



When Jesus arrived back on the other side of Lake Galilee from Gennesaret the scene could not be more different. Whereas the people of the Gerasene region sent him away, he is now met by an eager crowd. They want to see what he might do. The message I want to take is, 'For those who are desperate and see their need of Jesus he gives cleansing, new life, and salvation. All three metaphors mean the same thing. Being saved and forgiven of sin. That is why Jesus is worthy of our trust!

Cleansing for the unclean. Jesus (v. 40) returns to the shore and as he steps out of the boat onto dry land again a man emerges from among the crowd. Jairus. (v 41) is a synagogue Leader. And so, it's quite a shocking sight when Jairus pushes his way through the crowd and falls at the feet of Jesus of Nazareth. His status doesn't grant him immunity from desperation or difficulty. His only daughter, about twelve, was dying. He's desperate and he's hopeless. But he knows that Jesus has the power to help. Everyone by this point had heard about Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus and Jairus struggle to get through the crowds. And we now have an interruption. A woman has been unwell for 12 years, as long as Jairus' daughter had been alive. She couldn't be more different from Jairus; he was a well-respected religious man. She was an unclean woman too. But she has something in common with Jairus; she was a hopeless, desperate case. Her being subject to bleeding for twelve years was almost certainly a Gynaecological/menstrual condition. And with that came all sorts of complications and inconveniences. She would have been in constant pain and discomfort and unable to bear children. She was a social outcast. Even in our own 21st century, there is still a fair amount of social stigma around these issues. She was not just unclean in and of herself, but anything and anyone that she touched would also become unclean (Leviticus 15:19-33). She was a social and religious outcast, excluded from every aspect of the temple life. She's an image of what we are like by nature. We are alienated from God because of our uncleanness, our sinful nature. "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. (Col 1:21) Our sinful nature means that we are separated from God. But we are welcomed into his family through Jesus! Jesus came into this world to bridge the gap as it were. And he did so by dying on the cross.

We can be friends with God again because Jesus Christ on the cross becomes sin for us! All that is needed is to trust in him. This woman knows she is defiled. But she thinks, 'If I can only touch a tassel on his garment, I will be clean.' So, she reaches out quietly and touches the hem of his garment. And miraculously, the bleeding stops! Her touching of Jesus by faith doesn't cause him to become unclean as it should according to the Law, the touch cleanses her because out from Jesus flows cleansing new life! And salvation! But before she had the chance to sneak away Jesus stops and asks (v 45) 'who touched me?' which is strange given that so many people would have been brushing shoulders with Jesus here. But Jesus carries on, 'I know that power has gone out of me.' (v.46) He knows that this was no ordinary or accidental touch. Someone has reached out to him in faith for healing. And so the woman (v 47), sheepishly, fearfully, nervously falls at his feet and admits to it. Jesus doesn't scold or rebuke her; he doesn't embarrass or humiliate her. He gently commends her for her great faith in him and declares in front of them all that she is now clean! (v.48) 'Daughter, your faith has healed you, 'Go in peace.' The word healed here can be translated as saved. He calls her 'daughter.' We don't know her name, but Jesus calls her 'daughter', adopted into God's family! 'Daughter, your trust in me has saved you'.

Remember Jairus here by the way! This woman, who at least in the view of everyone else, wasn't important and her problem compared with death wasn't that significant. She's survived twelve years with this condition she can surely survive another twelve minutes while Jesus goes to heal the daughter of the synagogue ruler. Why didn't Jesus go and deal with that first and then come back to find out who touched him? But Jesus' timing and perspective are different from ours. He

knows full well what has happened and this undesirable woman is just as precious a daughter as Jairus's. She stands out among the crowd as one who had genuine faith. In a crowd that big surely many sick people would have been there and even touched in accidentally and they weren't healed, but she was because of faith. She wasn't healed because she touched his cloak as such, she was healed because of her faith in him. She knew she was desperately helpless. And she therefore reaches out by faith towards the only one who could save her. When she does, she is made new. Jesus still saves today! We come to him with nothing but faith in the knowledge that he through the cross cleanses us from our sin. The author Rachel Jones says: "No longer are we held at a distance, kept outside the camp. We're brought into God's embrace, loved unconditionally and cherished."

Then comes the news, 'Don't bother the teacher anymore.' Imagine being Jairus in this moment. His only daughter was moments away from being healed and saved from death. And now this delay has caused her death. Remember when Lazarus got sick and when Jesus finally arrived Lazarus' sister said to Jesus: 'If you had been here then my brother would not have died.' The same thoughts may have been going through Jairus' head. She's been healed, good for her, but why did he need to stop and talk to her? Now my daughter is dead! But look at what Jesus says, 'Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.' (v. 50) In essence: 'trust me.'

For us, when we face difficulty and things seem to go wrong, when we are fearful and anxious, Jesus pulls us aside, and although he doesn't promise to take away our trials and hardships he still tells us, 'trust me.' When he arrived at the house, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter James and John, and the child's father and mother. (v51) Meanwhile, all the people were weeping and mourning for her. "Stop weeping," Jesus said. "She is not dead but asleep." Now some sceptics and liberal commentators have taken Jesus to mean this literally! They suggest that she was just in a very deep sleep and the people mistook it for death. Now I we cannot take that interpretation. This girl was definitely dead! You wouldn't have had mourners if she were not! The mourners began to laugh at what Jesus said knowing that she was dead. Moreover, in verse 55 we read when she returns to life it says that 'her spirit returned.' Dr. Luke confirms for us that she was dead. He'd have interviewed the witnesses and concluded she was definitely dead!

To Jesus bringing someone back from death is as easy as waking a child up from a sleep, or maybe easier. That should bring great comfort now to all who trust him, we can know that in Christ we are safe even when we sleep in death. One day we who are trusting in Christ though we have died physically will be resurrected, But also Jesus' power over physical death also points to his power over spiritual death. If the bleeding woman's condition was a metaphor for how we are in relation to God, then this little girl's condition is a picture of us spiritually. The Bible uses being dead as a metaphor for us by nature. "As for you, you were dead in our transgressions and sin." (Eph 2:1) By nature, without Jesus we are spiritually dead. Hopeless and powerless in other words. But Paul goes on to say, v4 "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead; it is by grace you have been saved." This is a beautiful picture of what he does for us who are helpless. He took her by the hand and said, "My child, get up!" She is raised to life. And says practically, "Give her something to eat" To her astonished parents surely death is a step too far.

With the demon possessed man, that miracle took place in a Gentile area, meaning he could freely share all God did for him as a witness. In Jairus' Jewish hometown, they had an expectation that the Messiah would be a great earthly ruler. This resurrection miracle might have caused the people to seize the opportunity to make him into a king in their own image. That was not the mission of Jesus!

Conclusion. Luke has deliberately put these two stories together. One is surrounded by people who love her; the other has been isolated for years. And yet Jesus calls them both 'daughter.' Both need Jesus. Spiritually, we are like both of them. Our sin has separated us from God and like the little girl, we are spiritually dead. We cannot give ourselves life. A dead person doesn't need a little bit of improvement; they need to be made alive. And that is exactly what God does through Christ. Out from Jesus flows cleansing, new life and salvation. So come to Jesus. Trust in Jesus. Because the one who cleanses the unclean and raises the dead is worthy of our trust. AMEN