

Luke 8

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 26 March 2013 16:57

Being opposed is part of Christian witness. So is being attacked, scorned and being secretly undermined. For myself, this is so regular as to be constant. Yet, Jesus had all this 2000 years ago! I am merely following in His footsteps.

The difference is that Jesus is God, and He knew who was against Him and even what they were thinking. He did not kill them all with a thunderbolt or disease, but allowed them to live, to bring evil on Him. He knew that by letting them live He was bringing the logical conclusion - murder - to His relatively short human life. Yet, He carried on, healing and preaching and showing utmost compassion to the very people who were about to kill Him! That is our model for life.

The sheer power of the Lord amazes me, in every word of every book of scripture. We see before us the Creator come as a man, enduring things God should not endure. But, He did it to secure our salvation, the salvation of all who are elect. And how magnificent was that endurance! No quibbling, no complaining, no running away, no bleating about His lot! Rather, He embraced it all as part of His glorious plan. He did it in 'real time' in a real country, at a juncture in history that is not unlike that of today in the Middle East. That is what makes the Gospels so incredibly striking.

Verses 1-3

1.

And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

2.

And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

3.

And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

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From Nain, Jesus and His disciples travelled all over the country, from village to city to countryside, preaching the Gospel. Women who had been healed and had evil spirits cast out of them, came and ministered to Jesus. One of the women was Mary Magdalene, who had seven devils cast out of her. Mary or Maria was her name, but was called 'Magdalene' because she came from Magdala (from the Aramaic, *midgal*, meaning 'a tower': on the western banks of Lake Galilee, three miles north of Tiberius). She later accompanied Jesus' mother and other devout women, and was at the tomb after Jesus arose. Some have identified her as a prostitute, but there is no biblical evidence for this assertion.

With the other women and Mary was Joanna, wife of Herod's steward, Chuza. (Joanna – 'Jehovah is a great giver'; female version of John. Chuza, 'the seer', house steward to Herod Antipas). Indeed, many people came to Jesus to minister to him with food, clothing and whatever He needed, giving freely of whatever they had. Is this our experience? Do we give freely and abundantly from everything we have – because God gave it to us in the first place? And when we give to godly persons, do we give without counting the cost or holding back? (Because this is the same as giving to the Lord, whose servants they are).

Verses 4-15

1.

And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

2.

A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

3.

And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

4.

And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

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5.

And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

6.

And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?

7.

And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

8.

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

9.

Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

10.

They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

11.

And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

12.

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

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When a huge number of people had come to Jesus, from every corner of the country, He spoke in a parable that is now famous in biblical teaching; the parable of the sower and the seeds. A sower went out with his basket to sow seeds in ground prepared for them. But, some seeds scattered beyond the field and landed on the paths and boundaries. People passing by, and even the sower, trod on them and so they were destroyed. Birds flew down and ate them.

Seeds fell on rocks, and though they started to grow, they quickly died again because there was nothing to put roots down into and there were no nutrients or water. Yet others fell amongst thorns, which soon strangled the corn as it grew.

But, some seeds fell on the ground prepared for them; they grew as they ought, and produced a very large crop – from one sown seed came hundreds more, as kernels.

When Jesus finished his parable He loudly said: *“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”* This is the same as today - who bothers to listen properly to what God says in His word? Many just rely on their own very weak ideas, not wishing to learn genuine interpretation. So, they say what *they* wish to say, disregarding what God truly says, and what His chosen teachers teach.

The disciples were baffled and asked Jesus what He meant by the parable. It is here that we see that parables were not given for unbelievers to understand... only the believers would understand them. The rest would fail and the words would be a mystery and a stumblingblock to them. This is why Christians who think retelling scripture in easy language, making it all oversimplified, are very wrong. Unbelievers do not understand NOT because of the language or the way we speak, but because they are spiritually dead! They CANNOT understand, no matter how simple the words are. Until they are born-again, the Christian Gospel makes no sense. Therefore, if YOU do not understand God, you must ask yourself if you truly have salvation.

Jesus explained the parable to the disciples: *“The seed is the word of God”*. The people outside the field (not elected) listen attentively to God, but quickly lose interest, because Satan deceives them, *“lest they should believe and be saved”*

. This does NOT mean people can choose Jesus of their own accord – if they choose Jesus it is because they are born-again by the Spirit. Thus, if Satan snatches them away from truth, it is

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because they never were elected.

A similar thing happens to the seed that landed on rocks: the hearers are interested for a short while, until the things of this world detract them and they go off on another road to find pleasure, sin and godless activities. Not because the teaching or preaching was inadequate, but because they are not elect and cannot keep up the pretence of belief. No person who is saved can ever be lost!

The seed amongst the thorns grew well at first, and then was choked to death. These people start out with enthusiasm – we often see them rise like shooting stars, only to fall very quickly... they 'run out of steam'. They are beaten by life's woes, riches, promises and worldly pleasures, so they no longer care to bring forth spiritual fruit. Indeed, they never do bring forth anything spiritual. These tend to be very zealous at first, they pray loudly and profusely, they show great regard for carrying their Bibles in public and stopping everyone in the street, asking if they are saved. But, it is all show. It is a product of emotion and intellect, and does not last.

Good examples today are charismatics, who, when amongst others of like mind, can even last up to a number of years, fed not by Christ but by emotional hype and lies. But, the lies must always be renewed and replaced by something even grander and more exciting, otherwise people lose interest. Charismatic churches are crammed full with these dead plants, supported by promises of personal power.

On the other hand, the seed that grows in good ground refers to the people who hear gladly and grow steadily in grace. They keep the word in their hearts, making sure it applies to every part of their souls. They do not rush ahead like the false believers, but grow as the Lord requires, often slowly. Sin and circumstances do not detract them, and so their spirits are strong. These are the truly saved. Can you detect persons who are truly saved, and those who are not?

Verses 16-18

1.

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

2.

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For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

3.

Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

We should be able to detect who is genuinely saved. Jesus gives us signs to look for. If a man lights a candle, he does not then hide its light under the bed or under something that blocks the rays. To do so would be absurd and illogical. (Bear in mind that candles in those days were expensive means of illumination and so much valued). No, he puts it in a candlestick so that people who enter his home do not stumble but see everything before them. Note how many teachers and denominations hide the light by speaking in falsities and complexities, thus blocking God's truth and the Gospel from all who come to them for illumination.

Though men and Satan try their best to hide the light of God, God makes sure that the light shines forth at some time from somewhere. God breaks through the subterfuge and error and those who are elect will find the light. Jesus warns His listeners to hear Him carefully. If they already "hath" (are chosen by God) they will be given the light. But, if they are not elect, even if they hear the Gospel gladly, it will be taken away again, leaving them with nothing. Beware of those shooting stars and those who display a flurry of interest at first. Steady their hearts and their extensive rushing around to see if they are genuine.

Verses 19-21

1.

Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press.

2.

And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee.

3.

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And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

As Jesus was speaking, Jesus' own mother and brothers/sisters arrived, but could not get near Him for the crowd. Someone came to Jesus to tell Him, and Jesus gave what seems to be an astonishing answer: "My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it."

This should not be taken to mean he had no interest in His earthly mother and family. He was making a point – that *anyone* who believed (proved by their putting the 'power' into action) was His family, and was always close. Note how Paul later echoed Jesus' words; he, too, demanded to see the power in action and not just hear words of profession. Anyone can claim to be a Christian, but it is only their activity, their putting truth into action, that proves their profession of faith.

Verses 22-25

1.

Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

2.

But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.

3.

And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

4.

And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

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One day after that, Jesus and His disciples (here probably meaning the Twelve) were on the shore of Galilee and entered a ship. Jesus wanted to get to the other side, the eastern shore, of the Lake. So, the ship set out. As the vessel rocked gently, Jesus went to sleep. As He slept a storm struck the Lake, whipping up large waves that engulfed the ship, causing panic amongst the apostles. They awoke Jesus with the words of fear, "Master, master, we perish".

Note that they did not say 'Master, we will perish unless you do something'! They had been with Jesus constantly since His ministry began; they had witnessed His miracles and power, and yet, in a crisis, they were filled with fear. That is why Jesus remarked, "Where is your faith?" We are all like this, showing great fear even though Jesus is with us and we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. We might even admit that this kind of worldly reaction is an insult to the Lord.

Jesus calmly stood up and rebuked the storm. The wind and waves just stopped and all was quiet. They could not resist the authority of the Creator! We can have very damaging and fearful times, but no matter how fearsome they are, God is in control and sees all. We need only to be calm and believe in the power of the Lord Who saves us. Do we do this? Not often, to our demerit and shame.

It is obvious that though they had seen so much of Jesus' power on land, they still did not fully realise Who this person was. He had even told listeners He was God! They spoke amongst themselves, saying 'Who on earth is this man, if he can command the elements and they cease their raging?' What foolish people we are. Our supposed faith is tested at its weakest point, by earthly woes and trials. Until that happens we always claim to have faith and to trust.

We are staunch until the trial becomes personal and close! Then, we run amok inwardly, in panic and depression! So much for faith! We are all liable to lose faith at these times, but oh what a shame. This is why we must all discipline our minds and hearts to respond rather than react, to everything life throws up. If we prepare ourselves spiritually, then we will not run about with arms waving, in tears and depression, expressing doubt and anxiety for all to see, especially the unbelievers who would love us to fail.

Verses 26-31

1.

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And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

2.

And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

3.

When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

4.

(For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

5.

And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

The ship finally got to the other (eastern) shore. This part was ruled by the Gadarenes ('reward at the end') or Gergesenes, the whole country being named Peraea. The chief city was about six miles from the shore. This means the ship had sailed from top left to bottom right, of the Galilee Lake. The city, Gadara, was on the banks of the Hieromax river, 'over against' or opposite, Galilee, set on a mountain top. According to Josephus, the majority of the citizens were Gentiles. This makes sense because the area had been annexed to Roman Syria for over thirty years.

Atheists pour scorn on the account, for obvious reasons! They point out that Luke refers to Gergesa, Matthew to Gadara, and Mark to Gerasa, in an effort to point out alleged errors in the text. This is common unbelieving practice and may be ignored. Both Mark and Luke use the term 'Gerasenes', and Gadara became part of the Syrian province after Herod the Great died.

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So, changes in names, or use of multiple spellings, were commonplace. It does not mean someone lied or made a mistake... where I live is called 'Swansea', which, in Welsh is called 'Abertawe'. To make things complicated, the Welsh translates as mouth of the (River) Tawe, while the Anglicized name, Swansea, has its origin in the name of the Viking, Sweyne, who captured the settlement... but there is another explanation – that the name suggests the coastal area was inhabited by swans! See how easy it is to think someone made a mistake? It could be Sea of the Swans, Sweyne's Eye, Abertawe, or Swansea!

Going back to Gadara... it is not called that in scripture, but the name Gadarenon is used ('country of the Gadarenes'), and at that time Gadara had civil rule over a smaller nearby town of Gerasa, so both names were used as one. Added to this, the name probably is based on the Hebrew, *gader*. Then we have the fact that there were probably two places with the same name (Buhl, *Geographic des alten Palastina*, 255; Guthe)... but, atheists cannot cope with complicated facts!

I have often said that the arguments used by atheists are infantile and badly researched! Modern Bible scholars agree that all three variants used in scripture refer to the same place and are valid. Another point used by atheists is that one Gospel writer refers to one demoniac, while another reports two demoniacs. This simply means that one writer did not mention two! (Interestingly, the heretical, unbelieving theologians, Westcott and Hort, want us to reject any mention of 'Gergesenes', and their influence on many theologians cannot be ignored).

When the ship landed, and Jesus got onto dry land, He was met by a wild man, naked and babbling, who had been demon-possessed for a very long time. Because of his wild, untamed state, he lived in the tombs, of which there were many, and in the rocky wilderness leading to the Lake. The tombs had carved stone doors and were often used as grain houses, or as homes. These tombs covered a very large area below the city, which occupied the top of the mountain, and dotted the mountain side for extensive distances. Today, the tombs are lived in by the small number of inhabitants, descendants of those massacred by Vespasian, who burnt the city to the ground, leaving survivors to live wherever they could.

This account, then, speaks of Jesus dealing with the demoniac (or demoniacs) somewhere between the shore and the chief city. I can walk a similar distance in my home town in about two hours. But, in this region, the valley floor was perilous and hard to navigate. It would seem, then, that Jesus did not venture beyond the shore, and that the demoniac must have seen the ship arriving from a distance. It could also be that he was roaming from his tombs and came

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across Jesus as verse 29 suggests.

The man fell at the feet of Jesus and *“he cried out”*. This followed Jesus commanding the demons to leave the man, who was so demonically insane, he was kept bound in chains. But, demoniacs are stronger than mere chains, and the man often tore them off. The devils forced him to leave the main occupied areas, to live in the wilderness between the chief city, Gadara, and the shore (which agrees with my summation).

If we carefully examine the verses, we can imply that the *“he”* who spoke to Jesus, was not the possessed man himself, but one of the demons inside him (verse 28). We could expect that the voice was not that of the poor man, but was of the demon; possessed men often ‘speak’ like this, the demon voices being different from their own.

The demon wanted to know why Jesus had come – was it to ‘torment’ him and his fellows? This is not to do with torture, but means to harass or to vex. The demons knew Who Jesus was. This was why they forced the man to fall onto his knees before the *“Son of God most high”*. They had no option but to show Jesus servility! The demon who spoke was only the spokesman, hence the singular words *“he”* and *“me”* are used. The demon pleaded with Jesus not to harm them, though He had every right to do so. The demon implied that demons and Jesus ‘did not mix’ and were totally different, e.g. *“What have I to do with thee?”*

Jesus generally did not discuss anything with demons, but on this occasion He asked the one speaking for his name. The demon said *“Legion”*. Other texts add *“for we are many”*. The number of soldiers in a legion changed with history, but at the time of Augustus, a legion consisted of almost seven thousand men. We can accept, then, that the man in the text was inhabited by thousands of demons.

If not the actual number of a legion, it was also used to signify a very large number. In theory a man can be filled with many thousands of demons because they have no physical size, shape, or volume. Some might argue that the spokesman demon could have been lying. This is a fallacy, for the demon knew Jesus to be God and could discern how many there were; also, being God, Jesus demanded to know and the demon could not lie; and, Jesus knew anyway!

Verses 31-33

1.

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And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

2.

And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

3.

Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

After the spokesman gave the number, the other demons all clamoured to plead with Jesus. They knew their time in the man was ended, and begged Jesus not to send them “*into the deep*” , or *abyssos*
– the bottomless pit in the centre of earth known as Orcus, which was used extensively, but not exclusively, to house demons.

This is the abyss of Sheol, which is a curious reference, for demons would have known whether or not such a place was actual and not mythical. It seems they feared being sent there, because though in the pit they could be free, they could have no real power or choice in the place, which is probably why demons prefer a living body to inhabit, through whom they can act.

This then causes us to ask “*Is Orcus a real place, even today?*” The answer must be “*Why not?*”

Christians who cast out demons ought to consign them to ‘the deep’, or ‘pit’, never to harass people again. Of course, others can take their place, but these can be dealt with another time.

Jesus could easily have sent the demons not just to the pit, but to oblivion. But, He did not, for each one must receive eternal punishment. Thus, He allowed the demons their request. This does NOT mean any human being can discuss options with Satan or with demons! As far as we are concerned we cast out a demon and send him to the deep, the pit. Many pigs were feeding on the mountain side, and the demons begged Jesus to send them to the pigs, living bodies.

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“And he suffered them”; that is, He permitted them their request.

Note that Jesus had already ordered the demons to leave, before the spokesman- demon spoke to Him. So, the command had already been given. Now, the demons left the man of their own accord and entered the pigs. The sudden assault literally drove the pigs wild and they ran amok, down the mountain-side, and into the lake, all drowning in the event. What happened to the demons? We do not know.

Note: The pig herders were not Jews but Gentiles, for pigs were unclean animals, and no Jew could use pigs to build a business, nor sell them, nor touch them.

Verses 34-37

1.

When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

2.

Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

3.

They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

4.

Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

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The pig-herders had watched all this from a safe distance, and fled in terror. Not just because they had witnessed an amazing sight, but because the owners would otherwise blame them for the loss of the entire herd! They ran all the way to Gadara, struggling up the side of the steep mountain until they entered the city, and telling everyone on the way. In the city they told the owners and the town leaders, who all left the city to see for themselves... in time, this took several hours, if not all day.

They were amazed to find the former demoniac sitting quietly at the feet of Jesus, clothed and well and speaking coherently. To a man, they were terrified. And the herders repeated how the casting out had occurred. After hearing the facts, the city leaders urged Jesus to leave. The people with them asked the same thing. Is it not strange that something so stupendous would cause people to ask Jesus to leave, instead of stay to heal and preach? But, they were petrified of the power shown by Jesus and did not want judgment pouring on their heads... or so they thought.

In reality, by asking Jesus to leave they effectively damned their own souls. Jesus left the region to return to west Galilee. The demoniac benefitted, but his countrymen lost an opportunity to hear the Son of God. Of course, this had to happen, because Jesus came not to the Gentiles (this was left to Paul and others), but to His chosen people, the Jews. But imagine – telling Jesus to go! I shudder at the thought. But, modern Christians often do this by ignoring His commands.

Verses 38&39

1.

Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying,

2.

Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

The now freed demoniac asked Jesus if he could go with him. This would be a rightful response after he had lived in the wild, doing abominable things, for many years. He had witnessed and experienced the power of God! But, Jesus commanded him to go home and to tell everyone

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what had happened. In this way the Gentiles heard of Jesus and the greatness of the Lord, a ready pool of listeners when the apostles finally went to preach to them later.

Verses 40-42

1.

And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him.

2.

And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

3.

For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

After Jesus returned to Judaea the people were pleased to see Him back. The crowds had waited patiently for Him to come and were eager to hear more and to have people healed. These were amazing days, but note how in amongst these scenes of joy were also scenes of disrespect and hatred. Can we expect anything less in our own lives?

At some time during the day, the leader of the local synagogue, Jairus ('whom God enlightens'), sought Jesus out. Unlike the Pharisees, Jairus fell at Jesus' feet in an act of worship, pleading that He should go with him to his home, where his only child, a daughter aged twelve, lay dying.

As soon as Jesus attempted to leave the crowd, they pressed in even closer, not wanting Him to go. Far from being detrimental, this gave Jesus the opportunity to again prove the power of God that transcended every person, place and urgency. The crowd prevented Jesus from going anywhere. We can feel deeply for Jairus, whose only child lay dying, as his plea turned to panic and grief. For him, time was ticking to its end, but to Jesus it made no difference to His power!

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Verses 43-48

1.

And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

2.

Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.

3.

And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

4.

And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

5.

And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him and how she was healed immediately.

6.

And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

One of the crowd, a mature woman, came behind Jesus and touched the bottom of His clothes. She had suffered loss of blood continually (probably from the womb or allied organs) for twelve years and had paid out everything she had to physicians, to no effect. She was desperate and so even to touch the great man's clothing would be something wonderful. Many today only accept from Jesus whatever they perceive to be an answer! They do not understand that Jesus

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can respond to our pleas in any way He wishes! And He may not respond in any way that we have thought about!

As soon as the woman touched the clothing, her bleeding stopped. Remarkably, Jesus immediately asked who had touched Him. Peter and the others said, 'Master, the crowd is pressing against you continually and yet you ask who touched you?' They marvelled at Jesus' question, for *everyone* was touching Jesus!

But, to Jesus, only one touch had meaning. No-one admitted to it, until the woman, afraid of what Jesus might do, approached and said it was she who had touched Him. She said that as soon as she had done so, she was healed. Jesus, full of compassion, told her to be cheered and to go in peace, for her faith had made her whole.

Though many were touching Jesus inadvertently because of the jostling crowd, Jesus knew instantly when one person did so out of desperation and need. He knows the difference between a sincere request and pleading and a generalised dutiful prayer! And He will surely answer the one plea out of hundreds of dutiful meaningless prayers. Can YOU discern truth from lies, real spiritual need from spouted shams?

Verses 49-56

1.

While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

2.

But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

3.

And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

4.

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And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.

5.

And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

6.

And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.

7.

And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

8.

And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

As Jesus was talking to the woman, someone from Jairus' house arrived. They advised him not to bother the Master, because his daughter was now dead. Jesus heard what was said and, without hesitation, told the group not to be afraid, but to believe that the girl would be healed.

Of course, Jesus is God, so He can know instantly, and in advance, what an outcome is. As His followers, if we live in accordance with His commands, we, too, will know instantly what to say and do. This is because we are His children and are given the benefits of spiritual power and authority. This may not be in total, because we are still sinners, but we should have a broad ability to know what an outcome should be.

It is obvious, from what transpired, that the servants and perhaps the father, secretly ignored what Jesus said. Even so, knowing their unbelief, Jesus went with Jairus to his house. He told everyone but Peter, James and John, and the girl's parents, to stay outside, while the usual mourners wailed and wept. Jesus said 'Don't cry! The girl is only asleep, not dead'. Those who were crying looked at Him with scorn, and may have muttered against Jesus, for they saw that

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the girl was dead. In doing this they mocked Jesus.

Why did Jesus say the girl was asleep? Well, He might only have used an alternative term. Or, it could be that she had a malady that caused a symptom that looked like death. Dead or not, her condition was serious!

Because of their unbelief, Jesus told everyone to leave the room and stood alone before the dead/sleeping girl. He held her hand and simply said "*Maid arise*". Verse 55 tells us that she had indeed been physically dead:

"And her spirit came again"

. That is, it returned. This plainly means that her spirit had departed, taken by God in death. Now, God - Jesus - returned the spirit, the part of humans that gives them life, and the girl immediately sat up and got off the bed. Jesus led the girl to the other room and told the parents to give her food.

The parents were astonished and yet Jesus told them not to tell anyone else what He had done. This would be impossible, because the girl had died and was now alive after a visit from the Master! But, it was Jesus' command.

Is it not odd, that Jairus apparently believed Jesus could heal his daughter, and yet, when told she was dead, reversed his belief allowing Jesus to be scorned? Jairus must have known about the thousands of miracles performed by Jesus previously, and about the raising of the dead. Yet, he lost his belief when his daughter was declared dead.

We are all like this, so do not think you would do anything differently. Even after we have known good times or amazing miraculous events in our lives, we still groan in unbelief and think God will not answer our pleas. Even so, God patiently says, 'Do not fear. I am here and will do what is needed'. But, we continue to disbelieve, such is our sinful nature and the aim of Satan to derail our faith.

It is good for us to think as king David did – to firstly glorify the Lord, before we even think of giving Him our prayers and pleadings. It is His due and it is our privilege and honour to do so. Do not just claim benefits, like a grasping merchant! Praise Him above all else, and let God act as He wishes. Any pleas should come after praise of God... and this is a lifelong spiritual habit

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that leads to mighty benefits. As I write this, I am very aware of my own failings to do so, and that everyone I know is similarly deficient in this necessary action. But, we must continue! The Lord gave all for us, so the very least we can do is believe.

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