

FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS

LUKE 8:40-56

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Fathers and Daughters

Luke 8:40-56

Let me just catch us up quickly. Jesus calmed a wild storm and cast out a legion of demons out of a wild man. The town was so freaked out, they asked Jesus to leave. Last week we left off with Jesus and the disciples getting in the boat and sailing away.

It appears that they are headed back for Capernaum. Capernaum is certainly one of Jesus' favorite places to minister. The people tended to be very soft and open towards his message and they really appreciated His ministry.

In this morning's text, Jesus is going to touch two women's lives. One woman is an adult, the other just approaching adulthood. There are a lot of comparisons between the stories of each woman. I'll explain as we go along. But look at this literary technique Luke uses here. We see this with many of the Bible writers. They will start one story, interrupt it with another, and then go back and finish their original story.

Clearly the key theme that connects these two stories is the love between fathers and daughters. For some reason, those of us who have had daughters know there is a special bond between our daughters and us. I don't know what your experiences have been with your daughters, but this incident could easily be true of my daughter and me.

A father passing by his teenage daughter's bedroom was astonished to see the bed was nicely made and everything was neat and tidy. Then he saw an envelope propped up prominently on the centre of the pillow. It was addressed "Dad". With the worst premonition, he opened the envelope and read the letter with trembling hands:

Dear Dad,

It is with great regret and sorrow that I'm writing you, but I'm leaving home. I had to elope with my new boyfriend Randy because I wanted to avoid a scene with Mom and you. I've been finding real passion with Randy and he is so nice to me. I know when you meet him you'll like him too - even with all his piercing, tattoos, and motorcycle clothes.

But it's not only the passion Dad, I'm pregnant and Randy said that he wants me to have the kid and that we can be very happy together.

Even though Randy is much older than me (anyway, 42 isn't so old these days is it?), and has no money, really these things shouldn't stand in the way of our

relationship, don't you agree? Randy has a great CD collection; he already owns a trailer in the woods and has a stack of firewood for the whole winter.

It's true he has other girlfriends as well but I know he'll be faithful to me in his own way. He wants to have many more children with me and that's now one of my dreams too.

Randy taught me that marijuana doesn't really hurt anyone and he'll be growing it for us and we'll trade it with our friends for all the cocaine and ecstasy we want. In the meantime, we'll pray that science will find a cure for AIDS so Randy can get better; he sure deserves it!!

Don't worry Dad, I'm 16 years old now and I know how to take care of myself. Someday I'm sure we'll be back to visit so you can get to know your grandchildren.

Your loving daughter.

At the bottom of the page there was a PS. Hands still trembling, her father turned the sheet, and read:

PS: Dad, none of the above is true. I'm over at grandma's house. I just wanted to remind you that there are worse things in life than my report card that's in my desk centre drawer. Please sign it and call when it is safe for me to come home. I love you!

It doesn't seem to matter how much they put us through, fathers always seem to have a real soft spot for their daughters.

The main idea of this morning's text is this. JESUS TEACHES HOW FATHERS OUGHT TO LOVE THEIR DAUGHTERS. I said earlier that these two incidents are meant to be interpreted and understood together. The story starts with Jesus being approached by a man about his sick daughter. On the way to the guy's house, another woman is healed by Jesus. Then Jesus goes to the guy's house and heals his daughter. Therefore, the story within the story forces us to interpret them together. There are so many comparisons. I am just going to point them out before we get into the passage so you can recognize them as we go along. Jesus portrays Himself as the loving Father. When He addresses the woman, He calls her daughter. The synagogue leader Jairus' daughter will also be healed by Jesus. The woman has been bleeding for 12 years. Jairus' daughter is 12-years-old. The woman receives blessings from God because of her faith and humility. Jairus' daughter is also healed because of Jairus' faith and humility. The woman was ceremonially unclean for 12 years. Therefore she was socially and religiously dead. Jairus' daughter was physically dead. Jesus gave new life to both of them. Jesus was tender with both of them. Here is one striking difference. Jairus was at the top of society and rich. The poor woman was lowly, poor, and had no status. However, they both find life kneeling and submitting to Jesus.

Now we are ready to get into the text.

A FATHER'S LOVE (VS 40-42a)

In verse 40 through the first half of verse 42 we are introduced to a father's love. **LOVING FATHERS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY HUMILITY AND SACRIFICIAL LOVE.** For those of us who are fathers, that's quite a challenge to live up to.

IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK HOME (40)

For Jesus, it's good to be back home as illustrated in verse 40. Those of you who travel a great deal know that no matter how much fun you have, it's always good to get home. Jesus and the disciples went through two adventures. They went through a horrific storm and came into contact with horrific demons. They just came from a town that did not appreciate their ministry. In fact they were asked to leave. But here the text says that a crowd was waiting at the shore, expecting Him to return. And when they arrived, they were welcomed. It really does seem as if Jesus and the disciples were treated like rock stars in Capernaum. No wonder Jesus enjoyed this city and no wonder He did a lot of miracles here. I can tell you that there is nothing more rewarding for a pastor to minister to people who really do want to grow and are humble enough to take direction. Jesus was in the perfect element for Him.

AN ACT OF HUMILITY AND LOVE (41)

In verse 41 we see that He is not disappointed as He is greeted with an act of humility and love. We are introduced to a man named Jairus. He is the ruler of the local synagogue. He could also be referred to as the president of the synagogue. His position encompassed what today we would call the Senior Pastor, the Executive Pastor, and the Worship Pastor all rolled up into one. It was a very prestigious job for a Jew. He enjoyed plenty of money and status. He would be on the top of the socio-economic ladder. He was a powerful man. And yet we see him here on his knees, at the feet of Jesus, begging. We also have to keep this in mind. By this time, Jesus has had several run-ins with the local and national religious leaders. Jesus was quickly becoming persona non gratis among the leaders of Judaism. But here is the president of the local synagogue kneeling and begging at Jesus' feet. What is it that could cause such a rich and powerful man to be begging at Jesus' feet? The simple answer is love. Jairus passionately loved his daughter. No doubt he was aware of Jesus' reputation to love and to heal. Jairus needed Jesus. His only daughter was dying.

If you have never loved sacrificially, then you have never loved. True love is sacrificial and humble. Throughout the Gospels and in fact the whole Bible, it is clear that it takes love and humility to be in an effective relationship with God. Jairus loved his little girl and no matter how much pride he had to swallow, no matter what it cost, no matter what the consequences, nothing would stop him from asking Jesus to heal his daughter.

A RECIPIENT OF LOVE (42a)

And in the second half of verse 42, the recipient of this incredible love is described. She is Jairus' daughter. She is a 12-year-old girl. She was just entering womanhood and yet she lies dying. She is an only child and her daddy loved her more than he loved himself.

Let me just take this moment to talk to men. Your wife and your children should feel as if they are loved by you more anything or anyone except God. They should feel from you all the love, tenderness, and care that God shows for you. They should be able to say that my husband, my father sacrificed a great deal for me.

Let me carry this one step further for those of you fathers who have daughters. The way you treat them is the kind of man they will choose for a husband. If you are abusive and a putz, they will marry an abusive putz. You set the standard. If you are a kind, loving, strong, gentle, sacrificial man, that's the kind of man your daughter will marry. That's quite an assignment. This guy has just demonstrated that **LOVING FATHERS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY HUMILITY AND SACRIFICIAL LOVE.**

Here we have just witnessed the incredible passionate love a father had for his daughter. In the second half of verse 42 thru verse 48 we will witness another Father's love. Luke's Gospel brings this truth out more than any other Gospel. **WOMEN ARE JUST AS IMPORTANT TO GOD AS MEN.** In many cultures, women are valued only a little higher than animals and other possessions. They are certainly not as valuable as men in these cultures. When I lived in Taiwan, I worked with the Chinese police on joint investigations. When we came upon an accident, it was clear that if a little girl had been killed, people would be sad, but not hysterical. On the other hand, if an ox had been killed or maimed, the owners would be hysterical demanding a payment. If a boy had been killed, not only would the parents and townspeople be sad, they would be beyond consolation and would demand a great deal of money to settle this loss. When little girls were born, people would be happy, but if a little boy was born, the entire neighborhood would celebrate and have a big party. Let's take our lessons from Jesus and not from culture.

ANOTHER FATHER'S LOVE (VS 42b-48)

AN ACT OF HUMILITY AND LOVE (42b-44)

In the second half of verse 42 thru verse 44 we witness another act of humility and love. Do you remember that I said at the beginning that these two incidents were meant to be taken together? Just as Jairus won Jesus' heart with humility and love, we see the same thing here. We are introduced to a woman who had been subject to bleeding for 12 years. In other words, she had been bleeding as long as Jairus' daughter had been alive. There are a few things we must point out about this woman. Most scholars think this was probably a continual chronic vaginal bleeding. Bleeding rendered a person ceremonially unclean. In other words, they were not allowed to participate in public worship. Since everyone and everything she

touched would also become ceremonially unclean, she didn't receive much human interaction. In fact, this woman should not have been in a crowd because everyone she even brushed against would become unclean and not even know it. This woman was religiously and socially dead for as long as Jairus' daughter had been alive. But Jairus' daughter was nearing physical death. To continue to compare these incidents, let me quote you some facts that Mark gave us that we could understand why Luke the physician may leave out:

"25And there was a woman in the crowd who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years. 26She had suffered a great deal from many doctors through the years and had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she was worse. 27She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched the fringe of his robe. 28For she thought to herself, "If I can just touch his clothing, I will be healed." 29Immediately the bleeding stopped, and she could feel that she had been healed!" (Mark 5:25-29 / NLT).

Mark informs us that during these 12 years, she spent everything she had on doctors. Not only were they not able to cure her, she suffered even more at their hands. Now this woman was totally broke and unless someone helped here, she may as well be dead. Jairus' daughter had no money. She was dependent on her father. It was a good thing she had a loving father. We will see that this poor destitute woman also has a loving Father.

It seems as if she has a little superstition mixed with faith here. She reasoned that if somehow she could just manage to touch the hem of Jesus' robe, she would be healed. Listen to what it was like with Jesus and His disciples. Even the disciples became known for their power to heal:

"12Meanwhile, the apostles were performing many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And the believers were meeting regularly at the Temple in the area known as Solomon's Colonnade. 13No one else dared to join them, though everyone had high regard for them. 14And more and more people believed and were brought to the Lord—crowds of both men and women. 15As a result of the apostles' work, sick people were brought out into the streets on beds and mats so that Peter's shadow might fall across some of them as he went by. 16Crowds came in from the villages around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil spirits, and they were all healed" (Acts 5:12-16 / NLT).

How much superstition was mixed with faith, I'm not sure of but I do know this. This woman risked everything to try and touch Jesus. If she was found out to have been unclean and touching all those people, she may have been killed. Jairus risked his job and his reputation to come and make contact with Jesus. It takes courage to receive the blessings of life. Acting out in faith always involves fear and risk. When we forgive someone, it takes courage and risk because we have no idea how they will use their forgiveness. In reality, if they use our forgiveness like we use God's forgiveness, there is a great deal of likelihood they will mistreat us again the way we mistreat God. Nevertheless, we are called to forgive. Believe me, acting out in faith requires courage because it will cost us time, money, energy, and hurt.

Jairus' risk will pay off and we see in verse 44 that this woman's risk paid off as well. The key word is immediately. As soon as she touched the hem of Jesus' robe, she was healed immediately. The bleeding stopped. I don't think pleasing God is all that complicated. We see that He is moved by humility and sacrificial love. And He is pleased when we act out in faith with courage. The Bible seems to define courage not as the absence of fear, but doing what's right even though we are afraid. Faith means that we should be facing fear and overcoming it. That's one of the lessons Jesus wanted the disciples to learn when they were caught in the storm in the middle of the lake.

I want you to hear clearly what I am not saying. I am not saying that when we overcome our fear and act out in faith, humility, and sacrificial love, that everything will turn out okay according to worldly standards. No. In fact we know the apostles suffered and were killed for their faith in Christ. We know that the early Christians were burned alive and used as street lamps. We know they were thrown to gladiators and wild animals so crowds could be entertained by their torturous deaths. Down throughout the years, Christians have been jailed, humiliated, tortured, and killed for their faith. We live in a culture that teaches us that all religions are equal and we can't even stand up to that lie by publicly telling our friends and others that we don't believe that.

But never fear, persecution is on its way for us. It will quickly become unpopular to be a professing Bible Christian. It takes courage to follow Christ in faith. It takes courage to demonstrate humility and sacrificial love. What we have to keep in mind is this. This world is not our final destination. Heaven is our final destination. We are being prepared to live eternally in heaven with our Lord and Savior Jesus.

THE HOMETOWN CROWD (45-46)

Let's pick up the incident here. The woman touched the hem of Jesus' robe and she was healed instantly. At this point, she is now trying to slip out of the crowd unnoticed. But in verses 45-46 we see Jesus stop in the middle of the hometown crowd. Keep this in mind. This is Jesus the rock star, mobbed by His adoring fans. All of a sudden Jesus stops and says, "Who touched me?" Peter's answers are so us, aren't they? He in essence says, "Come on Jesus, everybody's touching everybody. What are You talking about? Why are You making a big deal about this now? We have to get to Jairus' house. Do You remember, his daughter is dying?"

Jesus continues to make a big deal about it. He explains that this was not just a touch of the crowd jostling and touching each other. This was a deliberate touch; a touch of desperation, a touch of hope, and a touch of faith. This was a touch that caused power to flow from me. This touch received a miracle. Now the crowd hushes and you can hear a pin drop. What happened? The crowd now becomes focused on Jesus as He explains that someone touched Him and tapped into His healing power through faith. To be sure, this crowd in this town is a crowd filled with faith. Yet someone touched Him with a special kind of faith. I think Jesus knew who it was but He has some additional blessings for this woman.

A RECIPIENT OF LOVE (47-49)

And in verses 47-49 we meet the recipient of this love. Look at verse 47. The woman knew that Jesus knew it was her. Luke says the woman realized she could not go unnoticed. She came trembling and fell at His feet. She knew that everyone would be furious with her. And she no doubt Jesus would be angry with her because now according to Hebrew law, she had made Him unclean as well. Their local Hero and Holy Man was now unclean. The crowd would be upset at this as well because they may fear that He would no longer be able to perform miracles. It was a big deal for Jews to remain ceremonially clean.

She now makes a public confession and explains the desperation that cause her 12 years of pain. She explained how when she heard all that Jesus had done and how many He had healed she regained hope that she hadn't felt in a long time. This hope grew into faith and it gave her the courage to act. And even though she was healed, she may feel that she was healed only to be killed by an angry mob.

But Jesus, the master of surprise, has yet one more surprise for this woman and for the crowd. He gently takes her hands and helps her to her feet. Tenderly he looks her in the eyes and says, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace." First of all, let's remind ourselves of the scene. The crowd has now made a little opening in the center. This crowd is now in a very tight circle with Jesus and the woman standing alone in the center with all eyes fixed on them and their ears wide open. The crowd listens to her heart-wrenching story and they see Jesus tell her that her faith has been rewarded. She has been healed. But there is more. Jesus told her to go in peace. Remember that peace in the Jewish faith means that one is right with God and thereby right with the community. This woman was now allowed to participate in the temple worship and she can once again rejoin society as a full participant. Also Jesus called her daughter. She is a beloved daughter of Jesus. By doing this publicly, Jesus defused all the fears and the prejudices the crowd may have had for her. It is clear that **WOMEN ARE JUST AS IMPORTANT TO GOD AS MEN.**

Jesus just gave social, religious, spiritual, and emotional life to this woman. In the next section, He will give physical life to a little girl. In verses 49-56 we see a variety of responses to God's love. What we need to learn here is this. **IT TAKES FAITH TO RECEIVE THE FULL EFFECT OF GOD'S LOVE.** Let's not forget where we are. Jesus was headed to Jairus' house when this incident slowed Him down. Luke picks up this story again.

RESPONSES TO GOD'S LOVE (VS 49-56)

PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT ALL FEAR (49-50)

The opposite of fear is not necessarily courage. The opposite of fear is love. Verses 49-50 illustrate the point that perfect love casts out all fear. As Jesus is pronouncing this incredible blessing on the woman, someone from Jairus' house says to Jairus, "Your daughter is dead. There is no need to trouble Jesus any

further.” Can you imagine how Jairus felt, how his heart sank? With all the excitement and joy in the crowd, Jairus was crushed to hear those words. But look at Jesus. Jesus knows how we feel. Immediately He turned to Jairus with these incredible words, “Don’t be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.”

Let’s talk about a couple of things here. First of all if I were Jairus, I would have to fight off my negative thinking when someone from my house said, “Your daughter is dead. Don’t bother Jesus anymore.” There will always be well meaning people telling us to give up hope. But we must remember that God always has the last word. In other words, like that great theologian and philosopher Yogi Berra used to say, “It ain’t over ‘til it’s over.” Jesus made it clear to Jairus that it wasn’t over.

When Jesus tells us not to be afraid but to just believe, that seems harder to me than it seems. For some reason, it must be in our nature to fear. I can’t tell you how many times in the Bible God or angels tell people not to be afraid, but I know it’s a lot. It takes a lot to exercise faith. I find myself in the same shoes as another father Jesus came in contact with. Demons had tormented his son to the point of death. Jesus told that father to just believe and here is how he answered Jesus:

“24 ... I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24 / NIV).

Okay, now if I’m Jairus, I’m feeling a little better. I’m still freaking out, but I’m trusting and hanging on to Jesus with my last little strand of faith. So together, Jesus, Jairus, the disciples, and the crowd head for Jairus’ house.

FAITH OVERCOMES NEGATIVITY (51-53)

Verses 51-53 illustrate that faith overcomes negativity. In verse 51 Jesus orders everyone out of the house except the girl’s mother and father, along with Peter, John, and James. Jesus didn’t want any negativity in the house. If you remember from earlier in the Gospel, Peter, John, and James were the first Apostles He called to be in the Twelve. From this point on, we will see Jesus take them under His wing into His inner circle of three. James becomes the first of the Twelve to be martyred. He is arrested and killed by Herod. Peter will later be crucified in Rome. John was the last to die. He was boiled in oil but didn’t die so he was exiled to the Island of Patmos where he wrote the book of Revelation. John was the last of the Twelve to die.

Jesus got rid of all the negative vibes from in the house, but there was still plenty of negativity outside the house. The professional mourners and flute players were wailing and mourning for the little girl. But Jesus rebuked them as well. He told them to calm down and be quiet that the girl was not dead but asleep.

First of all, we don’t know from the passage if the girl had actually died and Jesus planned on raising her from the dead or if indeed she had simply slipped into a coma. The crowd ridiculed Jesus because they assumed they knew when someone was dead and they wanted to get paid for their services.

But it was common during that period of time and in fact all throughout human history that many people indeed were buried alive when people thought them to be dead. It has consistently been one of people's greatest fears; to be buried alive. Nevertheless, Jesus knows what He is going to do.

ONE LUCKY GIRL (54-56)

We have already met one lucky woman. In verses 54-56 we will meet one lucky girl. Again see the tenderness of Jesus. He took her by the hand and said, "My child, get up!" At once the girl's spirit returned to her. She immediately stood up and Jesus told the mother to get her something to eat. This little girl was not only Jairus and his wife's daughter; this little girl was Jesus' daughter as well. Both women in today's text received life. They had been touched by their heavenly Father, Jesus. In Isaiah's prophecy of Jesus the Messiah (Isaiah 9:6), he referred to Jesus as the Everlasting Father.

This little girl was lucky for two reasons. First she received a touch from Jesus. But secondly, she had an earthly father that loved her. He had enough sacrificial love, humility, and faith to ask Jesus to heal her. What an incredible blessing to have a father like that. The woman overcame her fear and humbly sought out Jesus at great risk. What we learn here is that **IT TAKES FAITH TO RECEIVE THE FULL EFFECT OF GOD'S LOVE.**

Men, Luke has just laid out some incredible challenges for us. He has given us two models of what a real man is. A real man loves his wife and children with sacrificial, humble, faithful, and tender love. Does that describe you? If not, then you better get on that right away. The point is this. **JESUS TEACHES HOW FATHERS OUGHT TO LOVE THEIR DAUGHTERS.**

Something all of us need to remember is that pride will keep us from receiving God's blessings for ourselves and our families. In his commentary on Luke, William Barclay talks about the importance of "swallowing one's pride". He used the illustration of Roland. Roland was one of Charlemagne's famous 12 companions. These 12 were legendary champions. He was in charge of one of the rearguard. In other words, it was his duty to make sure they did not get attacked from the rear. One day his battalion came under a fierce attack. They were extremely outnumbered.

Roland had a horn. The horn was so powerful, it had a name. The horn's name was Olivant. It's blast could be heard for over 30 miles. It was said that the horn's blast was so mighty that birds fell dead if they happened to be flying overhead. His companions begged him to blow the horn. Charlemagne would hurry back and rescue them but Roland was too proud to ask for help. Finally, after all his soldiers were killed and he was almost dead, he blew the horn. Charlemagne answered the call with fresh soldiers. It was too late. Roland was dead ... because he was too proud to ask for help. Here is how Barclay sums it up:

“It is easy to think that we can handle life ourselves. But the way to find the miracles of the grace of God is to swallow our pride and humbly to confess our need and ask. Ask, and you will receive – but there is no receiving without asking.”