

The Compassionate Jesus

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Scripture: Luke 8:40-48 (NIV)

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.'"

Introduction

This is one of Jesus' healings, a rather special one in my opinion.

The story is told of two liberal sociologists who were walking down the street. They saw a man lying unconscious and covered with cuts and bruises from a terrible mugging. One of the sociologists turned to his colleague and said, "Whoever did this terrible deed really needs our help."

If we look around us, we see tragedy, sorrow, illness and death. We probably have more questions than answers about what we see. However, unlike the two liberal sociologists but like Jesus, we respond to what we see, we experience grief, sadness and suffering. And we should compassionately respond.

Compassion is not only recognizing another's distress but a willingness to do something about it.

J.C. Watts wrote, "Compassion can't be measured in dollars and cents. It does come with a price tag, but that price tag isn't the amount of money spent. The price tag is love."

Two Extremes, One Jesus

Returning to Luke 8:40-48, I note that 2 people in this crowd have a sincere faith. One man and one woman.

The man was a ruler and leader of the synagogue and the woman an outcast and barred from the synagogue. One is rich and the other is poor. One is respected and the other is rejected. One is used to honour and the other is used to being despised. One has a 12-year-old dying daughter and the other has a 12-year-old illness. One is brought down and the other lifted up. Jesus was on His way to one and one was on her way to Jesus. One's need was expressed through conversation and one's need was expressed through action.

Although these 2 people are at extremes from one another, Jesus embraces both of them. Luke writes (1:52), "He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble." Before Jesus, each is on equal footing with the other.

This reveals some interesting characteristics of Jesus' compassion, and we would do well to always keep this in mind:

1. Jesus was accessible.
2. More than accessible, Jesus was available.

Jesus' accessibility meant that any one of the crowd could speak to Him and touch Him.

Jesus' availability meant that He was intimately and sincerely concerned with humble people's cries for help.

Jesus was moving from point A to point B, people were crowding Him and pressing against Him. Jesus could have said that He was busy, or that He did not have enough time or something to the effect of all of us having problems. Jesus was accessible to the crowd and available to individuals who truly humbled themselves before Him.

Jairus, despite what the Pharisees and scribes might have thought about Jesus, had to set aside the opinions of Pharisees and scribes; he broke "protocol" and fell before the very Jesus the religious leaders were plotting to kill. Believing in Jesus, he called for Him to come and heal his daughter because she was close to death.

The woman who touched Jesus had been bleeding for 12 years, the age of Jairus' daughter. She was always ceremonially unclean. So she could not go to synagogue or temple, not touch her husband, not touch her children and not touch her family members. She was excluded from both society and her family. She was suffering physically, emotionally and spiritually for 12 years. Like Jairus, she had to break protocol and humbly reach out and hold onto Jesus.

I can imagine Jairus' possible reaction when Jesus, being crowded and pressed by people; Jesus who was on His way to daughter before she died, asks "Who touched me?"

The Greek word translated to "touch" is "*haptomai*," the reflex of "*haptō*." You may ask, what is the relevance of the Greek? The relevance is that "*haptomai*" and "*haptō*" are both verbs. And only now, do we realize just how the woman touched Jesus. She grasped onto Jesus' garment. She is literally hanging onto her hope and Jesus, recognizing her faith and suffering, responded in compassion and sent her on her way, healed and at peace.

Jairus hung onto Jesus as his hope, despite the laughter of the people, and Jesus raised his daughter from the dead. Jesus had already displayed His power as God, and Jairus wanted Jesus to give him his daughter back. Jesus, feeling his pain and suffering responded in compassion and gave him his daughter back.

Call to Faith (Conclusion)

Let's rewind to verse 46, "But Jesus said, 'Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.'" The power of God is purposefully directed by God to those who are willing to humble themselves and call on Him for an outcome, not only during their deepest needs but as they live their lives to His glory.

So we are, like Jairus and the woman, hoping. Jesus, our hope has already displayed His power over death, over Satan and his demons, over illness, over nature, over our sin and the grave.

Jesus, our hope, restores life and restores physically, socially and spiritually. Jesus already knows your pain, hurt and needs. Are you willing to humble yourself and call upon a compassionate Jesus?

He is accessible and available to you. Right now.

Amen.