

“Daughter”- the radical inclusive love of God Luke 8:40-56 July 17, 2010

Intro:

Jesus: encounter. The more you meet Him, the more you will be changed.

We are on the last story in Chapter 8. I mentioned last week that Chapter 8 is essentially a chapter where our author Luke wants to build up our understanding of the power of Jesus- he has power over nature, demons, and in this passage sickness and death. But there's more to the story, and I'd like to focus in on that today, asking how it might change us.

Read Text:

Imagine yourself to be Jairus for a moment. You and your wife have one daughter. We don't know why you have only one daughter- perhaps you had been trying for some time, and you could only conceive one child. Or perhaps this is the only one that survived- you had several miscarriages. Whatever the case, you have one daughter, and she is your princess, your special daddy's girl. And the thing is, she is sick, very sick. In fact, the town medical expert has said she is on the verge of death. And so when you hear that Jesus is coming to town, and you are both desperate and overjoyed- perhaps Jesus will heal my daughter. I must get to him- I know I am nothing, I need his mercy- but this is my daughter!

So you go, and lo and behold, you are able to push to the front of the crowd. Falling on your knees, you beg of Jesus to come to your house and heal your daughter, and Jesus says yes to coming! You are overjoyed- you have heard what Jesus can do! And so you set out with haste, pushing through the crowd, yelling “make way, please, make way! My daughter is dying!”

Of course, most people do because they respect you- you are the synagogue leader after all.

But literally a minute into this journey, Jesus suddenly stops and asks, “who touched me?” “Who touched me?” he says again. You're not too sure what Jesus means- I mean the crowd is simply pressing around. And so you're relieved that one of Jesus' inner circle speaks some sense to Jesus. “Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!”

But Jesus continues to insist, and it's starting to get a little frustrating. You know the condition of your daughter when you left her- she was literally on the verge of death. Jesus, my daughter! The awkward waiting seems like hours, but in reality only a few seconds have passed. And then all of a sudden, a breakthrough the crowds *she* comes in. *That woman.*

You can't help it, but suddenly anger overtakes your senses as she begins to tell her story.

See, you know that woman. You know that woman because, as the synagogue leader, you know who is allowed to be a part of the religious community- even more so the general community- and who can't. And for the last twelve years- ever since your own daughter was born- that woman has had a menstrual problem that has never stopped. As such, Jewish law renders her unclean- unfit to be in the larger community with everyone else. She has had to live separate from the town because of this. You feel bad for her, sure. I mean, it's not like she can really do anything about it. She's tried, of course- she's come to you personally to discuss her options time and time again, given that you are part of the leadership of the synagogue who gets to decide if someone is unclean. You've seen her give all she has to find a cure- for 12 years you've seen this! But well, you say- that's just her lot. Sometimes God just allows people to go through certain things. You can't help it. And so in your mind you've just sort of dismissed her as sort of a nuisance. But today, today she has crossed the line.

As you listen to her explanation, you aren't hearing how she's been healed. Rather, all you want to do is to grab her and scream “Can't you see that you are getting in the way of my daughter getting healed!!! Don't you now she's on her deathbed now? Can't you see that you've just taken precious time away from Jesus and my daughter could die?!?!”

And then, before you know it, that scene in your imagination stops. Time stands still, and you go numb.

Your friend who has been tending to your daughter pushes his way toward you from the side, and you see it- you see that look. He doesn't have to say word- you simply look at face, and you know what he's about to say- “your daughter is gone; let's not trouble the teacher anymore.” You don't know what to say. You see this woman, this woman who has taken Jesus' time. You are in complete disbelief of how Jesus has missed his moment. But even as these feelings start coming- and they come within seconds- through the numbness you hear yet another voice, and you cannot comprehend this one at all. “Daughter... your faith has healed you, go on in peace.”

“Daughter...” “daughter...” You simply cannot put together what is happening at the moment. Here is Jesus- the one who has healed and saved so many. Here he is, having said yes to your plea to come to your house to heal your only daughter. But here she is- that woman- that annoying, unclean woman who has held Jesus up from saving your daughter's life- she is dead now, you will never get to see her giggle, never get to have her jump into your arms for a big daddy hug, never get to see her get married, never get to... And Jesus calls her, this woman, “daughter?”

There are a number of different themes in this story. Yes, it's about Jesus' authority over sickness and death- we know the rest of the story- both the woman is healed and Jairus' daughter comes back to life. Yes, it is about the need for faith in Jesus for salvation and healing- the text clearly points to the need for faith in both healings. But the theme I'd like to focus on is the one centered around this radical, inclusive love of God.

This love that takes the time and personal attention to make us (who have no business whatsoever with Jesus) sons and daughters of God. It doesn't matter if you're the precious daddy's girl of a prominent leader, or you're the discarded street woman who everyone shuns- Jesus looks at you and says “son,” “daughter.”

We must answer two questions as we see Jesus here.

1. Will we come to Jesus and let Him love us this way?

Let's be frank here. Some of you are this woman. For as long as you can remember, you have been alone. Sure, there were people around, but no one has ever come close and loved you in the ways you deep down thought you should be loved. Do you realize that Jesus calls all those who come and trust in Him “son,” “my daughter?” There may be layers of why you feel the way you do, there may be various voices in your head that say you're worthless or unloveable, but Jesus has one word for you- “daughter,” “son.”

2. Will we join Him and share His love to those who need to know this about Jesus?

The application Luke will drive to with these encounters in chapter 8 is the sending out of his followers, with his power, to share about God's good news and bring His healing to those they encounter. It is mission. Yes, in this story Jesus tells people to keep it silent. He is doing so because he doesn't want people to flock to him and make him a messiah figure in the way they want. But even with that, he wants his followers to go and demonstrate the kingdom of God.

Thousands of individuals living right here are literally dying to know that the God of the universe is willing to stop and give personal attention to them. It will only be done through those who now follow him.