that Jesus knows the one who touched him. Jesus said, John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." He knows his sheep. He

knows each one of them by name. Which means Jesus knows this woman too.

Think about that, beloved. When Jesus was hanging on the cross, dying for the sins of all those who believe. You know whose name he had on his mind? Yours. As Jesus has ascended to the father and he is there bodily at the father's right hand, you know he is, who he is praying for by name? You. He knows you by name. You have been chosen from before the foundation of the world to be his. You've been given by the father to him as a gift of a redeemed worshipping people. He knows you. He loves you. He died for you and he even now prays for you.

Let that sink in. Let that deeply encourage you. Jesus knows this woman too. Why then, did he ask this question? "Who was it that touched me?" Why does he say and without identity, identifying her, someone touched me? He doesn't name the one who stole the power. Why does he not name her? Jesus is not lacking information. He asked the question because he intends very gently to strengthen her faith, to perfect her imperfect faith. He's drawing her out. He's drawing her forth. He wants her to come on her own. He wants her to, we wants her to reveal her faith to others and to help her give testimony to the true grace of God in her life.

Jesus intends to publicize what was private to her in what she intended to keep private. Jesus intends to help her confess openly what she wanted to rejoice in quietly. She just wanted personal Bible study and Jesus says no, let's make this a corporate thing. He wants her to give glory to God before others rather than hide her light under a bushel. No, I'm gonna let it shine. What Jesus intends here, it's in accordance with what Asaph wrote in Psalm 50, verse 14, "Offer a sacrifice to God of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High." And then this, verse 15, "Call on me in a day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." The woman called upon him in her day of trouble. Jesus delivered her.

Now what's left to complete the circle, glorify God. Do it openly. Do it publicly. Let everybody hear what God has done for you. Look at verse 47, she knows the gigs up. "When the woman saw she's not hidden, she came trembling." Why is she trembling here? What's she afraid of? Jesus had just exercised power not to hurt her, but to heal her. What's she afraid of here? Perhaps it's a sudden realization she's being called to give an account, and not just an account before Jesus from whom she stole power, but in public in front of a gathered crowd. They say the worst thing, the worst fear that any of us have is what? Speaking in public, right? Perhaps it's public embarrassment, perhaps it's

fear of, of shame, having to explain before a gathered crowd the nature of her condition. You can understand that.

Perhaps she's become concerned that she'd done something wrong here. That she's, she's violated Levitical law in a presumptuous way by, by touching the celebrated teacher's garment. In any case, you got to understand this is a bad moment for her. Very difficult. But notice, Jesus intends to make her go through it anyway, doesn't he? He wants to push through her feelings of reticence. Push through her sense of embarrassment, her shyness. He wants her to be courageous, not cowardly, but courageous in her faith. This reminds me of some who seem afraid to testify publicly before the church in the waters of baptism. They're afraid to speak openly about the grace of God in their lives. And I think to myself, you know, I'm pretty sure that God knew that that command to be baptized would make shy people feel uncomfortable. But you know what? He issued the command anyway, because there's something more important in his plan than your shyness.

Jesus is not here too concerned about violating sensitivities. He's not concerned about making shy people feel comfortable, letting them remain hidden. He is the one actually, who said something very opposite. He says, "Everyone who

acknowledges me before men, I will acknowledge before my father who is in heaven." But, very sobering words, "Whoever denies me before men, I will also deny before my father who is in heaven." Listen, we had better get over our shyness when it comes to giving glory to God, amen?

Back to the narrative. "When the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, falling down before him, and she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had immediately been healed. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.'" All three writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke record Jesus words of encouragement to this woman. Very important, very heartening for this timid creature, for this beloved woman who had suffered so much.

If we piece together what we read in all three gospels, we kind of get the whole of what Jesus told her. If we piece it together, it kind of says this: Take heart daughter, or take courage daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction. All those things Jesus said, the gospel writers have recorded different things. Several words of assurance though that Jesus gives this dear woman, all of them informing her faith. All of them strengthening her faith,



perfecting her faith. And if she, and I'm sure on further reflection, she did imbibe his words deeply. She swallowed them down, really chewed on them, and learned them. She would be confident, fully confident in following his blessed command. "Go in peace." Reasons for her to go in peace. Number one, Jesus tells her take heart or take courage. That is to say, no more anonymity, no more hiding out, no more shyness on your part. Come into the light. Take courage, daughter. Take courage. Come into the light. Tell publicly what God has done for you. There's no reason to fear.

Second, I love the fact that Jesus calls her daughter. I mean, this woman who'd been struggling and suffering like this for twelve years is probably at least Jesus's age. He's not talking about a physical daughter. He's not talking down to her. Calls her daughter. What's that about? Very significant here. Notice back in verse 21, Jesus said, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." What is she? She's one who heard his word when he called for her, and she came back, which tells us she'd been leaving. She was, she was on her way out. She's getting away from the crowd and, Someone, hey, someone touched me. Someone touched me, for I perceive power's gone out. What's he doing? He's calling for her. She hears his word. She comes back. She falls down trembling. So

look, obedience wasn't easy for her. But against her natural impulses, against her instincts to run away and hide, she obeyed his word. That is proof positive she's a daughter of the king in the deepest spiritual sense. Very encouraging word.

Third thing, your faith has made you well. Not the touch of a tassel on my garment, not magic flowing out from a miracle worker, but your faith. What a word of assurance that her healing, her salvation is not dependent on any mere physical connection. The blessing has been secured by the presence of genuine saving faith, and that's a faith that resides deep within. It's a spiritual reality that is never going to wither, never going to fade. But will, in fact, strengthen with the testing. As Peter wrote, "The proof of your faith, being more precious than gold, which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and honor and glory." So Jesus calls this woman out and he does so, not unkindly, not to push her into uncomfortable territory, merely, but he does so to fill her heart with courage. He does so to inform her that they're family now. He does so to assure her that her faith is genuine.

Fourth thing, your faith has made you well. And then the addition in Mark's account, after telling her to go in peace,

Jesus adds, be healed of your affliction. What is that about? Well, Jesus had her testify publicly. Something her shyness and her desire for anonymity would have prevented her from doing. But it is, listen, it was vital for her to restoring her to the community; allow her to attend synagogue regularly, to interact socially with brothers and sisters, for her to publicly testify, for everybody to know. Listen, this is huge, allowing her to have a life after her illness.

You know who had a front row seat to her public testimony and to Jesus' validation of her healing? You got it, Jairus. Who's Jairus? Oh, he's the synagogue ruler. He's got a lot of authority. He's got a lot of influence. And after what's coming up in his life, just a few verses from now, Jairus is going to have no doubt in his mind that this woman is truly healed. Later after his ordeal, reflecting on the significance of all this, he's going to say to himself, listen if Jesus pronounces her clean, she's clean, she is in. If Jesus called her daughter, I am honored to be her brother. She's my sister. She's one of us. We need to reinstate her. We need to welcome her back into community. We need to love this woman.

Fifth, finally, why did Jesus call her out? He says, "Your faith has made you well." This refers to a wellness that's

deeper than flesh and blood. It's a wellness that's more profound than the healing of a blood flow. The saving efficacy of Christ's power goes deeper than physical healing. It heals the condition that caused the weakness in the first place. The verb here, you can't see it in your English text, but the verb is *sozo*, common New Testament word for spiritual salvation.

Jesus' promise to this dear woman, this daughter, this faith bearer, her sins, will be imputed to him, will be covered by his atonement, will be paid for by his death on the cross. His righteousness will cover her like a fine white linen, bright and clean, brighter than the fallen snow on the ground. She too is going to stand justified by God the Father. Glorified one day in the resurrection of the just. Her healing, her wellness isn't superficial. It's not temporary. Her salvation is deep, and full, and final, and permanent.

Listen, aren't you thankful? That the unsettled and sometimes anxious condition of our weak faith is something that mobilizes the mercy of Christ for us? Aren't you grateful that even in our imperfect faith, that God's power isn't diminished at all, or hindered, or too short to save? Aren't you humbled, that in our ignorance, and in our immaturity, Jesus has grace for us, to teach us, to train us, to disciple us, and discipline

us into strong faith. He puts us through these kinds of trials, these kinds of tests, he afflicts us, that we might endure and mature. Praise God for that, amen?

Listen, for those of you who are wired more like this woman, maybe somewhat fearful by nature, maybe prone to shyness, sense in yourself a tendency to shrink back, hold back, remain anonymous. Let this text be an encouragement to you to take courage, to testify boldly knowing that you're blessed by God and you can go in peace. For those of you who have a little bit more of the Peter in you, more prone to be bold, somewhat impetuous, outspoken. Or maybe someone like Jairus, you're prone to go right to Jesus from the front.

Perhaps you have a hard time bearing with the apparent weakness of others. You need to consider this account. See how tender Jesus is in dealing with those who are like this woman. Got a verse for you from the apostle Paul, "We urge you, brothers," 1 Thessalonians 5:14, "We urge you admonish the idol," but then this, "Encourage the faint hearted." You know what it is to encourage? It's to give strength to. Someone who is faint in heart, give strength to them. Then this, "Help the weak," help them. In their weakness don't just condemn it, don't just ignore it, don't set it aside. Don't say, "Aw that's too

much trouble," help. You've got help; help. And then, "Be patient with them all." Patience, gentleness, help, encouragement, that's what we see our Lord doing here.

We're not finished with the account. When we come back next week, we're going to learn more about Jesus perfecting an imperfect faith, but this time in Jairus. Jairus' trial is about to get ten times worse, as what he feared, his worst fear comes true. But Jesus is there at hand to strengthen his failing faith, which will not fail. Will you bow with me?

Our Father, we thank you for what we've learned in this text, and we really are just, even in the time it's taken, we're still just skipping off the high points. There's so much more that we could learn. But Father, I trust your spirit to take the lessons of this text and work them into the heart of every believer. Whether weak or strong, whether shy or bold, father, we ask that you would do your mighty work, by your spirit to sanctify us all. To bring glory and honor to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

We pray for those who are here who do not yet know you. Don't know what it is to trust, don't know what it is to throw themselves completely upon you, and to find your grace powerful to help in their sin and weakness. We just ask Lord, that you

would draw them to yourself. That you would plough the fallow ground. That you would soften the heart and make their hearts good hearts that are going to receive the word and grow up and produce a yield, to bring glory to you. We love you. We thank you for what we've learned. In Jesus' name, amen.