

Series: Gospel Women

March 22, 2015

[Slide 1: Awils]

Title: Healing Faith

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Text: Luke 8:40-56

Capernaum

Jesus arrives in Capernaum:

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Capernaum was a little town 10 miles north of Tiberius. Like Tiberius, it sat on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum had no palaces. Its houses were one or two story buildings built around a courtyard, connected by narrow streets and lanes. It was home to farmers and fishermen. Its ancient jetties are still visible beneath the surface of the lake.

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Unlike Tiberius, Capernaum was a thoroughly Jewish town. Its main surviving feature is its synagogue. Beneath the ruins of a 4th century A.D. synagogue are the floor and foundation of the very synagogue in which Jesus taught when He lived in Capernaum at Peter's house.

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So it was quite natural that Jesus and His disciples would come home to Capernaum after an adventurous journey to the rugged, untamed east shore of the lake. On their way to that far shore they had survived a wild night-time storm, only to encounter a deranged madman living in a tomb. Written off as a hopeless case by his community, Jesus drove out the horde of demons that possessed him and restored him to full mental health.

But an even greater adventure awaited Jesus and His no doubt exhausted disciples as their boat drew close to the stone pier of Capernaum.

A urgent greeting:

Luke tells us that a crowd was standing there on the pier to meet the boat.

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Luke 8:40 NIV

Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him.

What was it that brought the entire village of Capernaum down to the waterfront? Why was it so important that they meet Jesus when He came home? After all, Jesus and His disciples were coming and going all the time. Had they heard how He had just fed 5000 or more people with only 5 loaves and 2 little fish? Were they hoping for their own free lunch? Or was there something more urgent on their minds?

A desperate dad:

The answer may well be found in the presence of one of Capernaum's most distinguished citizens – a leader of the synagogue:

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Luke 8:41-42 NIV

Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house ⁴²because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him.

Jairus, as a synagogue leader, was a very important and well known member of the community. Every person in town knew who he was; no doubt he knew them just as well. And everyone in town had watched his little girl, an only child, grow up to become a beautiful young woman. They had known that she had fallen sick. They knew that the local healers or physicians had been unable to cure her. Now her life hung in the balance. The least they could do was stand with their village leader and pray for a miracle.

Her father had gone looking for Jesus in a last ditch effort to save his daughter, but Jesus had been out of town. Where exactly? Up north at the end of the lake where He had fed a vast multitude with a boy's lunch, some said. Then came a report that He had last been seen heading for the eastern shore. Now returning fishermen reported that a boat was out on the water, headed their way. Jesus was coming home, but would He arrive in time?

Outsider

In the crowd:

For the people of a village like Capernaum, being an accepted member of the community was the most important thing in their lives. Their community was their identity. To be an outcast from the community meant much more than being cut off from friends and family. It meant that you were *no one*.

The same crowd that had turned out to support one of its esteemed leaders had long since ostracized a former member: a woman with a chronic condition that rendered her "unclean," and therefore unacceptable to her community and to God.

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Luke 8:43 NIV

And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her.

The fact that she was afflicted with this condition was taken to mean that God had judged her for her sins. To so much as touch her or be touched by her made you unclean and unacceptable to God as well. As a result, she lived in permanent exile from the only world she knew.

The hem of His garment:

Luke tells us that this woman dared to join the crowd on in the narrow lanes of Capernaum that day. The same desperation that had brought the synagogue leader to Jesus brought her as well.

No one in the crowd would have taken up her case and brought her to Jesus. She was – as always – on her own. Luke tells her that she did a very daring thing:

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Luke 8:44 NIV

She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

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The words “edge of his cloak” refer to the four tassels which all Jewish men wore as a reminder of the importance of God’s Law. These tassels, worn at the hem of their cloak, were a symbol of their own dignity and authority as God’s children. To touch one of these tassels was to appeal to the power and authority of its wearer. That is what the woman did: crawling on her hands and knees through the crowd, she came up behind Jesus and appealed to His might and power over her disease. The moment she did, the bleeding stopped.

“Who touched me?”

The crowd might have no idea of what had happened, but Jesus immediately knew that someone had reached out to Him and had been healed:

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Luke 8:45-46 NIV

“Who touched me?” Jesus asked.

When they all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.”

But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.”

Terrified, the woman came forward:

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Luke 8:47-48 NIV

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. Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

Imagine what it must have felt like to be discovered in the middle of the crowd, and to have to admit that she, an unclean woman, had touched the Holy Man!

And look at what she did: "In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed." She became a *witness*. She, the *exile* had come home. Jesus had healed her.

Jesus says to her: "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace." To call her "daughter" means that she is once again a daughter of Abraham, a fully restored member of Israel. She can now live in God's *shalom*, God's peace.

Healing Faith

What about Jairus?

Meanwhile, for Jairus things went from bad to worse:

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Luke 8:49 NIV

While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," he said. "Don't bother the teacher anymore."

What a bitter irony: his mission to find healing for his daughter is interrupted by a social outcast who had been – in his way of thinking – punished by God for the past 12 years. Then, the outcast is healed after sneaking around behind Jesus and touching His clothes. Then Jairus learns that his daughter has died. There's nothing to do now except go home with a broken heart to his grieving wife.

Faith creates Faith:

Jesus watches as Jairus receives the crushing news, then says:

[Slide 14]*Luke 8:50 NIV**"Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed."*

Where is that kind of faith going to come from? Sickness is one thing; death something altogether different. The answer lies with the unclean outcast who had crept up behind Jesus to touch the tassels on His garment. Her faith had not only saved her; it stood out like a beacon of hope to a father who had just lost his child.

Jairus dared to believe and agreed to bring Jesus to his daughter.

[Slide 15]*Luke 8:51-55 NIV*

When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother.

Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. "Stop wailing," Jesus said. "She is not dead but asleep."

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They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But he took her by the hand and said, "My child, get up!"

Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat.

And so it was that the faith of a woman who had been an outcast invalid for 12 years brought life to a 12 year old young woman.

Healing Faith:**[Slide 17]**

Do you need Jesus to heal you today?

Do you know someone who needs His healing touch?

It doesn't matter who you are or what your background. Insider/outsider makes no difference. It doesn't matter what others think of you or your situation. It doesn't matter how impossible the need may be.

What matters is that you come to Jesus and trust Him to be your Healer.

