

A TALE OF TWO “DAUGHTERS”
LUKE 8:40-56

Pain is universal. Suffering is common. Illness, though frequent and normal, often surprises us. Death is one out of one. We recoil against all of these. And God uses pain, illness, and death to sanctify us. Samuel Rutherford wrote that believers should “**praise God for the hammer, the file, and the furnace**...the hammer molds us, the file shapes us, and the fire tempers us.” And while they all come from the hand of God, we tend towards idolizing freedom from these normal tools of God in our lives.

Commenting on Rutherford’s statement, A.W. Tozer wrote, “The devil, things, and people being what they are, it is necessary to use the hammer, the file, and the furnace in the holy work of preparing the saint for the sainthood. **It is doubtful** whether God can bless a man greatly until he has hurt him deeply.” [*The Root of the Righteous*, 165.]

God uses pain, illness, and death in our lives in good ways. These harsh circumstances become friends and blessings to us, when we respond to them in faith. In **Luke 8:40-56**, the gospel writer weaves together two similar and contrasting stories of suffering and death to remind us of the nature of Christ (the Son of Man), and to stimulate faith in the sufferers, and in the observers of these events.

On Thanksgiving week, many (most? all?) of us are suffering. The Lord is not against us. *He is for us* — using our pain to drive us to Him in love and trust —

THE SON OF MAN DESIGNS YOUR TROUBLES TO COMPEL YOU TO TRUST HIM. AND HE IS TRUSTWORTHY.

In chapter eight, Luke uses a series of four miracles to demonstrate the power and authority of the Son of Man. He is authoritative over natural forces (the storm, vv. 22-25), demons (vv. 26-39), and in this passage, physical ailments (vv. 40-56). He is the Son of Man. He is powerful and He is trustworthy. In this story, Luke compels His readers to trust Christ in troubles by **revealing six attributes** of the Son of Man. While we might give attention to the responses of the people in the story (and that *is* part of Luke’s purpose), the main purpose of Luke is to reveal more about the Son of Man. The stories are all about Him. What should we learn about the Savior, Jesus, the Son of Man?

1. The Son of Man is **AVAILABLE** (vv. 40-42)
2. The Son of Man is **POWERFUL** (vv. 43-46)
3. The Son of Man is **SAVIOR** (vv. 47-48)
4. The Son of Man is **TRUSTWORTHY** (vv. 49-50)
5. The Son of Man is **DISCERNING** (vv. 51-53)
6. The Son of Man is **COMPASSIONATE** (vv. 54-56)

1. The Son of Man is **AVAILABLE** (vv. 40-42)

- The timing of Jesus' **return** to Capernaum is unknown, but it could be as short as the day after He and the Twelve left to go to the Gadarenes (v. 22).
 - ✓ It is striking that when He returned **the people welcomed Him...had been waiting**. Perhaps someone from Gadara had arrived prior to Jesus and said He was on His way; or perhaps they were aware of the desperation of Jairus and were waiting with their leader and friend (Jairus).
 - ✓ What is interesting is that Luke says they are **waiting** (anticipating). Three times previously Luke has used that word to refer to people waiting for the Messiah (3:15; 7:19-20). Luke might be hinting that the residents of Capernaum are also waiting for Jesus as the Messiah.
- With this crowd, **there came a man named Jairus** (v. 41). He also has been waiting.
 - ✓ He is socially prominent — **an official (ruler) of the synagogue**. He was the administrative head of the synagogue. He planned the services and was responsible for the care of the building.
 - ✓ (Notice that while the religious leaders reject Christ, not all did — Jairus and Nicodemus, Jn. 19:39).
 - ✓ When Jairus **fell at Jesus' feet and implored Him...** it is a sign of submission and perhaps worship. It is certainly more than what the demons did (v. 28) and may be a sign of faith (v. 50ff). Certainly he has enough faith to recognize that he is out of solutions and only one Person can help him.
 - ✓ And Christ responded to Jairus' repeated request — **as He went...** He is going to Jairus' house.
 - ✓ We are meant to see the desperation and urgency in the story —
 - He had **only one daughter...twelve...dying**. She is about to enter adulthood; marriage and children are not far away, and something dramatic has happened and she is actively **dying**.
 - And even while he likely was trying to urge Christ forward, **the crowds were pressing** (choking — cf. v. 14, also choking with worry?) — it's constricting and difficult to move. It's going slowly. While Luke doesn't say it, it is reasonable to imagine Jairus' impatience and pleading.
- Here is a man who is part of the religious establishment that is rejecting Christ, and he comes to Jesus for help and Jesus responds. He is available and accessible (Heb. 4:14-16; 13:5-6; Ps. 46:1).
 - ✓ But one must acknowledge his need, recognize his inability, and come to Him for help.
 - ✓ Decades ago I was lamenting a need to my dad and he just said, "Have you thought to ask me?"
 - ✓ Have you thought to ask God for help with your need? He is available and ready to help.

2. The Son of Man is **POWERFUL** (vv. 43-46)

- While Jairus and the crowd are moving toward his house, there is an interruption — a **woman with a hemorrhage...came up and touched the fringe of His cloak**.
 - ✓ The woman has been suffering with what was probably a vaginal bleed for a dozen years.

- ✓ She has been to innumerable doctors and they made her condition worse — a couple common remedies were: a glass of wine mixed with rubber, alum, and garden crocuses, or a glass of wine mixed with onions. It's not surprising that she hasn't been helped at all (Mk. 5:26).
 - ✓ She is also ceremonially unclean and unable to worship or have contact with others because of her condition (**Lev. 15:25-27**). She's hurting physically, isolated spiritually, and alone relationally.
 - ✓ Like Jairus, she has no other options; she is desperate for help. So she reaches out to touch Jesus.
- The similarity between the girl and the woman are noticeable: the girl is twelve years old and the woman has been suffering for twelve years. And while there are further similarities (both are women and both are unnamed), there are many contrasts:
 - ✓ The woman had been suffering for 12 years; the girl has been experiencing happiness.
 - ✓ The woman's illness has been long; the girl's illness has been short.
 - ✓ The woman is nearing the end of life; while the girl is also near the end of life, she should have been at the beginning of life.
 - ✓ The woman is unclean; the girl is not unclean.
 - ✓ The woman is alone; the girl has family.
 - ✓ The woman is anonymous in the community; the girl is well-known (because of her father).
 - ✓ The woman is healed (v. 48); the girl dies (v. 49).
 - ✓ For all those differences, see again the willingness of Christ to care for everyone — including outcasts. He is sympathetic to those who are broken (**Mt. 12:18-21**; Is. 42:3).
 - And He acts powerfully for the broken. Coming from behind (to not intrude) she touches the fringe (one of the four corners) of a cloak that would have been draped over His shoulder (**Num. 15:38ff**) — she touched the tassels that were reminders of the commands of God and His ritual cleanness!
 - ✓ And ***immediately her hemorrhage stopped*** — as with all other healings, it was instantaneous, complete, and without need for rehabilitation (**vv. 47, 55**). And she is also now ceremonially clean. "Years of agony and embarrassment are reversed in one brief touch." [Bock]
 - ✓ And just as immediately, Jesus said ***"Who touched Me?"*** He discerned the difference between the shuffling of people in the crowd and the touch of the woman made in faith for her healing.
 - Jesus is not looking for information He doesn't know — He is drawing her out to declare faith.
 - The question is an act of grace — if it wasn't made public now how would she remove the contempt and ostracism she faced as an unclean person? It had to be public for full restoration.
 - ✓ And don't criticize Peter — his statement is natural; they are being crushed (v. 42); many touches.
 - ✓ ***"I am aware that power had gone out of Me..."*** = This isn't "magic" for many others touched Him in the crowd without similar effect. It is an example of the uniqueness of His unique hypostatic union. As man, He willingly limited Himself in many ways (He was subject to the confines of a localized human body), but as God, He was still omniscient and omnipotent (vv. 22ff).

- ✓ So the woman doesn't manipulate Him and "steal" power from Him; as the Son of Man He sovereignly responds to her act of faith and heals her, despite not looking at her and interacting.
- ✓ What we are meant to see is the sufficient power of Christ. He is powerful over storms, over demons, and over illness (and death). He may choose not to heal at times, but that is not because He is incapable. It is His wisdom for that person in that situation. He is powerful. Trust Him.

"Pain gets our attention, for believers and unbelievers alike, and directs our gaze toward the One who, through Jesus Christ, is overcoming all brokenness and suffering originating from Adam and Eve's tragic rebellion." [Michael Emlet]

3. The Son of Man is **SAVIOR** (vv. 47-48)

- She could not escape exposure, so in humility and submission, ***she came trembling and fell down... and declared in the presence of all...*** Like Jairus, she is responding in humble faith and worship.
 - ✓ While she may have been trembling, she speaks boldly, ***declaring*** (making a full report) *why* she came to Christ *what* Christ had done. It's a testimony of faith. Perhaps this is what she wanted to avoid, but like the healed demoniac, when Christ compelled her, she willingly spoke of His good work.
 - ✓ If she hadn't already believed, it seems this is an act of faith because of what Jesus says...
- He addresses her as ***daughter*** — a term of affection, kindness, and gentleness. Obviously familial. This is the only time Jesus addresses anyone directly with this term. It's a remarkably reassuring address.
 - ✓ She is no longer marginalized, without relationship. She has family.
 - ✓ "Jesus cleansed the woman, sending her on her way with a new status, wholeness." [Pate]
 - ✓ ***Your faith has made you well; go in peace.*** Her faith was halting, but it was faith. (The size or strength is not what saves anyone; it is the object of faith that is critical for salvation.)
 - ✓ And He *does* save her — the word ***well*** is "save" — used of physical healing (vv. 36, 50); but it also has a primary spiritual meaning, and Luke intends us to think that — especially as Jesus says ***go in peace*** — the reconciliation of relationship between God and man. She is in fellowship with Him.
- Jesus is presented in Luke as the Son of Man, emphasizing His power — these miracles demonstrate His power over every known realm (physical and spiritual). We are to see His power also to save spiritually.
 - ✓ If you do not yet believe, hear this story and repent of your sin (turn away) and believe that Jesus is the Christ who will liberate you from your sin. Your sin does not put you beyond His salvation.
 - ✓ We are to see Christ as capable and the One for whom we are to live. Would you repent/believe?

4. The Son of Man is **TRUSTWORTHY** (vv. 49-50)

- The interaction between Jesus and the woman was brief. But it was long enough to delay Him getting to Jairus' home. **Capernaum was small**; it would have taken only a couple of minutes to get to his home.

Instead, while Jesus was speaking to the woman, the report of the girl's death arrived.

- ✓ Luke is clear — she **has died** — it is final. There is no doubt about her condition.
- ✓ "...time ran out. The trial that was a matter of time now becomes a matter of *fact*." [Davis]
- ✓ So — there is "nothing else for *the Teacher* to do..." He is "just" a teacher; so "just *stop*..."
- ✓ [Aside: note the interplay between the two "daughters" in vv. 48-49. The biological father of the one daughter is incapable of helping; the spiritual "Father" of the other is wholly adequate. *Trust*.]
- ✓ **But Jesus overheard** and responded:
 - **Do not be afraid** = I.e., "stop being afraid..." Jairus' worst fears (v. 41) have been realized. He no longer needs to be afraid — not because of her death, but because of Jesus' presence.
 - **Only believe** — "have faith in Me..." Whatever else Jairus is thinking and feeling, he is to definitively act in faith and trust in God's power. You don't know what God might do...
 - God split the Red Sea and Jordan River in two; a 90-year-old woman had a child; Israel will become a blessing to the nations; and the Savior would rise again from the dead.
 - What Jairus has heard is not the end of the story — **she will be made well** (saved).
 - Jesus didn't give the details; He only offered the hope, and the man had to act in faith.
- Your suffering and pain and illness is not the end of the story either.
 - ✓ You may not be made well from your illness, but God is trustworthy. Cf. **2 Tim. 4:18**.
 - ✓ We don't know what God might be pleased to do, but we do know that we can trust Him.
 - ✓ I don't know when my father's time on earth will be over, but my brother has already asked me to preach at his funeral. I know my text — **1 Thess. 5:24**. He is faithful.
 - ✓ RJ and I were just married and I was trying to figure out budgeting; "how do you budget dad?" He laughed — "house payment was \$110 and I made \$35/week." You can't budget that; you must trust.
 - ✓ What do you struggle to believe? He is trustworthy. Keep looking at Him, praying, and believing.

5. The Son of Man is DISCERNING (vv. 51-53)

- Aren't people who know everything difficult to live with? Mark Twain said when he was 14 he couldn't believe how stupid his father was, and when he was 24 how much he had learned in ten years. It's tough to live with people like that. And the people in Capernaum were like that (and insensitive, too).
 - ✓ So Jesus, Jairus, the Twelve, and the crowd arrived at **the house**. Only a few could go inside, so Jesus took the three closest disciples (**Peter, John, and James**, likely as a legal testimony) along with the **father** (note that Jairus' name isn't used; his importance is receding) and the **mother** (first mention).
 - ✓ When they arrive **all are weeping** — likely also paid mourners (typical; cf. Mt. 9:23; Mk. 5:38).
 - ✓ And Jesus comforts them with these words: **she has not died but is asleep**. Sleep as a figure for death is common in the NT (Jn. 11:11-14; **1 Thess. 4:13-15**; **5:6-7, 10**). It means "she is dead, but not with the kind of death you think of...She will be resurrected."

- ✓ And the mourners responded to the comfort of Christ with an explosion of **laughing**. Some have suggested that “Jesus has turned grief to amusement.” That’s not what happened. The “mourners” weren’t mourners and they turned into mockers. They ridiculed Christ and were uncompassionate to the family. Why? Because they “knew better...they **know she had died...**”
- ✓ But they did not know or believe that death is not final — that there is a resurrection for all people (**Dan. 12:2**). They saw her death as a final end. And they mocked Christ.
- Do you see the discernment and wisdom of Christ? He is rightly evaluating the situation. He is giving a true perspective of the circumstance (and offering hope), and the people reject. In Christ and in Christ’s Word there is wisdom for every situation (Col. 2:2-3).
 - ✓ Our suffering and pain should remind us that the world is broken and remind us of sin’s ugliness.
 - ✓ Our suffering and pain should also remind us of the goodness of God in that broken world and that He is moving toward us in our pain, not away from us (remember Christ’s availability in vv. 42-43).

6. The Son of Man is COMPASSIONATE (vv. 54-56)

- One of the most grievous attacks on God and Christ is that He is uncompassionate and uncaring. He cares more than we understand. He knows what we are like; He made us that way (**Ps. 103:14**).
 - ✓ So Jesus **took her by the hand**. *He* (emphatic) really did touch her (which ordinarily would make one unclean; however, the sinless Son of God is not made unclean, but makes unclean things clean).
 - ✓ It’s also an act of compassion; He did not need to touch her, but He did (cf. **7:14**).
 - ✓ So He also spoke with gentle tenderness, **Child, arise**. Along with the simple command is kindness.
 - ✓ And **her spirit returned** — she was really dead and now she is really alive (“I have the keys of death and of Hades,” Rev. 1:18). The One who spoke the world into existence speaks life into her.
 - ✓ And again we see full and immediate healing — she is alive and the illness that caused her death in the hour before is fully eradicated; she is completely healthy.
 - ✓ And in further compassion, Jesus says to feed her — she has more needs to sustain her life; take care of her. Christ cares about her ongoing health and care.
 - ✓ Her parents **were amazed** (a typical response; cf. 2:47; 24:22). But Jesus **instructed them to tell no one...** (also a typical response; Mt. 8:4); He didn’t want miracles to become the focus of ministry.
- As you consider these miracles, notice the diversity of Jesus’ miracles and His compassion towards down-trodden (and women):
 - ✓ Jesus has healed two *women* (one well-known and one anonymous but both disparaged as women) — Luke is particular in noting Jesus care of women (e.g., 4:38-39; 7:11-17, 36ff; 8:1-3; 10:38ff).
 - ✓ Jesus has ministered to two *unclean* women — ceremonial uncleanness is no concern to Him.
 - ✓ Jesus ministers to the socially well-known (Jairus) and the anonymous (the woman).
 - ✓ Jesus ministers to an adult and a child.

- ✓ Jesus is a compassionate Savior. He is the sovereign and authoritative Son of Man, which means He has power for your problem. And He is compassionate towards your suffering and ailment.

CONCLUSION: Jonathan Edwards emphasized the importance of trusting Christ in suffering when he wrote a letter to his daughter while she recovered from an illness (3/28/1753) —

I would not have you think any strange thing has happened to you in this affliction: 'Tis according to the course of things in this world, that after the world's smiles, some great affliction soon comes. God has now given you early and seasonable warning not to depend on worldly prosperity. Therefore I would advise...if it pleases God to restore you, to [count] upon no happiness here. Labour while you live, to serve God and do what you can, and endeavour to improve every dispensation to God's glory and your own spiritual good, and be content to do and bear all that God calls you to do in this wilderness, and never to expect to find this world anything better than a wilderness.

This was Edwards' wise care of his daughter to remind her that in this world there is tribulation and that we should not have expect anything less.

But in this suffering world, we have a powerful Savior who cares about our needs. The story of the two "daughters" tells us this.

BENEDICTION: 1 Thess. 5:23-24