

Session 3

February 4, 2024

EXPECTANT FAITH

Luke 8:41-42, 49-56

This section of Luke 8 is fascinating. It contains two interwoven miracle healings. One involved an older woman who had suffered a bleeding condition for twelve years. The other, coincidentally, involved a 12-year-old little girl. The older woman had nothing; the little girl was the daughter of a well-to-do synagogue leader. The older woman had suffered; but the younger had died.

Far from being a boring historian, Luke's eye for detail and his crisp handling of the narrative once again makes the story come alive. I have approached this text from the brisk drama I believe Luke intended to convey. The focus this week is on the raising of Jairus' daughter but be sure to keep in mind the other miracle as we go.

Strong emotions (vv. 40-42). The focal text leaves off verse 40, but I think it's important to put the story in context. Jesus had just traveled across the sea to the land of the Gerasenes where He delivered the Gadarene demoniac. Once the town people found out about it, they asked Jesus to leave (v. 37). Some hold that the reception awaited at the seashore as He was departing that region, but verse 40 more likely indicates that Jesus had once again passed over the sea and returned to the jubilant and receptive audience of Capernaum. There, Jairus met Him. Synagogues were local Jewish meeting places that arose when the temple was unavailable. Ten adult males and a copy of the Torah was sufficient to found one. They had no priests or clergy, so a local layman assumed the role of rabbi. Notice the strong emotions of that moment. The crowd was jubilant (v. 40); Jairus was humble, on the ground before Jesus and pleading (v. 41). At his house was desperation, as his only daughter lay dying (v. 42). For reflection: *Look back at Luke 7:1-10. What characteristics did the centurion and Jairus share? How were they different? What applications can you make?*

Strong words (vv. 49-53). In the midst of all this emotion came the dreaded words: "Your daughter is dead." The words that followed could be taken several ways. Maybe the messenger was chastising Jairus as though the whole ordeal had been a waste of time. Or perhaps, he was conveying respect for Jesus and His busy ministry. Jesus' reply was strongly worded as well. Three quick points were made: "Don't be afraid. Only believe. She will be made well" (v. 50). Of the multitude of interested persons, only a few were allowed to witness the miracle: Jesus' so-called "inner circle" of Peter, James, and John, and the little girl's parents. This was likely for several reasons. First, the size of the chamber itself would have limited the number of spectators. Second, these were the most important people there in terms of witnessing another of the Lord's miracles. Finally, the faithless disposition of the crowd itself may have influenced Christ's decision to keep them away (see v. 53). More strong words were spoken by Christ to that crowd in verse 52. While His command to "Stop crying" may have surprised them, His diagnosis of the little girl's condition was enough to evoke their ridicule. For reflection: *Compare the words and actions of the Lord here with the raising of Lazarus in John 11. What similarities do you see? What are the differences?*

Strong actions (vv. 54-56). In some ways, the raising of this little girl is almost anti-climactic. The noisy crowd outside has been replaced by the quiet onlookers inside. Jesus gently takes her

hand but says in a voice loud enough to be heard outside, “Child, get up!” Keep in mind that the girl was dead. The messenger from Jairus’ house confirmed it (v. 49). The crowd outside confirmed it (v. 53). The absence of her “spirit” (or “breath”) confirmed it (v. 55). Notice the rapid series of events: her spirit returned, and she got up “at once” (v. 55). Her taking of food was not so much related to her recent illness as it was to her sudden “aliveness.” What better proof of the miraculous did anyone need? She was up and eating! For reflection: *Given the magnitude of this miracle, why do you think Jesus instructed them to keep it quiet? Where else in the Gospels did Jesus tell His followers not to tell?*