



## **Luke 8:40–48**

40 Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. 41 Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house 42 because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying. As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. 43 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no

one could heal her. 44 She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. 45 ‘Who touched me?’ Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, ‘Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.’ 46 But Jesus said, ‘Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.’ 47 Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. 48 Then he said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.’

## **Reflection**

In Luke 8 Jesus is teaching us about the nature of the kingdom of God. In particular, the kind of people who enter into it and become Christians. The kingdom of God is like a first century farmer scattering seed (Luke 8:1–15). Some falls on hardened pathways, on rocky ground, and amongst weeds – all to no avail. But other seed falls on good soil and produces a crop, a hundredfold more than was sown. The kingdom of God is like this. The good soil, fledgling new life, and that hundredfold harvest represent members of the kingdom of God. They exhibit a faith that can't be hidden, faith that may come from humble beginnings but ultimately burns like a lamp on a stand; a lamp that at once shines as a beacon to our world but also exposes its darkness (Luke 8:16–18). We

find faith like this in today's passage, in two people from very different walks of life. Luke holds them up before our eyes in Luke 8:40–48 which I'll read for us now,

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The kingdom of God is surprising. Its members are not who you'd expect. Even for Jesus mother and brothers there is no guarantee, Luke 8:20–21,

20 Someone told him, ‘Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.’ 21 He replied, ‘My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice.’

Entrance into the kingdom of God has nothing to do with the family you were born into. It is about faith proved genuine by hearing God’s word and putting it into practice.

Next Luke leaves us with a picture of Jesus’ shell-shocked disciples fearful and looking at Jesus as if they’d never truly seen him before (Luke 8:22–26). Jesus has just calmed the wind and waves with a word and they’re asking themselves ‘Who

is this man?’ Jesus asks of them, ‘Where is your faith?’ Because entrance into the kingdom of God isn’t a matter of who your friends are. It’s about faith proved genuine by the way you act.

The disciples doubt and are fearful and confused after witnessing this great miracle. But the naked, crazed, demon possessed Gentile who Jesus heals next responds with faith that puts them to shame (Luke 8:26–39). Because your background, where you’ve come from and the sins of your past count for nothing when it comes to entrance into the kingdom of God. At this stage the Twelve are still in doubt, but not this man, listen to his response again from yesterday,

38 The man from whom the demons

had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 'Return home and tell how much God has done for you.' So the man went away and told all over the town how much Jesus had done for him.

Today we meet Jairus, a man respected and esteemed in his community, a synagogue leader no doubt with an impeccable religious background, faultlessly going through the outward motions of faith as a member of a first-century Jewish community. But this counts for nothing when it comes to entrance into the kingdom of God. Jairus sought Jesus out, and despite his status, threw himself at Jesus' feet because entrance into the kingdom of God isn't about your religious background or

your success in keeping religious rules. It's about faith proved genuine by the way you act. But plenty more on Jairus tomorrow.

In tandem with Jairus today however Luke introduces us to another person who could not be further removed on the social spectrum. Where Jairus is well-off and respected, she is poor. Where he is accepted, she is rejected. He has a family, she is alone. He has loved his daughter, the light of his life, for the past twelve years. She's suffered relentless menstrual bleeding for the same amount of time, exhausting her finances and friendships in a futile attempt to be healed. People greet Jairus in the marketplace but they recoil from her. Jewish law deems her unclean, banishing her from the synagogue and Jewish company.

But this counts for nothing when it comes to the kingdom of God. Because entrance into the kingdom of God isn't about your finances or friendships, it's not about the way you are viewed by the world around you, your suffering or your good health. It's about faith proved genuine by the way you act. And look at this woman's faith. Mark describes it even more powerfully in his account,

27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 because she thought, 'If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.' Mark 5:27–28

Her faith may have been uninformed, superstitious, presumptuous, and imperfect;

but it was real. We can tell this by her actions. And Christ honoured her fledgling faith. Beginning faith is often like this. It's often uninformed, and mixed in with errors and misconceptions. But foggy understandings are often the beginning of an authentic and informed trust in God. We can take great courage from this passage in that we don't have to have everything figured out doctrinally in order to possess a faith that pleases God. We must believe that Jesus is God and that he died for our sins. We must rest everything on that. But entrance into the kingdom of God isn't about complete Biblical understanding; it's about faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus proved genuine by the way we act.

**Think**

Spend some time this morning reflecting on our passage and your faith. How has your life changed since you became a Christian? How is your faith proved genuine through your actions?

Or perhaps you're investigating Christianity, almost like a member of the great crowd pressing up against Jesus in our passage today. In a sea of a million hands, Christ will see the one that is raised in faith. Are you sensing within yourself the stirrings of faith? By God's grace, move towards him. It won't go unnoticed by the Master.

## **Pray**

Pray today that your faith would burn like a lamp on a stand; a beacon to the world

just as this woman's story has become. Pray also for the growth of the kingdom of God, capturing and captivating people from all walks of life, who've had a life changing and eternity defining encounter with the Lord Jesus. Pray too for anyone investigating Christianity or in a crisis in life that has them reaching out desperately to God as their last resort. Pray that they might find Jesus in their hour of need and come to see Christianity as the best answer to not only their current distress but also to the deepest questions of life. Pray all these things in Jesus' name.