

DELIVERANCE—NOW!

Luke 8:40–56

Dr. George O. Wood

Luke 8:40–56 is the culmination of this great eighth chapter in the Gospel of Luke. Romans 8 is also a great, great chapter.

“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. As Jesus was on his way, 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. ‘Who touched me?’ Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, ‘Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.’ But Jesus said, ‘Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.’ 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. Then he said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.’ While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. ‘Your daughter is dead,’ he said. ‘Don’t bother the teacher any more.’ Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, ‘Don’t be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.’ 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. Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. ‘Stop wailing,’ Jesus said. ‘She is not dead but asleep.’ They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But he took her by the hand and said, ‘My child, get up!’ Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to

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eat. Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened” (Luke 8:40–56, NIV).

The eighth chapter of the Gospel of Luke demonstrates two kinds of needs: developmental needs and deliverance needs. The chapter begins with Jesus telling stories, like the story about the man who went out to sow, illustrating that the kingdom of God is that which we must personally and willingly receive. This story was taught to the multitudes not because there was a crisis, but rather because they were in the normality of life. Just living a normal life requires that we take the Word of God into our hearts and that we grow accordingly.

But there are moments when life is not on a normal track, when we are in extreme danger. So the rest of Luke 8 describes moments of great danger, moments when deliverance is needed. The disciples in the storm on the Lake of Galilee needed the deliverance of the One who had power over nature. The Gadarene demoniac who had the legion in him needed the power of Him who had the lordship over Satan and hell and the demonic hosts. The woman who pressed through the crowd needed the lordship of Jesus over the illness in her life. And Jairus’ daughter needed the lordship of Jesus over death itself.

When we open our hearts to the gospel, we find that Jesus did miracles in four basic areas or realms over which He had authority: over nature, over demons, over illness, and over death.

Luke 8 gives us four great stories which show Jesus’ power and authority in moments when deliverance was needed.

So today I recognize that, in this audience, like the audiences that Jesus was ministering to in Luke 8, the great majority of us are in need of a message that is developmental in nature. You’re not here today under any sense of impending personal crisis. Nor are you going through a crisis right at the moment. It is an everyday kind of experience for you. Yet, there are others in this

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room this morning who are going through a time of great personal danger, a moment when life is really tossing wildly on you just like the disciples' boat on the Lake of Galilee. Maybe it is related to something physical. Maybe it is related to a problem or a need or an adversity of some kind that you have faced. But you find yourself here today in crisis. I feel like this Scripture I've read today gives a special word to those in crisis. I feel especially burdened today for those of you who may be going through a time in your life where the Lord is asking you to deal with a wrongful relationship that you have entered, or where the Lord is asking you to put off immorality in your life or where maybe someone is here this morning who is having a great struggle getting off the bottle and becoming clear of both alcohol and drugs. Others are going through a struggle of realizing that bitterness has encased your heart and you're becoming very brittle and bitter in your spirit, or maybe your heart is becoming hard.

And the Lord has a word for you today who need a special act of deliverance from Him as well as a special word for all of us in the everyday, developmental needs that we have. I want to especially address this Scripture from the standpoint of the woman who presses through the crowd. She so beautifully shows us what faith is all about. And what it means to grow in faith on a developmental basis as well as what it means to have faith intersect our lives when we are in need of deliverance. I would like to illustrate and point out four things relating to her faith.

I. First, I would point you to the mentality of her faith.

To find a scriptural base for this, we compare it with other Gospel stories which deal with her situation. When we turn to Mark's account of her coming to Jesus, we find in the English translation this phrase, in Mark 5:28, "For she thought" (KJV), or "Because she thought." What was she thinking? She was thinking, *If I could only get to Jesus and touch the hem of His garment, I would be made well.*

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Somehow in our life, if change is to take place, it must begin in the area of our thinking, in the area of our mentality. “Because she thought.” I realize for those of you who know the Greek New Testament that, if you looked up the Greek of Mark 5:28, you would find that the word in the Greek is based on the word *lego* which means “to say.” The actual Greek translation would read, “because she was saying.” But the English translators have put it, “Because she was thinking.” So I’ve taken a little bit of liberty with the text in building my first point, by saying that freedom in faith begins with what we think.

It really is true because if she was saying, “If I but get to Jesus,” she had to have been thinking it first, because thought is the precursor, it proceeds the speaking.

When we look at the whole matter of seeing Jesus at work, we find in the Gospels that Jesus worked greatly in climates of belief. But He was unable to do great works, even in His hometown of Nazareth, because of the unbelief. This woman had a lot of unbelief to overcome in her own life. A lot of adversity to overcome.

There was the longevity of her condition, which mitigated her believing that any change could take place. She had been ill for twelve years. And anyone who has been ill for that long knows that it is not easy to begin to believe that things could be different.

She also had the opinion of many doctors, which went against her and suggested to her that she was frozen and locked in time. The experts were saying, “You’ll never get well.” In fact, Mark’s Gospel, recording her need, says, “She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse” (Mark 5:26). Does that describe any situation that you’ve ever known in dealing with an illness? Maybe you feel like, “I’ve seen all the doctors and spent all I had and I’m getting worse—not better.” Luke simply

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omits the fact that she had spent all her money on doctors, because he's a doctor himself. He simply says, "No one was able to help her," which was the truth.

In getting to Jesus, she had to brave the opinion of the experts. Maybe there have been people that have told you, "You'll never change." Maybe they've not been medical experts. Maybe they've not been psychologists. Maybe they've been members of your own family who have said to you, "You'll never change! You'll never make it."

There was not only the length of her condition and the opinion of doctors, but there was the crushing crowd around Jesus which made it very difficult for her to press through. She didn't change her thinking and say, "There are so many people, I can't get in anyway. I just won't even try."

She even had to overcome her religious tradition, which bound her. She was in a religious tradition which said that a bleeding condition renders you unclean, ceremonially impure and therefore unable to go to the temple. And anything you touch and anyone you touch, becomes defiled. I can see this woman, as she starts out, realizing that anything she touched and anyone she touched—theologically speaking—couldn't go to the temple because they'd be impure.

They'd have to go through bathing in order to be ritually clean again. And yet, ignoring all that, she's pressing through the crowds. And the Pharisees who think they are righteous are getting defiled left and right, as she puts her hands on them and pushes them aside. It's one of the really neat humorous moments of the gospel. She had to overcome the negativity of her religious tradition.

She had to even break through knowing that there was a more pressing need than hers that was driving Jesus. Jesus was on His way to Jairus' home and the little girl was at the point of death. This woman was not at the point of death. The fact that the girl was at the point of death is

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illustrated by the fact that, when Jesus stops and helps the woman, by the time He was done helping her, the girl in Jairus' home has died. There are many times we feel the Lord's busy elsewhere or "I'm not worthy." We have to get past that kind of mentality, that we're not worthy. We have to get past the mentality that the Lord doesn't really want to have anything to do with us and instead begin thinking, "If this daughter of Adam can get to Jesus, things will be different for me as well." She was thinking.

II. And to that thought life, came a second part of her faith that we get from the Greek translation of Mark, as well as the English of Matthew. She was saying, "If I could but get to Jesus." Matthew 9:21 says, "For she said within herself" (KJV).

The Greek language is a very precise language when it comes to verb tenses. More precise than the English language and the past tense in Greek has two forms. They're called "aorist," which has no equivalent in English, and an "imperfect" tense. The aorist tense describes action that happened and is over, it's sort of like stop-action. It has occurred and it's done. The imperfect tense describes action that was happening for a period of time. It was repetitive action. It's interesting the verb tense used here of this woman is not that "she said"—aorist tense, meaning she only said it once—but it's the imperfect tense instead, which means "she was saying." When she got up that morning and found Jesus was coming to her town, she started to say, "If I could get there... I know He's going to be busy... I know there will be people around Him... but if I can touch even His cloak, I'll be well." She made her way out of the house and said it again. As she pushed aside the crowd, she said it again within herself, "If I can get there."

Positive confession people have seized here on a valid point, when they say, "What you say is what you get." The only problem with positive confession people is that, somehow, in using the principle, they abuse it by leaving out the sovereignty of God. You can say something all you

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want and, if God chooses not to do it, you can say it 'till you're blue in the face and spitting quarters out your ears, and God is still not going to do it. But there is a valid principle of faith in that, "What you say is what you get," and that language creates reality.

If you don't believe that language creates reality, I'd like you to have the experience of talking to a forty-year-old person who is an overachiever and successful, who is still hearing the words from their childhood from parents, "You'll never amount to anything. You're clumsy. You're no good." We carry those kinds of realities, created by words all our life, and struggle with them.

Words create reality, and self-talk is so important.

Jesus, in Acts 1:8—when He told the disciples to go to the uttermost part of the world—was making a faith statement. I don't think He did it hesitantly or apologetically or sort of mumbled it. But when He said, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth," He knew that there were over 33,000 persons in the world at that point for every single believer in Palestine, and 2.8 million persons in the world for every believer in the world. Yet He knew they were going to do it. And His statement ultimately created the reality.

We need to take authority in our language and be careful in what we say.

A phrase that I didn't understand for many years is Paul's phrase in the Philippian letter, where he says, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Phillipians 4:13). My attitude toward that was, "Come on, Paul! You're putting us on. You know you're in prison and you know you've been held as a prisoner for five years and there's no way that you can do anything, let alone everything. You're putting us on and you're giving us preacher talk." Pulpit clichés.

"It's a joy and a privilege to be here this morning..." You may have pain in your back but "it's a

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joy and a privilege.” Preachers are notorious for saying flowery things. Is Paul just giving this kind of pulpit talk sort of thing?

Then one day, I realized what he was saying. He wasn't saying, “I can do everything.” What he was saying was, “This is the toughest thing God's ever called me to do. I've never been called before to sit in prison for five years. I want to be free. I want to take the gospel to the west, to Spain. I want to revisit the churches. I want to train workers. I want to be involved. I don't want to be here in prison. It's the roughest thing God's ever asked me to do. But I found that with His help I can do it. And if I can do this, I can do anything. I can do all things through Christ.”

Maybe the thing which you're doing right now is the toughest thing you've ever been asked to do. But the Lord gives you the strength to do it. Paul didn't sit in prison and waste his life by immersing himself in blame toward God. “God, why have You let this happen to a servant of Yours like myself?” Nor did he waste his time by drowning in an ocean of self-pity. But he went on to say, “Lord, I'm here. There's nothing I can do about it. You haven't done a miracle for me in releasing me. But Lord, I trust You and, even here, in this place, I will do this. If this is what You're calling me to do. If prison is what You're calling me to do, I can do even this in You.”

What he said, as it came out of his heart and out of his letters, determined and created the reality for him.

III. Added to the mentality of faith and the language of faith is the action of faith.

This woman did more than think and she did more than say. She did. She acted. She did four very important things. She got up. She got dressed. She got out. And she got through.

And all of those are tough when you're sick. It's tough to get up. And when you get up, it's tough to get dressed. And when you get dressed, it's tough to get out. And when you've gotten out, it's tough to get through. But she did it.

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There is this cycle of life which says, “What you think is what you say is what you do is what you think is what you say is what you do.” Even in receiving the Lord into our life, the basic of the Christian life begins with this sequence of thought, speech and action. “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ [speech] and believe in your heart [belief] that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9, NIV). Then Paul goes on to say, a couple chapters later in Romans, that action follows—“Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God” (12:1, NIV). We define salvation as simply “Believe and confess”—speak it and that’s all there is. But the Lord calls us, as Christians, to a life that is more than passive. It is not simply thinking it and saying it, but getting out on the firing line and doing it and being a Christian with all of our heart. Being the best kind of a Christian, with the help of the Holy Spirit, that we can possibly be.

IV. The fourth thing this lady’s faith speaks to us is that the object of her faith becomes Jesus.

Faith has an attitude. Faith has a language. Faith has an action to it. But faith must have an object. This woman wanted to get to Jesus and, evidently, at the time she wanted to get to Jesus, the object of her faith was the hem of His garment. You would have found her kind at the shrine of Lourdes, hoping that at the magical moment, the cure would be given. She had faith in a point of contact. Faith is a wonderful thing. You can have faith, but not have faith in Jesus. Faith works as a principle, even divorced from Jesus. That’s why there’s so much stuff on positive thinking today, because faith works, even if it’s divorced from Christ. It works.

People think positive. Live positive is the general rule until they hit a crunch that nobody can escape from. People who think negative tend to live negative. So there’s truth in that.

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But the object of her faith appears to be in the robe of Jesus. I think that's why Jesus stopped the whole parade and turned around and said, "Who touched Me?" "What a stupid question," Peter says. "You've got to be kidding. Look at all these people around You. It's a mass of people. What do You mean?" Jesus says, "Power went out." What is Jesus doing? He's wanting this woman to identify herself, so that He may help her to know that it was a combination of her faith and Himself that made her well. It was not the magical touching of the robe or the point of contact. It was the power of Jesus that had made her well.

We place our faith, not in faith, but in the Lord. That's perhaps where we become separated from those who are heavily into the positive confession movement. Faith needs an object, just like love needs an object.

If you're a young person and you're in love and I come up to you and say, "I hear you're in love! Who are you in love with?" You wouldn't say, "Nobody in particular. I'm just in love with love." I'd reply, "You need help!"

We don't fall in love with love. We fall in love with a person. We don't fall in faith with faith.

There are people who are in faith with faith. As though faith were a God. We're in faith to God.

That allows God to demonstrate Himself, by either changing our circumstances or changing us in the circumstances. But it allows God the freedom to be God and us to still come to Him with our needs and our burdens.

The object of her faith was the Lord. This story, I think, focuses us on the moral realm in areas of disobedience in our life, to let us ask if we're willing to come to a moment in which we bring that need for deliverance in our life to the Lord. There may be those who say, "I always wanted to get free of my addiction to chemicals or alcohol." The Lord, through this story, is saying, "Now is the time to do it." Ask the Lord to do it and help you to do it. Now's the time to lay

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aside the sin that so easily besets, and clear moral wrong, and ask the Lord to intercept and give us His mind and His language and the action that we should take in regard to that.

This woman in the Gospels is the only woman whom Jesus called “daughter,” the only one He ever directly called “daughter.” I think He calls her daughter because she didn’t consider herself a daughter of God. Twelve years of religious uncleanness had separated her from the religious people. She probably saw herself as an outcast and as a person unworthy of God. Jesus creates her reality by calling her “daughter.” Perhaps she was younger than He. Maybe she was in her mid-twenties. But He identifies her as a daughter.

He calls each of us the name by which He creates the definition of our life and the reality of our life. Son or daughter. When the woman is healed, Jesus goes to the synagogue ruler’s home—Jairus’ home—and there, He finds the little girl has expired. Jesus’ view is that death is not the cessation of existence, but rather, death is “sleep.” So He wakes her and restores her, illustrating that the deepest need in our life, which we may think and feel goes beyond the woman, is actually the need that is so deep that it seems to have a deep hold, as death itself. The Lord of glory shows us—through His Word—that even in those moments when there’s no hope, from a human point of view, He is there and present to minister to us. Deliverance now. It’s a matter of making up our mind and getting to Jesus and bringing our need to Him for His help and healing.

Closing Prayer

Our heavenly Father, we bring these moments of worship to a close. We recognize that a great many of us today are in no sense in crisis in our life, but are simply going along. This is the second Sunday of June, another normal week. Yet to those of us in developmental stages, You’re asking us in our daily life to have the attitudes, speak the language, and do the deeds which go with being a disciple of Yours, of coming to You, the object of our faith. There are others, Lord,

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in great personal and spiritual danger. Maybe struggling between obedience to You and a very clear sinful choice. I pray, Lord, that You will minister to them at this moment on this day and bring change into their life and bring Your presence. We pray for those who come now who are ill in body or come representing others who are physically ill, that You will minister and heal. We ask, Lord Jesus, that You will repair and restore our hearts and that You will catch us, in these closing moments of worship, into Your presence and into Your love. With all our hearts, Lord, we want to serve You. And be faithful to You. We come to You because there's no one else that can help us in our great needy moments like You. We're glad to come to You, Lord. We're thrilled to know that You care and You love. Blessed be Your name. Amen.