

Luke 8:40-56

“Faith or Fear?”

December 15, 2024

1. Well, if you’ve been with us the past couple of weeks, we’ve seen some pretty stark contrasts in the stories we’ve read
 - a. Two weeks ago, we saw Jesus and the disciples leave the shores of Galilee
 - i. As they set out in the evening, Jesus falls asleep in the stern of the boat, and then a massive storm descends upon lake
 - ii. The disciples were consumed with fear, but as Jesus arose and calmed the storms, he asked them, “Where is your faith?”
 1. In verses 22-25, we saw One in the boat who had unshakable faith, and the rest were full of fear
 - b. Last week, we saw Jesus and the disciples reach the opposite shore on the Sea of Galilee, in the region known as the Decapolis
 - i. As Jesus had shown complete authority over the winds and the waves, in last week’s passage we saw him prove his authority over a whole host of demons
 1. The demon-possessed man was set free from Legion
 2. Jesus allowed the demons to flee into a herd of two thousand pigs
 3. And the entire herd madly ran down into the lake and drowned
 - a. We saw the herdsman run into the towns and villages, telling all that had happened, and then the people of the Gerasenes came out to see for themselves
 - i. And they begged Jesus to leave their presence
 4. But the man whom Jesus had set free went all throughout the Decapolis, telling everyone all that Jesus had done for him, and the Scriptures tell us that EVERYONE marveled
 - a. In verses 26-39, we saw one on the shores of the Gerasenes with a newfound faith, and all the rest were full of fear
 - c. These two stories set the stage for our passage this week, and hopefully we’ll see by the end of the sermon how all three of these stories are preparing us for NEXT WEEK’s passage, as we think about all that Christmas means for us
 - i. But first, let’s dig into our verses for today, starting in verse 40...
 2. Luke 8:40
 - a. ⁴⁰Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him.
 - i. That’s certainly another contrast worth noting, isn’t it?
 1. When Jesus performed a great miracle in the Gerasenes, the people pleaded with him to leave
 2. But as Jesus arrived back on the opposite shores in Galilee, there were great crowds who were apparently just sitting around waiting for him
 - a. We don’t get any details about the timing of these events, but you have to think that, if the disciples were out on the lake the first time in the evening hours, and on into the night
 - i. They probably spent most of the morning in the Gerasenes, and possibly headed back to Galilee that afternoon at the earliest
 - b. So the people had been waiting for Jesus AT LEAST through the night and most of the day
 - i. And Luke tells us that they welcomed him when he got back

1. And this word that he used for “welcomed” implies a positive reception, often with a warm embrace
- ii. Again, quite the difference from the cold reception in he got on the opposite shoreline

3. Luke goes on in verse 41...

3. Luke 8:40-41

a. ⁴⁰And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus’ feet, he implored him to come to his house, ⁴²for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

i. The first thing that stands out when we read this passage is that Jairus was a ruler in the local synagogue

1. And this ruler of the synagogue fell at Jesus’ feet, imploring Jesus to come and help his dying daughter

a. This is important for us to note, because this is typically NOT the reaction that the synagogue leaders usually have toward Jesus, is it?

i. Back in Luke 4, we saw how Jesus had returned to his hometown of Nazareth, and he had been allowed to teach there in the local synagogue

1. But, by the time he was done teaching, Luke tells us that ALL in the synagogue were so filled with wrath toward Jesus that they tried to throw him off of a cliff

2. Certainly the “all” that Luke refers to includes the ruler of the synagogue in Nazareth

ii. In Luke 6, we saw Jesus in the synagogue in Capernaum, where he encountered a man with a withered hand

1. Jesus called the man to stand in front of everyone, and he asked the religious leaders in the room, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?”

a. In response to the silence that followed, Jesus immediately restored the man’s hand

b. And in response to this great act of mercy and kindness, the religious leaders were filled with fury and discussed what they might do to Jesus

i. Certainly this group of religious leaders included the ruler of the synagogue in Capernaum

b. There was a great old preacher from England named Leonard Ravenhill, who passed away in 1994

i. He was quite the fireball of a preacher – you can still find lots of audio of his sermons on YouTube today

1. But he was known for calling out the watered-down American evangelicalism that sadly, is still so prevalent today

2. Just one example of the things he said was this, that “If Jesus came back today, he wouldn’t cleanse the temple, he’d cleanse the pulpit.”

a. Ravenhill also famously said, “I get invited to speak at a lot of places... once.”

2. One has to wonder if this was the case with Jesus

- a. Luke tells us throughout his Gospel that Jesus taught in the synagogues on multiple occasions
 - i. I wonder how many he ever got to go to a second time
 - 1. So the picture we get in the Gospels is that Jesus was neither loved nor respected by the religious leaders in Judea
 - 3. Yet here we see Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue of this town, falling at the feet of Jesus, and asking him for his help
 - a. Now, the skeptic in us might say, “Well sure, Jairus only went to Jesus as a last resort, and only because his daughter was dying”
 - i. Maybe...
 - 1. Or Maybe, similar to Nicodemus in the Gospel of John, Jairus was a religious leader whose heart had truly begun to be softened toward the Son of God
 - ii. Another thing we can note about Jairus is something that Matthew Henry points out in his commentary, as he compares Jairus with the Roman Centurion back in Luke chapter 7
 - 1. If you remember, this Centurion also had one in his house who was at the point of death, but what did he say to Jesus?
 - a. He said, “You don’t need to come to my house, Jesus, because I know if you simply say the word, my servant will be healed... for I know you are One with GREAT authority”
 - i. And Jesus MARVELLED at this Gentile’s faith
 - 2. Yet here in our passage, Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, one who should have ALSO known that Jesus had great authority, instead plead for Jesus to come to his house
 - a. Did Jairus have a lesser faith than the Roman Centurion
 - i. He did
 - 1. But I love what Matthew Henry says regarding Jairus’ lesser faith...
 - a. Nevertheless, “Christ complied with his request; he went along with him. Strong faith shall be applauded, and yet weak faith shall not be rejected.”
 - 2. That is an encouragement for us, isn’t it?
 - a. For far too often, we are the ones with the weak faith of Jairus, aren’t we?
 - iii. Well Luke continues on...
4. Luke 8:42-43
 - a. *⁴²As Jesus went, the people pressed around him. ⁴³And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone.*
 - i. Don’t miss the fact that Jairus’ daughter was 12 years old, and this woman had had this incurable condition for 12 years
 - 1. It’s hard to imagine that this was just a coincidence
 - a. Could it be that God the Father, by His sovereign hand in bringing Jesus and this woman and Jairus and his daughter all together here, at this moment, was not just wanting this woman to be healed...
 - i. But that He was also wanting this synagogue ruler to learn something deeply valuable?
5. Luke 8:44-46 says,

a. ⁴⁴She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. ⁴⁵And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!" ⁴⁶But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me."

i. That's pretty amazing, isn't it?

1. She just touched the fringe of Jesus' garment, and IMMEDIATELY this sickness that had gone on for twelve years...

a. This sickness that she had spent all of her income on trying to get cured...

b. This sickness that all the physicians were incapable of healing...

i. It was healed IMMEDIATELY and COMPLETELY by just touching the fringe of Jesus' garment

2. We have to remember that this most likely was not a spur of the moment action by this woman

a. Back in Luke 6, before Jesus gave the Sermon on the Plain, Luke told us that a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon had come to hear Jesus and to be healed from their diseases

i. And in verse 19, Luke says that all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and he healed them all

1. Is it possible that this woman had heard from the people who had gone out to Jesus on that day?

a. That here was this rabbi, this prophet, this one claiming to be the Son of God, and all you have to do is touch him, and you will be healed?

ii. Well, that is what she did, and she was healed at that very moment

1. And then Jesus asked, "Who was it that touched me?"

a. Now this COULD have been just an expression of Jesus' humanity, as he was genuinely wondering who it was that had grabbed some of his power

i. But I believe that the more likely explanation is that Jesus wanted this woman to be heard

1. Remember, this woman's healing is fully intertwined with Jairus and his daughter

2. We don't have any record back in Luke 6 that he wanted to know all the names and stories of all the people who touched him and were healed on that day

a. But on THIS day, I believe Jesus wanted the people to hear her story

i. More specifically, I believe that Jesus wanted JAIRUS to hear her story

3. And so, as Jesus refuses to move on, we read in verse 47...

6. Luke 8:47

a. ⁴⁷And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed.

i. This woman came forward and fell down before Jesus, just as Jairus had fallen down at Jesus' feet

ii. She told in the presence of everyone there why she had touched him

1. And perhaps Jairus' downcast eyes lifted, as she told of how she had been in this condition for twelve years, the very same age as his daughter who was dying back at home

2. And perhaps his heart became empathetic toward her, as he heard her speak of the fact that she had spent all her life savings on medical physicians, and they had been unable to cure her
 - a. You see, as the ruler of the local synagogue, Jairus was to have been the physician of his people's souls
 - i. But standing there before Jesus, Jairus was likely beginning to see that he had no idea what a TRUE physician of the soul was
 1. He had no answers for how he could help his dying daughter
 2. He had no answers for why he should go to this Jesus that many of his fellow synagogue rulers had rejected
 - a. You can just picture him standing there in apprehension and uncertain expectation...
 - i. What is Jesus going to say???

7. Luke 8:48 tells us,

a. ⁴⁸*And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."*

i. Jairus would have been floored at this point

1. This woman wasn't made well because she was faithful in observing the law
2. She wasn't made well because she had brought the proper sacrifices to the Temple
3. She wasn't made well because she had brought her tithe into the synagogue, or quoted the correct passage from the Torah, or recited the right prayer to God
 - a. She was healed, immediately and completely, because she simply had put her faith in the man that was standing before both of them, Jesus of Nazareth

ii. Well, Jairus didn't get much time to process all of this, for we read in verse 49,

8. Luke 8:49

a. ⁴⁹*While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher anymore."*

i. And in this moment, as Jairus' heart began to fall into despair, we read in the next verse...

9. Luke 8:50

a. ⁵⁰*But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well."*

i. Here was Jairus' moment of decision

1. Back in the boat on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus was full of faith, while all the disciples cowered in fear
2. In the Gerasenes, the man who had been freed from the Legion of demons was filled with faith, while all of his countrymen trembled in fear
3. And now, Jairus was presented with his own moment of decision
 - a. Would he, like the disciples, like the people of the Gerasenes, melt in fear...
 - i. Unable to believe who this man standing before him TRULY was?
 - b. Or, like the once demon-possessed man who was now free from the chains of the enemy...
 - i. Like the woman kneeling at Jesus' feet who was now free from the chains of her sickness
 1. Would Jairus choose to believe in Jesus, and place all of his faith in who this Jesus claimed to be?
 - a. Will Jairus choose faith?
 - b. Or will Jairus choose fear?

4. We read in verse 51...

10. Luke 8:51

a. ⁵¹*And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child.*

- i. Just a quick side note here to point out that, while Jesus ministered to the masses...
 - 1. While, as we'll see in a few weeks, he had around seventy disciples who followed him...
 - 2. And while out of these seventy, he had the twelve whom he had chosen as disciples...
 - a. Even out of the twelve, Jesus had his three that he would very intentionally pour into – Peter, James, and John
 - i. There's a good lesson there for us in the American Church who seemed to be so wrapped up in church growth and the rapid expansion of our numbers
 - 1. Discipleship has ALWAYS been a slow and methodical and intentional process
 - a. Jesus, the very Son of God, only chose to have a core group of three men over his three-and-a-half-year ministry
 - b. As we seek to follow in his footsteps of making disciples, maybe we could just be content with starting with One person we could pour into
- ii. So, Jesus enters the house with his three disciples, and Jairus and his wife, and verse 52 says,

11. Luke 8:52

- a. ⁵²*And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping."* ⁵³*And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead.* ⁵⁴*But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise."*
 - i. Now, we have to stop and ask the question, "What is REALLY going on here?"
 - 1. The person from Jairus' house had come to him and said, "Your daughter is dead."
 - 2. Luke says that the people in the house laughed at Jesus, because they KNEW that she was dead
 - a. So what did Jesus mean when he said to them, "She is NOT dead, but sleeping?"
 - i. Jesus is reminding us, Christians, that we are not to view death as the world views death
 - 1. The world has countless ideas on what happens to us after we die...
 - a. The hindu would say that we are reincarnated as either something small and insignificant, or someone great and important, depending on how good a person we were in this life
 - b. The Roman Catholic would say that we would go to a place of Purgatory, where we would continue to serve penance until all our sins have been accounted for
 - c. The New Age fanatic would say that we would return as a spirit, or maybe a tree
 - d. The atheist would say all is finished... there IS NO life after death
 - b. But our hope is different, isn't it, Christians?
 - i. For we understand the biblical principle that we are ALL immortal beings

1. As C.S. Lewis put it, “You do not HAVE a soul. You ARE a soul. You HAVE a body.”
- c. In other words, this body that we have has a predetermined shelf life
 - i. As most of us over forty can attest to, at some point these bodies begin to stop acting the way we wish they would
 1. We don’t heal as fast as we used to
 2. We tend to injure ourselves a whole lot easier than we used to
 - a. Our eyesight may be failing
 - b. Our hearing may be decreasing
 3. The fact is undeniable... these earthly tents are beginning to fall apart, aren’t they
 - a. And that is what is SUPPOSED to happen
 - i. For it is not our BODY that is immortal, but our SOUL
 - d. When these bodies finally give out and we breath our last breath, it is NOT the end of all things
 - i. For our SOUL will continue to live
 1. And the wonderful news for us as Christians is that our soul will go on TO BE WITH THE LORD!
 - ii. Isn’t this the great promise that the Apostle Paul lays before the believers in Thessalonica, as he writes in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18,
 1. *¹³But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about THOSE WHO ARE ASLEEP, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP. ¹⁵For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP. ¹⁶For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words.*
 - iii. Jesus spoke no lie when he said to the people that the young girl was not dead, but sleeping
 1. Was her body dead?
 - a. Yes
 2. But her soul... her SPIRIT... was still very much alive
 - a. And so Jesus says to her, “Child, arise,” and verse 55 says

12. Luke 8:55

- a. *⁵⁵And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat.*
 - i. Her spirit returned to her body, and her body was brought back to life
 1. I love how Jesus proves that she is indeed back in the land of the living, as he tells those in the room, “Get this girl some food!”
 - a. We’ll see a similar unfolding of events at the end of the Gospel of Luke,
 - i. When Jesus, now also raised from the dead, appears among the disciples and says to them, “Have you anything here to eat?”
 - b. Even for us, when we leave these old jars of clay, and Jesus clothes us in our new, resurrected bodies, one of the very first things we have to look forward to is the great marriage supper of the Lamb, isn’t it?

i. I can't even imagine what the food and drink will be like on that day

1. But we will all feast together, WITH JESUS

2. And it will be a GLORIOUS meal!

b. And so our passage concludes in verse 56, as Luke writes,

13. Luke 8:56

a. ⁵⁶*And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.*

i. Now we have to admit that this passage ends with a bit of a perplexing command

1. After Jesus freed the demon-possessed man in the Gerasenes, he told the man to go back, and proclaim all that God had done for him

2. But here, after Jesus raises Jairus' daughter from the dead, Jesus charges them to tell no one what had happened

ii. So why did he give two very different commands?

1. There are a couple of possible reasons

a. The first is that Jesus often gave similar instructions to people when he wanted to try to move more quietly through a certain region

i. There were times where he had certain things he wanted to accomplish, but the great crowds of people seeking after signs and wonders would serve as a hindrance to his work

ii. We see this in Mark 1:40-45, as Jesus healed a man from his leprosy

1. Mark says that Jesus sternly charged the man not to say anything to anyone, but the man did not obey

2. And because he went and spread the news loudly about Jesus, Jesus could no longer openly enter the towns of that area

iii. So maybe Jesus is just trying to cool down all the excitement that he knew would come from raising this girl back to life

b. That's possible, but I believe there might be another, more serious concern that Jesus had

i. Later on in his ministry, Jesus will raise another from the dead, as he calls out his friend from the tombs and says, "Lazarus, come out!"

ii. This would be an incredible miracle that many would witness, and the word about it would spread very quickly

c. But in John chapter 12, as Jesus prepares for his triumphal entry into Jerusalem

i. Many were certainly rejoicing and celebrating his arrival

ii. But the chief priests were seeking to have him killed

1. And verses 10-11 tell us that, *"the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus."*

iii. I believe that Jesus, who knew all that was in the hearts of men, knew that this could be the reaction of the religious leaders toward Jairus' daughter

1. Just as they would later seek to have Lazarus killed because everyone had claimed Jesus raised him from the dead,

a. So also they might seek to have this little girl killed for the very same reason

i. It is hard for us to fathom that they might think such a thing, but their hearts were so consumed with wrath and fury toward Jesus, there was no telling what they might do

- iii. So Jesus commands them to keep all of this quiet, very likely so they might be able to enjoy their daughter being with them once again, in peace
 - b. Now a question that we have to ask is, what about Jairus?
 - i. Jesus never makes a proclamation over him like he did for the woman who had been healed from her bleeding
 - 1. He never says to Jairus, "Son, your faith has made your daughter well, go in peace."
 - a. So how do we KNOW whether or not Jairus actually believed?
 - b. How do we KNOW that Jesus healed Jairus' daughter, in spite of Jairus' continued fear
 - c. How do we KNOW that Jairus chose to place his faith in Jesus in that moment?
 - 2. Well, we simply go back to verse 50, and we look at one little word in Jesus' statement... the word "and"
 - a. Often times in the Scriptures, translators will add in smaller words such as "and" or "but" or "also" in order for sentences to flow better in our language
 - i. But in the original Greek, this word for "and" is very much in the words of Jesus
 - 1. This little word is a conjunction, linking two clauses of equal and important value
 - ii. Jesus says to Jairus in verse 50, "Do not fear, only believe... AND your daughter will be well"
 - 1. Jesus promised a certain outcome for Jairus' daughter, based upon Jairus' belief
 - a. Jairus' daughter was indeed made well, so, EVEN THOUGH THE SCRIPTURES DO NOT EXPLICITLY SAY SO, we can rightly infer that Jairus did indeed believe in Jesus
 - b. Jairus chose to have faith, instead of fear
 - i. And his daughter was given back to him, whole and healed, and at peace
 - ii. The story of this woman's healing, and the story of Jesus raising Jairus' daughter back to life, are beautiful stories for sure
14. But what is the application for us, today, as followers of Jesus?
 - a. We talked extensively a couple of weeks ago about how we are NOT to apply these kinds of passages
 - i. We are NOT to claim these passages as evidence that we are to have dominion over demons and sickness and even nature itself
 - 1. That if we would just have enough faith, we would never again have to be defeated by cancer or tornadoes or the evil forces of darkness
 - a. We are NOT to use these verses to support the false teachings of the name-it-and-claim-it preachers, or the proponents of the prosperity gospel
 - i. For all throughout the history of the church, we have seen faith-filled Christians who have suffered from sickness and disease that has resulted in their death
 - ii. All through the history of the church, we have seen faith-filled Christians who have lost everything in the winds and the waves of natural disasters

- iii. All throughout the history of the church, we have seen faith-filled believers living their entire lives in poverty, being slandered and ostracized by the world, and even killed in the arenas
 - b. Jesus himself promised that, "In this world, we WILL have trouble"
 - i. So these promises of the false teachers that we are meant to be healthy, wealthy, and prosperous as followers of Jesus simply has no Scriptural OR historical grounds to stand on
- b. So again, what is the application?
 - i. The application is that, REGARDLESS of the outcome, every one of us in this room are also faced with the same choice that Jairus had
 - 1. Every single one of us are also faced with the same choice as the woman with the bleeding condition
 - 2. Every single one of us are faced with the same choice as the man who had been freed from Legion in the Gerasenes
 - 3. Every single one of us will be faced with the same choice as the disciples on the boat during the storms on the Sea of Galilee
 - a. Will you choose to live your life in fear?
 - b. Or will you choose to live your life in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?
- c. We have to remember that in each of these events, the disciples were right there watching everything unfold
 - i. They were seeing firsthand what it looked like to choose faith over fear
 - ii. And this would be so very important for them to see, for, as WE'LL see next week, Jesus is about to send them out into the villages, WITHOUT HIM
 - 1. He was about to take this group of young men, and he was about to send them out to the wolves
 - a. THEY would be the ones rebuking demons
 - b. THEY would be the ones rebuking diseases
 - c. THEY would be the ones proclaiming the Kingdom of God
 - 2. And they would have to make a choice, based on all that they had just seen on the Sea of Galilee...
 - a. Based upon all that they had seen in the Gerasenes...
 - b. Based on all that they had seen with this woman and with Jairus...
 - i. Would they choose to remain in fear?
 - ii. Or would they choose to BELIEVE in Jesus, and put their entire faith in him and in him alone?

15. Brothers and sisters, this is the charge for each and every one of us today

- a. We have a Kingdom to advance upon this earth
 - i. We'll see next week how this Kingdom invaded the kingdom of darkness through the incarnation of the Son of God as a little baby boy
 - 1. But that little baby grew into a man
 - 2. And that man, our Lord Jesus, has entrusted TO US the keys of the Kingdom
 - a. Will you choose to live in fear, Christian, keeping this Kingdom all to yourself, hiding the light of Christ within the safe confines of your own home?
 - b. Or will you choose to live in FAITH, believing IN JESUS, and believing that it is in HIS power and HIS authority that we all go out and advance HIS Kingdom in the world?
 - 3. We'll dig deeply into all that this Kingdom entails next Sunday, but for today, the question for each of us is simple?
 - a. Will you choose fear? Or will you choose faith?

16. As we close this morning, let us read once again the words we sang before the sermon...

- a. God rest ye merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay
Remember Christ our Savior, was born on Christmas Day
To save us all from Satan's power, when we were gone astray
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy
O tidings of comfort and joy

From God our heavenly Father, a blessed angel came
And unto certain shepherds, brought tidings of the same
How that in Bethlehem was born, the Son of God by name
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy
O tidings of comfort and joy

Fear not then, said the angel, let nothing you affright
This day is born a Savior, of pure virgin bright
To free all those who trust in Him, from Satan's power and might
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy
O tidings of comfort and joy

The shepherds at those tidings, rejoiced much in mind
And left their flocks a feeding, in tempest storm and wind
And went to Bethlehem straightway, the Son of God to find
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy
O tidings of comfort and joy