

## Luke 8:22-39 Jesus' Authority over Sickness & Death



1. Just like the parables of Jesus, unless we study the miracles of Jesus carefully we will easily miss the main message.
2. Four miracles of Jesus are recorded here: (1) nature miracle; (2) deliverance from demons; (3) healing, and (4) raising the dead. These are also the four serious troubles we face in life: (1) circumstantial danger; (2) demonic oppression; (3) long-standing sickness, and (4) death that has the last word on everyone's life. Jesus encounters them one by one. Each time we find that Jesus has absolute authority over them all, and they give way to Jesus. When we meet these challenges in life, either we react in fear or we respond in faith.

Miracles (1) & (2) take place in Jesus' first overseas mission trip on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. Miracles (3) & (4) take place in Jewish towns on the west side of the Sea of Galilee.

### A. 3<sup>rd</sup> Miracle : Dealing with Sickness (8:40-48)

1. When Jesus returned to the shores of Galilee, a great multitude of Jews welcomed him back. What a contrast to the Gadarenes' rejection! (v37) Most probably Jesus was now back in Capernaum, and a man named Jairus, a 'ruler of the synagogue', came and threw himself at his feet. Jairus, as one in charge of the synagogue, would normally sit on an exalted chair, but he was desperate because his 'only daughter' was sick to the point of death. In those days, a 12 year old girl was at the threshold of becoming a woman, because a young girl became a woman at 13 and married around the age of 15. So Jairus' daughter was a young girl with all the possibilities of life ahead of her, and she is desperately ill.  
  
Jairus means 'God enlightens'. He was a religious man, a dignified man. But in desperation he was kneeling, begging Jesus to come to his house, *"My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she may live."* (Mk 5:23) At once Jesus went with Jairus, and the multitudes thronged around Him. (v42)
2. Now on the way to Jairus' house, an unexpected event, the 3<sup>rd</sup> miracle, takes place. A very sick woman with a longstanding illness, approached Jesus secretly in hope of receiving healing. Her problem was very severe. Her monthly period just would not stop and she'd bled for the past 12 years. She'd spent all her savings on doctors, but none of the treatments helped her. (v43) In fact, instead of her getting better she actually grew worse! (Mk 5:26) After doing all she could have done for 12 long years, this poor woman was now broke and even sicker. Now the only hope she had left was Jesus. Jesus alone and Jesus only was her last and best hope. And faith began to rise in her *'when she heard about Jesus...she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."* (Mk 5:27-28) In other words, 'I know Jesus can heal me.'
3. This woman could not come to Jesus openly like Jairus. Her medical condition rendered her 'unclean', i.e. potentially infectious according to the Law. She was not allowed to attend services or mix with people in public. (Lev 15:25ff) She had to be 'self-quarantined' because her 'uncleanness' was communicable by a 'touch'. (Lev 15:27) How then could she get to Jesus? She decided to secretly approach Jesus from behind and touch the 'tassel' of his garment – "Operation Tassel." All Jewish men put on four blue-stringed tassels on the four corners of his garment to remind them of God's commandment to live a holy life before Him (Num 15:38ff).
4. The moment she touched the tassel of Jesus' garment, the flow of blood stopped instantly. Something was transferred from Jesus to this woman. Jesus' power flowed into her body and her sickness left. By touching the tassel of Jesus' garment, she was connected to Jesus' power. Just like copper wire connecting with powerful current of electricity, she was connected to Jesus, and Jesus' life and Jesus' health flooded into her. This is the secret to Christian life. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. We must abide in Him to bear much fruit! If I need power, I need Jesus' power to flow into my soul. So also Jesus' patience, joy, strength, boldness and zeal. *'Jesus became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.'* (1 Cor 1:30).
5. At this point Jesus turned around, *"Who touched Me?"* (v45) He said, *"Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me."* (v46) His disciples thought, "That's a ridiculous question, the crowd is pushing into you from everywhere. Everybody touched you. What do you mean, 'who touched Me'?" But Jesus was saying in effect, "I am not talking about everybody's touch. 'One particular touch' was different from every other

touch, and the power went out from Me with that touch.” So it is possible to be in the very presence of Jesus and not touch Him at all!

Did Jesus have a problem locating who touched him? Or was He bringing the woman out into the open to make her whole emotionally and socially as well? After years of isolation, being in the crowd of people would have been probably difficult for her, and being accepted back into the society was important. The woman was afraid her ‘operation tassel’ may be found out, but she knew she couldn’t hide anything from Jesus, so she knelt down and told Him everything. That’s how we approach Jesus in prayer! No need for hidden agenda, no need to impress Him, and no need to squeeze out His blessings. Tell Jesus everything that is in our hearts.

6. To her surprise Jesus encouraged her warmly, *“Daughter, be of good cheer, your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”* (v48) This woman is the only person Jesus tenderly addressed as ‘Daughter’ in the gospels. Jesus is saying, there is nothing magical about the tassel. It was her ‘faith’ that connected her to Jesus and His power, and nothing else. It is our faith that connects us to Jesus. So also with the communion table and the water baptism. The gospel stresses this simple truth of faith repeatedly. *“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”* (Heb 11:6)

## B. 4<sup>th</sup> Miracle : Dealing with Death (8:40-42, 49-56)

1. While Jesus was speaking to the woman, tragic news broke. Someone came to Jairus with heartless words, *“Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the teacher.”* (v49) How would you feel at this point if you were Jarius? Jesus was taking His time, being kind to this woman and educating the public about the importance of faith. And Jairus’ only daughter couldn’t hold on any longer and died. Why did Jesus ‘waste so much time’ on this woman? Now it was too late! This woman’s miracle of healing from the 12 year-long sickness came at the cost of Jairus’ only daughter, 12 years of age! How unfair! How frustrating! Jairus must have felt devastated! Yet there is not one word of complaint from him.
2. At that point of frustration and anger, ‘fear’ could have crept into Jairus. But Jesus encouraged Jairus to stay in faith, *“Don’t be afraid. Only believe and your daughter will be made well.”* (v50) When they arrived at Jairus’ house, professional mourners were already at work, with ‘flute players and noisy crowd also wailing.’ (Matt 9:23) They lost no time in selling their trade. Jesus allowed only Peter, James and John, and the father and mother of the girl in the room. Then Jesus said to the wailers outside, *“Do not weep. She is not dead. But sleeping.”* (v52) The professional mourners ridiculed Jesus and laughed at Him, they knew the girl was dead.
3. Jesus put them all outside, except the three disciples and the parents. Then He took the girl’s hand and said, *“Little girl, arise.”* (v54) The original Aramaic words Jesus spoke are recorded in Mark’s gospel, *“Talitha cumi.”* (Mk 5:4) It is something mothers would say to their little girls each morning to wake them up. At Jesus’ words, the girl’s spirit returned and she got up at once. Then Jesus told the mother to ‘give something for her to eat’ (v55), just as if this is like any other morning - *“Sweetie, it’s time for breakfast!”* Then Jesus charged them not to tell anyone about this miracle, again the Messianic secrecy. Some years later Peter, who was one of the eyewitnesses to this event, said to Dorcas the same words. He said, *“Tabitha, arise.”* (Acts 9:40) And she opened her eyes, and she saw Peter and sat up.

## C. Lessons:

1. What is the meaning of the four miracles in Luke 8? When we come to the end of your resources and strength, we can come to Jesus in faith. Faith connects us to Jesus, and Jesus always has the answer. Jesus IS the ANSWER. In fact, coming to Jesus in prayer should not be the last resort, but the first.
2. Death doesn’t have the last word on God’s children. LIFE has the last word. A believer’s life is like an ordinary day. We get up in the morning and go about our business during the day. When the evening comes, we get tired and fall asleep. Then on the resurrection morning Jesus will wake us up to ‘New Heaven and New Earth’.  
Jesus said, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.”* (John 5:25)

That’s why David said, *“As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.”* (Ps. 17:15 C.f. 16:10-11)