

Title: Desperate
Text: Luke 8.40-56
Theme: The power of Jesus to save
Series: Luke
Prop Stmt: Everyone needs Jesus, but not everyone is willing to admit it.

God declares through Isaiah the prophet that he alone is God, he alone is Creator, he alone knows the future, he alone can save, can protect, and is worthy of your trust. In 43.10b-11 God says, *“Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior.”*

Our God is the one and only God. He is the true and living God. Therefore, no one can save like our God. There is no salvation in anything or anyone besides the true and living God. By saving, rescuing, healing, even raising some from the dead, Jesus is proving that he is the true and living God. Jesus performs these miracles in order to demonstrate conclusively that he, and he alone is the true and living God. He does not heal everyone in the country. He does not necessarily heal on demand, because we are not in a position to demand anything from God. While Christ does wonderful things for people, the goal of his works is to demonstrate to you who he is, so that you will trust him, completely, no matter what. Christ wants people to connect the dots. He wants you to think, understand, believe, and engage your heart and mind. The history of our world demonstrates that most people do not do that. But, in our text there are two who do and it changed their lives.

Most people do not want to examine their belief, or even examine their lives. I ask people if they really understand what they believe. Do you ask questions? Do you get it? Do you bother to really examine the facts of faith? You better! Cultural, moralistic Christianity will damn you, just like cultural Islam, Hindu, animism, ancestor worship, Judaism and atheism. Your efforts to save yourself and be a better person are worthless. You have to understand the gospel of Jesus from your heart. These accounts about Jesus in Luke 8 are carefully arranged so that you will take to heart and embrace the true identity and authority of Jesus Christ. The chapter begins with Jesus challenging his audience to hear his Word and take it to heart. Then he shows his absolute authority over nature, his total dominance over demons. The crescendo continues. Jesus is so powerful that if you touched him, you could be healed and if you were dead and he touched you, you would rise again. Who else could do this, but God?

Read Text:

The Applebee’s commercials starring Lions head coach, Dan Campbell are pretty funny. Part of the catch is that you don’t expect an NFL head coach to have a side hustle as a waiter. What are you doing here? The guy’s salary pays \$11,000 a day. So, no one is going into Applebee’s thinking that Dan’s got the time or the need to do this job. If he ever did this, it would not be because he needed to, but because he wanted to for some reason. Even though the prophecies made these promises, it was almost impossible to imagine that God had actually come to earth and was walking around Capernaum and other towns in Galilee. What are you doing here? But,

how else can you explain what Jesus did? But I want you to see both the power of Christ and the incredible compassion of Christ. He is not only alone in his authority and power, but he is absolutely amazing in his compassion and sympathy for people that we would assume that someone in his position would not have time for. Put together is this: Jesus is demonstrating his power and authority over all, so that you will know that He is God, He alone can save you and so that you will turn from your sin and any of your efforts to run your life and trust him completely, no matter what.

This account is full of contrast and heart-stopping, intense drama. The contrast is immediate. When Jesus returned from the other side of the lake, where the people begged him to leave because they were afraid of him, he was welcomed by a crowd that was waiting for him to come. One of them was a man who was desperate for Jesus to come.

1. The man desperate for Jesus. (40-42)

Jairus was a ruler of the local synagogue. The nation of Israel had synagogues (Greek word for meeting places) scattered throughout the country and in many of the countries where there was a concentration of Jews. They were not part of Israel in the OT until the Southern Kingdom was conquered by the Babylonians in 586 and thousands of the people from the tribe of Judah (who then became known as Jews) were deported to Babylon. The Temple was destroyed in Jerusalem, so in an effort to not lose their beliefs, the Jews started meeting together on Saturdays and eventually began to build places to meet, which became known as synagogues. When the Jews returned to Israel they built synagogues throughout Israel even while the Temple was being restored. Since the life of town or city revolved around the synagogue, the ruler of the synagogue was a very important person. Synagogues were led by a group of elders (typically 3-7 men) which, later on became a model for leadership that God established for local churches. Jairus was either seen as the leader of these elders or he was the elder tasked with arranging the services in the synagogue. Already there is a growing dissent and hostility among the religious leaders concerning the ministry of Jesus. The synagogues would prove at times to be flashpoints, but here was an exception to that. Jairus was a religious leader who believed in Jesus. In fact, he was desperate for Jesus.

The ruler of the synagogue falls down at Jesus feet and starts imploring him to come to his house. Jairus is desperate and whether or not his synagogue or others have been hostile towards Jesus, he doesn't care. His only daughter is about 12 years old and she is dying. Jairus is aware that he has a problem that he cannot fix. What is worse is that he cannot fix his daughter.

As a dad, I've always wanted to and felt a deep urgency to fix things for my kids, especially my girls. A dad wants to protect his girls. If something was broken, I wanted to fix it. If something was wrong, I wanted to make it right. If someone touched them I would probably go to jail. I want to fix everything, but I can't. If Cathi and I are watching the Lions or Tigers and they make a bad play, she usually punches me and yells, "Why'd they do that?" I don't know! I don't like getting punched, but I like the fact that she instinctively thinks that I can do something. I cannot

imagine the utter sense of frustration that Jairus had knowing that his little girl was dying and he couldn't help her. Did she look scared? Did his wife scream for him to do something? His only daughter was dying and he couldn't fix her, but he knew someone who could. He knew Jesus could heal her, so Jairus heads out desperate to find Jesus and he does. He falls down before him, he implores him to come to his house, he doesn't care what others think, what ridicule or shame he will face from the others, he loses all of his dignity as the ruler of the synagogue, his daughter is dying and he is desperate for her to live. The end of v.42 is all we need to know. "Jesus went."

If Jesus comes for your daughter, your daughter is going to be alright, no matter what. Jairus couldn't fix her, but he just did what every dad wants to do, he found a way to make her whole. He found Jesus and Jesus was on his way. It doesn't matter what happens now. Jesus is coming. Jesus went and Jairus's world just changed. But the crowds made traveling difficult. "The people pressed around him." It was slow going and reading this, we all feel the urgency of the moment. A 12-year-old girl was approaching marriageable age. Life expectancy was much shorter then. There was no such thing as a teenager. You basically skipped a good bit of adolescence and went into adulthood. Therefore, this 12-year-old girl was thought of as coming into the prime of her life and just as she was on the cusp of it, her life was being snuffed out. But with Jesus coming, that was about to change. At least we thought. Jesus was coming but there was more than a man desperate for Jesus. V. 43 says, "*there was a woman....*"

2. The woman desperate for Jesus. (43-48)

The girl who was dying was 12 years old. There was a woman in the crowd who had been suffering for 12 years. She had a very personal bleeding condition which had all sorts of ramifications. She would likely be anemic, weak, unable to marry, or if married unable to have children, or care for them well. She would be ceremonially impure and unable to be around others. Her condition was untreatable. She had spent everything she had on doctors and they could not help her.

The contrast is sharp. Jairus is a man, she is a woman. Jairus is a named ruler of the synagogue. He is in the epicenter of religious life in the community. She is unnamed and impure. She cannot even go to the synagogue. She is not invited to people's homes. To touch her is to be ceremonially impure yourself. She is isolated, lonely, embarrassed and lives on the fringe. Jairus approached Jesus and fell before him at his feet. This woman tried to be discreet and unnoticed. Her condition is intensely personal. Her life for the past 12 years have been one disappointment after another. She has exhausted all of her money and she is worse off than before. She is marginalized, a failure, unclean, and embarrassed. Getting the nerve to try to see Jesus would be difficult enough, but now there is this crowd! And to make matters worse, Jesus has just been told about Jairus' daughter, so Jesus is leaving. Her chance to be healed is slipping away. Luke says that the crowd "pressed around him." That word translated "pressed" in v.42 is the same word that is translated "choked" in v.7. Somehow, she is able to get close enough to Jesus to reach out, and inconspicuously touch him. At least she thought it was inconspicuously.

She did not approach him from the front, but from behind. All she did was touch the fringe of his garment. Just the fringe. If I just touch even the edge of his clothes, she thought, and she did and *“immediately her discharge of blood ceased.”* Immediately. She was healed and she knew it.

But then, one of her greatest fears was realized. Jesus stopped and asked, “Who was it that touched me?” You can only imagine that her heart froze. Was it coincidental? Would she be discovered? Was Jesus mad, because someone unclean had touched him and he knew that he was now unclean? Would she be shamed in front of everybody? You know that she just wanted to melt into the ground. Peter was almost incredulous. “Who touched you? The crowd is pressing on you and you want to know who touched you?” Jesus clarified for Peter that it wasn’t that kind of a touch, it was a touch that resulted in power going out from him. Jesus had stopped, the crowd stopped. All denied that it was them but it was evident that Jesus wasn’t moving until whoever touched him admitted it. There is no hiding from Jesus.

Now, like Jairus the woman falls down before him. She is trembling with fear. When you are “the problem” and have been for 12 years you live with a stigma from others and a deep sense of shame and failure. She is so used to being let down and so used to being the one who has let others down. FAILURE could be tattooed right over her forehead because in her mind and in others, that is exactly what she was. Why should this be any different? Once again, she did not measure up. Once again, she was “that one.” And yet, she had been healed. She *“declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed.”* She just told everyone why she was so desperate for Jesus. She had a problem that no one could fix and she dared to believe that Jesus could. What would happen next?

Jesus knew who touched him but he wanted her to know that he knew and he wanted her to know that she mattered to him and that she was indeed well. She was not in trouble. In fact, the first word to her was, “Daughter.” She was probably older than Jesus. However, by calling her daughter he was underscoring a point that he had made earlier in v.21. Those who hear the word of God and do it, are his family. You are not an outcast anymore. You are in the family. My family. The woman trusted Christ and her faith drove her to taking this incredible risk. But there is no risk in trusting Jesus. And then Jesus says, *“your faith has made you well; go in peace.”*

Why does Luke include this account? He is demonstrating throughout this section of his gospel the power of God’s Word, the necessity to believe it and the benefit to those who do. As we will see, the biggest issue is not her being healed from her condition, but the proof that Jesus is who he says he is and can do what he says he will do. Jesus did not promise that he would heal everyone on earth, but he did promise to save from sin everyone who comes to him in faith. The ultimate point of his life was to die on the cross to pay for our sins so that we can be completely forgiven forever. If you believe the lie that you are so flawed, so needy, so internally ugly, and such a disappointment and failure that even God doesn’t want you, let this woman’s story open your heart to the grace of God for you. The grace of God for you, is not just a power, it is the person of Jesus who knows those whom he saves. He knows us and he wants us to know that he knows us. He knows our names. This dear lady did not interrupt the mission of

Jesus. She was the mission of Jesus. And so are you. Will you believe him? If you do, you will let others know.

Those whom Jesus saves go public. They do not keep it to themselves. They confess with their mouths and believe in their hearts that Jesus is Lord. Those who are his are willing to confess him before others. That is why Jesus commanded those who trust in him to then be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When you realize just how desperate you are without Christ, and you realize how deep his forgiveness is, and grace is, and love is and how rich his mercy is and what kind of welcome and acceptance is yours, you will tell others. You will have to. The change in your life will demand an explanation as it would in this woman's life. For 12 years she had heard, "What's wrong with you?" From now on, she would hear something else. "What happened to you?" She could say it. She touched Jesus, but in truth, it was he who reached out and touched her and he came all the way from heaven to do it.

The joy of the moment was short-lived. Someone came from Jairus' house and told him that his daughter was dead. It was too late. While Jesus was healing a woman who was sick, but not dying, he neglected to heal this girl who was. It is a scene repeated in almost every superhero movie. The courage and love of the superhero makes him or her vulnerable to the wiles of the villain who is able to hold hostage the hero's love while innocent civilians are at risk. In the moment the hero has to choose, who will he save, because he can't do both. Jesus, however, is not a superhero. He is God. He is never backed into a corner and forced to pick one over the other. His power is sufficient for all.

3. **Jesus can save and will save anyone desperate for him.** (49-56)

When Jairus hears this awful news, the messenger then says, "do not trouble the Teacher any more." But Jesus is more than a Teacher. His words are more than wise and helpful information. His word is life and power. Jesus immediately says to Jairus, "*Do not fear, only believe.*" Jairus did and Jesus, along with Peter, James and John went into the home, where the mourners were already in full gear. Jesus informed them that their grieving was premature and their services were no longer needed, to which they laughed. He didn't know what he was talking about. He was about to make a fool of himself. She was not sleeping. They knew the difference between sleeping and death and she was dead. What an idiot to give her parents false hope like that! "But taking her by the hand he called, 'Child, arise.'" Last week we saw that when Jesus commands, demons run. Here when Jesus commands, death flees and life comes. "*And her spirit returned, and she got up at once.*"

I love Luke's next comment. The girl had been dying. She was sick for obviously a while. Now, she was alive, but she could really use something to eat. Well, don't you think we should take this slowly? You know give her body a chance to adjust? No. Jesus gave her life. He did what you can't but now you need to do what you can do. Get her something to eat.

The chapter ends in a way that is similar to how it begins. At the beginning of this section, Jesus hides the truth by speaking in parables from those who refuse to believe. Now, surrounded by

people who were not ready to believe him, he told Jairus and his wife not to tell anyone what had happened. The time would come, but not now. Was this because Jesus was protecting Jairus as a ruler in the synagogue? Was he protecting the girl? On the other side of the lake he told the man who had been freed from the demons to tell everyone what had happened. Here, the command was to be quiet. Why?

Miracles like this, naturally become the center of attention and what people crave. The primary mission of Jesus was not to do miracles. In fact, from this point on, the number of miracles that Jesus performs decreases radically and the amount of teaching that he does increases radically. The power of Jesus word seen in the performing of miracles was so that you will believe in the truthfulness and authority of his Word to save. This woman who was healed and this girl who was raised back to life, would both get sick again at some point and both would die. But for those who trust in Christ alone, they will live with him forever.

When you love someone like Jairus did his daughter, you will do everything you can to get them to Jesus or get Jesus to them. Who do you love like that? Is it worth getting them to Jesus? One day Jairus probably walked his daughter down the aisle on her wedding day. The girl he lost, he got back and now on this beautiful day, he was giving her away. His faith in Jesus, saved her life. Jairus, was it worth it? Was it worth it the effort to find Jesus, to implore him to come to your house, to believe him even though you were told that she had died? We know the answer.

One day, this lady was celebrating Passover with her family, hugging family members she had not touched for 12 years, going to homes and events that she had stayed away from for 12 years. Jesus called her "daughter." If we could step into her world for a moment and the same, we could ask, "Daughter, was it worth it? Was it worth getting through the crowd to touch Jesus? Was it worth the risk? We know the answer.

What is it worth to trust Jesus? When you realize how desperate you really are, then you will know, it is worth everything and you will not be ashamed.