

# THE HEALING MINISTRY OF JESUS

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## Who Needs an Appointment?

Luke 8:40-49

How many of you have ever gone to Google.com on the internet and looked at their maps? You can type in a particular address and then zoom in to that particular location. You can even zoom out to see larger and larger regions with that location still at the very center. This morning we're going to be focusing on Jesus' ministry of healing in Luke chapter 8 but first I want to zoom out a few levels so we see the big picture. In Matthew, Mark and Luke there are a number of summary descriptions of Jesus' overall ministry. We read that Jesus did three things. Number 1, Jesus announced the arrival of the Kingdom of God foretold in numerous passages in the Old Testament. He proclaimed the good news that the Kingdom of God is near, it has come, it is among us, it has begun. Number 2, Jesus taught. He taught about God and he taught about how we are now called to live in God's Kingdom which is breaking into human life. And number 3, again and again, everywhere he went Jesus healed people--from evil spirits and of all types of diseases.

Jesus' ministry of healing was an essential part of what he came to do. The healings were in fact signs that the Kingdom of God was now being established on earth. The Old Testament foretold that when the Kingdom of God would come, everything wrong would be made right, everything broken would be made whole. The healings were the most visible evidence that God's Kingdom had come, was truly beginning. Thanks be to God!

That's the big picture of Jesus' ministry of healing. Let's zoom in now to our specific passage this morning: Luke 8 beginning at verse 40. Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. Then a man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

The word was out and a large crowd gathered around Jesus. We read specifically about a man named Jairus. Jairus was the ruler of the local synagogue, a very important person in the community so when he came the crowd probably opened up and made a way for him to go right up to Jesus. Now Jairus was a dignitary, an honored leader of the community but he humbles himself before Jesus because he had one precious daughter, 12 years old, and she was dying.

Often there comes a time in a person's life, when we recognize how much we need God. Intellectually we may know we need God but we can still try to do a lot of things on our own without even thinking about God. But disease certainly has the power to shatter our illusions about being in control of life. For months I have been living with the truth that I can't make cancer leave my body. [[[I need God]]] My oncologist has told me that current medical science [for all that it has learned—current medical science] can not make my type of cancer totally leave my body. To be healed of cancer this side of the grave, I need God. Some people discover how much they need God when they try to help an adult son or daughter straighten out their life or try to help a friend with an addiction or when they finally face their own addiction or some other personal problem. However it may happen, sometimes we discover that no matter how hard we think, no matter how hard we work, no matter who we talk to; there are some things we just can't make right. We need God. How many of you have reached the point where you know experientially that you need God?

Jairus had so much love for his daughter. So he humbled himself and pleaded for Jesus to come and heal his beloved daughter. And Jesus says Yes, Let's go. Verse 42. As Jesus was on his way [to heal Jairus' daughter], the crowds almost crushed him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

We're told the name of the ruler of the synagogue. Everyone knew Jairus. He was important. Why aren't we told the name of this woman? Because in the eyes of her community she wasn't important. In that culture she was only a woman. And for 12 very long years she'd bled constantly from her female organs which meant she was in a continuous state of being ceremonially unclean. According to Jewish law she could never enter the Temple in Jerusalem or even enter a local synagogue. She was an unclean outcast in her community. And anyone she touched would also become unclean. She was someone to be avoided. Someone to ignore. Someone to go unnoticed and unloved. The crowd didn't make way for her. As the crowd walked to Jairus' house, this woman likely needed to push and elbow a bit to get close to Jesus. But after 12 long years of suffering and rejection, this woman really wanted to be healed. And she had faith that Jesus could heal her so risking the anger of the crowd she pushed her way to Jesus. And we read that when she was close enough just to touch the edge of his cloak, "immediately her bleeding stopped." She was instantly healed physically. And before she even had a chance to slip away, Jesus stopped walking and asked [verse 45] "Who touched me?" Peter made light of it. Master, lots of people are crowding and pressing against you. But Jesus wouldn't budge. Verse 46 "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me " [to heal someone].

Jesus wouldn't continue to Jairus' house until the person who had touched him and been healed came forward. Question: Why did Jesus wait? She'd already been healed physically. Why not let her slip away and get on to Jairus' house and his dying daughter? I believe the first answer is that Jesus waited because he had even more healing for this unnamed and rejected woman.

The Greek verb *sozo*, S O Z O, can be correctly translated several ways. It is the primary verb "to be saved." The English word "soteriology," the doctrine of salvation comes from this Greek word *sozo*. But it also means "to be healed," "to be made whole." Salvation is so much more than having our sins forgiven and going to heaven. To be saved is to be healed and made whole in every aspect of our being. Jesus wasn't content letting this woman slip away with only a physical healing. He had more for her. He wanted to heal her spirit and heal her mind as well.

The greatest healing is the healing of our spirit, the healing of our broken relationship with God. Sin separates us from God. But Jesus' death and resurrection removes our sins and opens the way for us to be forgiven and reconciled, reconnected in a living relationship with God. The essential heart of salvation is to know God. Being reconnected in a living relationship with God is the essential heart of salvation and being in a living relationship with God is the foundation for every aspect of healing.

Jesus wanted to bring this woman into a relationship with him. So he stopped and he called her to come forward. He waited until she did. He took the time to listen as she told her story of bleeding for 12 years and of now being healed. He listened to her story.

For 12 long years she had been rejected as an unclean outcast. She was avoided and ignored, shamed, likely called a variety of filthy names. But Jesus would not ignore her. He

would not let her go unnoticed. She might have preferred to slip away. It must have been very painful for her to talk about her bleeding for 12 years in front of the whole crowd. It must have stirred up all kinds of thoughts and feelings about herself. But Jesus listened to her story. He began a relationship with her. He commended her publicly for her faith. And in front of everyone for everyone to hear and especially for her to truly hear he called her “daughter.” Jairus loved his daughter so much. And Jesus wanted to make sure this unnamed rejected woman knew deep in her heart that she was loved by God as a precious daughter. How many painful feelings, how many false beliefs about herself must have been corrected and healed when she heard Jesus call her daughter?

Now I want to zoom in even closer. I want to zoom in and as it were read between the lines of this Scripture passage. Because I believe that Jesus waited for a second reason as well—because he also had a healing to offer the crowd and perhaps even for Jairus himself.

I believe that Jesus waited so that he could expose the prejudice of the crowd. There were those in the crowd—perhaps even Jairus—who needed to have their minds corrected and healed as well. I’m pretty confident that when the crowd heard the woman tell her story of bleeding for 12 years, they didn’t see her as a precious daughter of God. There were likely to be many who saw her only as an unclean outcast, a sinner who deserved her disease and deserved her rejection. Those she had touched as she elbowed her way to Jesus would likely be horrified and furious because now they too were ceremonially unclean and would need to take the time and the expense to travel to Jerusalem and offer special sacrifices. For Jesus to value her, to take the time to listen to her story, to begin a relationship with her, to not condemn her action but to commend her faith, to call her “daughter” was a powerful though unspoken rebuke to what they were likely thinking about this woman.

In Luke 5: 31-32 Jesus said “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Sometimes the healing that Jesus, the Divine Physician, offers is the exposing of our sinful thoughts and attitudes and calling us to repentance, to confess and turn away from them.

I thought about titling this sermon “Do you know how sick you really are?” Our new monthly Sunday morning healing prayer and communion service, like Jesus’ ministry of healing, isn’t only for those with diseased bodies. My own sickness is far more serious than physical cancer. Sometimes I act like I can actually live a Christian life while my spirit is virtually disconnected from Jesus, the living Vine. And my mind is deluded and deceived. Sometimes I’ve got pretty selfish thoughts, greedy thoughts, angry thoughts, anxious thoughts, unloving thoughts, ways of seeing the world and other people that just aren’t accurate, aren’t right. And it’s even worse. The desires of my heart are divided and disordered. My thoughts are wrong because my underlying desires are wrong. I’m divided. Part of me wants to follow God. And part of me is so sick that I want things my way. My priorities are messed up. And it’s even worse. My will is diminished. It’s weak. Even when part of me wants to do the right thing, sometimes I still don’t. And with all of that within me, it’s no surprise that my relationships fall short of God’s love and are distorted in various ways.

You’ll have to decide about yourself, but I’m pretty sick. I definitely need an appointment with the Divine Physician. I need healing in every aspect of my being. I need a lot of prayer. In fact I think I need a whole course of treatment, my own personalized discipleship plan, my own treatment plan for how I’m going to seek health.

Sometimes we get so used to the familiar ways we think, to the familiar tension we experience between godly desires and selfish worldly desires that we don't even realize how sick we all are. What's normal, isn't normal. We're surrounded by so much sickness, not just out there in the world, it's in us, we're surrounded by so much sickness that we don't even know how far we've fallen from the way God created and designed humans to be.

But in Jesus, as we read and meditate on the Gospels, in Jesus we catch a glimpse of what real health and true righteousness looks like. In Jesus we catch a glimpse of what we will one day be by God's grace. May it be so. Earlier I said that at times in our lives we become aware of how much we need God. There are also times when we can become aware of a desire within us to be like Jesus. Times when we see the repeated patterns of our characteristic faults and failures and shortcomings and we want so much to be different, to be changed, to be set free, to become more and more like Jesus. Oh Lord, may it be so.

Do you sense that desire within you? Are you sick and tired of hurting others however you might do it? Are you sick and tired of hurting yourself? Of hurting God, of grieving the Holy Spirit by what you do or don't do? O Lord, open our eyes and show us even now, today, this week, what is wrong within us. And give us a glimpse of what you desire us to be, of what we shall be one day by your grace. O Lord, quicken and stir and arouse such desires within us.

Friends, the good news is that the Kingdom of God has already begun. It's not yet fully realized. We await the return of Jesus when he will make all things completely new. But God's Kingdom has already begun and we can start becoming more and more like Jesus right now. The power of Jesus to heal every aspect of our being is now at work in us and among us. And the foundation of our ongoing transformation is relationship. For as Jesus' spirit, his inner being, was in constant communion and intimate communication with God the Father so can we be in a living relationship with the Triune God. O Lord, even more than our desire to be like Jesus, quicken and stir and arouse our desire to be in a living relationship with him.

Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole;  
I want Thee forever to live in my soul.  
Break down every idol, cast out every foe;  
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

*Refrain*

*Whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow.  
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*