

Bi132 The Gospels

Lesson Bi132-22 A Woman's Faith Rewarded

In Jesus' day, most people in Israel viewed women as quite inferior to men. This was far from God's plan. He had created Adam and Eve as equal partners in the Garden. The Jewish religious leaders in Jesus' time thanked God each day that they were not born a Gentile, a woman, or a slave. By contrast, Jesus showed high regard for women. He treated women and men equally, performing miracles for both, raising both from the dead, and teaching the same truths to both. Jesus had both male and female disciples traveling with him. Some of these women Jesus had set free from evil spirits. Some were contributing to the support of Jesus and the Twelve out of their own means (Luke 8:1-3). All of them wanted to be a part of God's kingdom.

One day when Jesus was back in Galilee, perhaps in the area of Capernaum, a large crowd gathered around him. One of the synagogue leaders named Jairus came and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." So Jesus went with him.

Jairus was not a pastor, but the layman in charge of taking care of the local synagogue, conducting services, and maintaining order. He surely had heard or even seen Jesus do miracles, because this town was the base for Christ's ministry. So he asked Jesus to come and heal his dying daughter. Jesus agreed and they started to go toward Jairus' home. But then there was an interruption. The procession stopped!

The large crowd following Jesus had been pressing around him. A woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for 12 years. Since she was ceremonially unclean according to Jewish beliefs, people avoided her. If anyone even touched her, they became unclean and unable to enter God's house. This woman had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all her money. Yet instead of getting better, she grew worse. She had heard about Jesus and took this opportunity to come up behind him in the crowd and touch his cloak. She thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." When she did, immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was healed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Jesus would not allow this woman to melt into the crowd. They needed to hear her testimony to this miracle and Jesus wanted to publicly commend her for her faith. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet. Trembling with fear, she told him the whole story. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering" (Mark 5:24-34).

The woman had been an outcast for 12 years. The Bible mentions no husband or children; she was alone. Her condition was too horrible for people even to talk about. Yet Jesus accepted her and tenderly addressed her as ‘daughter.’ No other story records Jesus using these words. She had heard about Jesus and believed she would be healed if only she could touch his clothes. In her desperation she broke the cultural rules, reached out, and touched him. She knew she was delivered and Jesus felt that some of God’s power had gone out from him to someone. Her faith had led her to the one who heals. Jesus assured her that she could go in peace, because she was permanently healed. In fact the word for “peace” Jesus used when they parted is actually the word for ‘saved.’ She received both physical healing—freedom from suffering—and spiritual healing—salvation.

Though this woman was rejected by society, she was known to God. The Apostle Paul later explains that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). All who have faith in Jesus are sons and daughters of God!

While Jesus was still speaking to the woman who had been healed, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

Ignoring what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

He did not let anyone follow, except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader Jesus saw a commotion. People were crying and wailing loudly and hired mourners played flutes. He went inside and said to them, “Why all this noise? The child is not dead but is only asleep.” But they laughed and ridiculed him.

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the three disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!” Immediately her spirit returned and the girl stood up and began to walk around, for she was 12 years old. At this her parents were completely astonished. Jesus gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat (Mark 5:35-43).

Jairus could have seen the sick woman as a serious delay to his daughter’s healing, but in fact, God is never late. She was not permanently dead. Jesus had power over death, in the same way that he brought Lazarus back from ‘sleep.’ People may try to steal our faith by telling us God is not coming, he has forgotten us. But because Jesus took time to minister to this woman, Jairus and his wife saw not only a healing, but a raising from the dead!

Jesus told them to tell no one about it. This is different than when he delivered the man with the legion of demons. In that case it was a Gentile region that needed to hear the man’s testimony. This was a Jewish area. Because of Jesus’ popularity with the people, together with growing opposition from the Jewish religious leaders, he did not want to cause any crisis before God’s timing was right. The people did not understand God’s timing for the Messiah. He came to teach them and show them what God was like by ministering in the same way to male and female, Jew and Greek, slave and free. God has no favorites; he wants *all* people to be saved.

This story is **important** because it shows Jesus' concern for women, not just the men of his day. Jesus involves himself in our day too, with the problems that both women and men face as they seek to put their faith in him.

The **main truth** of this story is that Jesus responds to faith, whether from a man or woman and regardless of their age, social situation, or wealth. The Bible says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God" and "he rewards the faith of those who earnestly seek him" (Heb 11:6). God wants all men and women to put their faith in Jesus.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. What request did Jairus make to Jesus about his daughter?
A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said that Jairus asked Jesus just to put his hands on her so that she would be healed and live, you are correct.
2. What words of faith did the bleeding woman speak to herself about Jesus?
A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you answered that she said to herself, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed," you are correct.
3. What was the attitude that both Jairus and the outcast woman shared?
A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said, "They both believed in Jesus and had faith that he would help them," you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to learn this story so you can tell it from memory. Try to find a small group of people and discuss this question with them, "What do you think was the response of the people who had seen the dead girl and then saw her alive after Jesus left with his disciples?" Some believed in Jesus and some were deceived by Satan into believing that it was some kind of a trick Jesus was playing on them. Some just didn't care. People who see miracles today and hear the truth, still have to choose whether or not to put their faith in Jesus and follow him. Those who earnestly seek him will find him.