

JESUS: UNIVERSAL HEALER

Open

The many needs in the world can feel overwhelming. Where do we start? How can we make any difference? Should we begin with those most in need? How do you approach these challenging questions?

Context

Two individuals confront Jesus with critical needs: a respected synagogue ruler with a terminally ill daughter and an obscure woman suffering from chronic menstrual bleeding. The esteemed, well-connected man approaches Jesus first. However, as Jesus travels across town, the unnamed, unannounced woman seeks his help.

Read Luke 8:40–56 (NIV)

^{8:40} 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."

⁴⁹ 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."

⁵⁰ Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed."

⁵¹ 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. ⁵² Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. "Stop wailing," Jesus said. "She is not dead but asleep."

⁵³ They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴ But he took her by the hand and said, "My child, get up!" ⁵⁵ Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶ Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

Discuss

1. While traveling to Jairus' home, Jesus encounters a woman with chronic menstrual bleeding. In ancient Israel, a woman in this condition would be considered ceremonially "unclean (see Lev 15:19–30). Based on her actions in the story, what mental and emotional state do you think she was in?
2. The woman comes up behind Jesus and touches the edge of his robe, rendering him ritually unclean (Lev. 15:25–27). Jesus is thus prohibited from approaching Jairus' daughter until the next day. Why did she still take the risk to touch Jesus? How would you feel in her situation?
3. How does Jesus respond to the woman? Why does he declare that her healing resulted from her faith (v. 48)?
4. Meanwhile, how might Jairus feel upon hearing that his daughter has died (v. 49)? What would you have thought and felt if you were Jairus? How might Jesus use the delay of the woman to challenge and strengthen Jairus' faith (vv. 49-50)?

Reflect

With whom do you most identify with: the woman with a bleeding disorder, the synagogue leader, or one among the crowds? Reflect on one of the characters below accordingly.

- The Woman

All of us experience wounding. Like the outcast woman in our story, we may hope for healing without the risks of openly sharing about our wounds. What chronic issues might you desire Jesus' help with for yourself or someone else? What could prevent you from approaching Him?

- The Synagogue Leader

Any of us might grow impatient—as undoubtedly Jairus did—when God delays bringing the healing we seek. How might Jesus' raising Jairus' daughter from the dead encourage us to continue trusting God when He doesn't heal according to our timetable?

- The Crowds

Within ancient Israel's intensely patriarchal context, people probably viewed the woman (likely unmarried) as worthless. In contrast, the synagogue leader would be highly respected. What might Jesus's engagement with the woman before helping Jairus tell us about Him? How can you mirror Jesus' response in engaging those typically "unseen?"

Pray

Imagine Jesus coming alongside you during a time of struggle or suffering. What is He saying? Pray for the courage to present these wounds to Him and enter into His care, and for patience and sustained faith as you wait for healing. Ask Him to guide and empower you in helping others.