

Trusting the Saviour with Your Future

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[0 : 0 0] Thanks, Esther, for reading. If you could keep your Bibles open at Luke chapter 8, that would be a great help to me as we turn to that together. And if you find it helpful, there's an outline just inside the notice sheet about the points that we'll think about as we look at what happened that day.

It's my custom to pray and ask for God's help as we turn to look at his words. So let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you have made yourself known to us in the person of Jesus.

Whether we've been followers of him for many years or we know very little about him today, we pray that as we look at him together, you will give us eyes to see him, heads to understand why he came, and hearts that are willing to change and follow him.

Amen. Well, we're looking at these scenes this morning that are matters of life and death. There's been a bit of confusion in the news recently about life and death. I don't know if you saw back in November, in the U.S. elections, the most surprising winner, it was the Republican candidate in Nevada, Dennis Hoth.

He won a seat in the state assembly. He's the owner of five brothels and a strip club. He received 68.3% of the votes. The big surprise, though, was that he was already dead.

[1 : 2 3] He died the previous month but got elected. And there are some of us as well who have given up on the living. You might have seen the story about Akihiko Kondo, a 35-year-old in Tokyo, who was so burnt from relationships he'd had with real women that he's decided to marry a holographic anime pop star.

He said that Hatsune Miku had healed him and that it was wonderful to marry someone who would never be unfaithful, never age and never die. 39 people attended the wedding, including a Japanese MP, and Hatsune was represented by a small doll.

So there's a bit of confusion out there about the living and the dead. But in normal life, I guess most of us would know that death is no laughing matter. And the thing that drives this section of Luke's account of Jesus' life forward, the real momentum, is this burning question, who is Jesus?

A question that we all have to answer for ourselves today, probably the most influential man who's ever lived. Who was he? And that's driving this section of Luke's account of his life. So that in the next chapter, Herod, the Roman governor, says, who then is this?

I hear such things about. And Jesus says to his followers, who do you say I am? That's where we're heading. What we see in this chapter is the question of Jesus' identity is a matter of life and death.

[2 : 4 9] Who was Luke? Luke was a doctor in the first century. He says at the beginning of his account that lots of people had undertaken to write up an account of the things that Jesus had been doing.

And so Luke decided to carefully investigate everything from the beginning and write this orderly account for us so that we could know with certainty what happened with this man, Jesus of Nazareth.

So you can picture Luke like the best kind of investigative journalist we might see putting together a documentary in today's language, going around visiting the eyewitnesses, interviewing them before camera.

Luke's piecing together exactly what happened so that each of us can answer the question, who is Jesus? And today he shows us some people who met Jesus.

Our first point, a desperate outsider needs healing and peace. So the scene gets set in verse 40. Jesus arrives on a boat across the Sea of Galilee, traveling west across the Sea of Galilee in what's now northern Israel, into the region of Galilee, and as the little boat steers in, you can picture crowds of people on the shoreline waiting for him to come back.

[3 : 56] And one of them is this man Jairus. Jesus sets off with Jairus to Jairus' home because Jairus' daughter is sick. And it's getting dangerous. Just look at verse 42 with me.

Verse 42. As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. Extraordinary, isn't it? And then within those crowds, just our eyes focus on one woman creeping through the crowd, ducking and diving to get near to Jesus.

And in just one sentence, Luke tells us her story. It's a horrible story. Verse 43. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for 12 years, but no one could heal her.

Just have a think to yourself. Where were you 12 years ago? April 2007. What was your life situation? Maybe a different job.

Some of you may be still at school. I was living in London. First year of marriage for me. Just have a think about all the different things that have happened to you since then, in the last 12 years.

[5 : 05] I don't know what will stand out for you. I'm thinking three children. Three house moves. Brain surgery. Three half marathons. That kind of thing. Things that you've done.

Big things that happened to you in 12 years. And imagine if, for all that time in your life, you've been bleeding. And nobody can stop it.

More than that, this woman's bleeding is probably a uterine hemorrhage. In her deeply religious culture, that made her ceremonially unclean. Continuously unclean.

So that it was an embarrassment for her everywhere she went. People had to keep their distance from her. If somebody touched her, they became religiously unclean. She's shut out from community life.

And she's very unwell. And Dr. Luke just mentions in passing, doesn't he, no one could heal her. I was looking up this week the kind of things that doctors would have prescribed to a woman who had that condition.

[6 : 07] In the first century, as they took her money off her for their advice, drink a glass of wine mixed with rubber and garden flowers. Or drink a glass of wine mixed with onions.

Nothing works. She's a hopeless case. But she knows that Jesus is coming back to the region. Maybe she's been there when he's healed other people.

And she thinks to herself, if I can just get near enough of him, if I can just touch him, even just touch the edge of his cloak, maybe that will be enough. And verse 44, Luke says, Immediately her bleeding stopped.

She's made completely well. But then she gets very alarmed because Jesus knows what she's done. She wanted to do it in secret, but he stops.

And in verse 45, he says, Who touched me? And he doesn't ask because he doesn't know. I take it that he asks because he wants the crowd to hear her story.

[7 : 09] Why? Why? Because they keep their distance from her. And they need to hear that he's made her well. That she's clean again. So they can welcome her.

But look at the fear in verse 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.

She's so afraid. Why? Maybe she's scared that Jesus will tell her off for approaching him without asking. Maybe she's scared the crowd will turn on her because she had moved through the crowd and touched everybody.

They can see her whole body shaking with fear as she tells the story to Jesus. What's he going to do? And then all she gets is kindness. Verse 48. Then he said to her, Daughter, your faith has healed you.

Go in peace. Twelve years. No one can make her well. Suddenly she is completely well. There's something else here as well.

[8 : 20] Jesus said to the woman in verse 48, Your faith has healed you. Go in peace. He uses a word that can be used to mean heal, but it's the word save.

Your faith has saved you. Now, here, of course, with what's happened to the woman, it's best to understand it as that she's been healed. That's what he's done for her. But remarkably, it's exactly the same phrase that Jesus used of a different woman at the end of the previous chapter.

Jesus was at the house of a religious leader, Simon, and a woman was there. Who'd lived a rebellious life. And because of her faith in Jesus' message, in Luke chapter 7, verse 50, he says to the woman, Your faith has saved you.

Go in peace. And he explains what's led to that in verse 48, just two verses before that. He said to the woman, Your sins are forgiven. Exactly the same phrase.

It's as though Luke wants us to put together these two women and Jesus' meetings with them and understand Jesus is a saviour. He's come to save us. And the salvation he's come to bring is a gift.

[9 : 28] You don't have to earn salvation from Jesus by doing good things to merit favour from God. What you do is you just have faith.

You recognise that you have a need. You trust Jesus' promises to save you. And you come to him and you trust him. And if you do that, what is this salvation?

Well, ultimately, it's a restoration of your whole self. Sins forgiven, chapter 7, verse 48. Your conscience cleansed. And then what we see here in chapter 8, that she is healed, this woman, after 12 years of being unwell.

The crowd are there to see that she needs to be welcomed back into the community again. And she is at peace with God. That's what peace means in the Bible. That all that we've ever done wrong, all that stands against us and God, is taken away.

And we have peace with him. That's our first point. A desperate outsider needs healing and peace. But all the time that that's going on, Jairus is waiting.

[10 : 36] So secondly, we're going to look at him. A religious leader needs life from the grave. Jairus is a powerful man, a religious leader in a religious society. But none of us is powerful in the face of death, especially when confronted with the death of a child.

Thankfully, most of us can only imagine how he must have felt. He had a bright, energetic, joyful daughter, bringing joy to his life, his family's life. And then she gets sick and she goes to bed.

And then she gets worse until they can see that she's dying. Then the glimmer of hope, the news reaches him. Jesus is arriving back in the region.

He'd gone away across the lake. He's coming back. So he rushes out. And in verse 41, you can imagine the crowd, who would have known Jairus, moving out of the way for this important man as he comes through.

And he falls at Jesus' feet. And this respectable man, who would have been able to send servants anywhere he wanted to do errands for him, comes in person to be on his knees to plead with Jesus that he comes to his house.

[11 : 46] It's all he's got left to do. And whatever Jairus knows about Jesus, he knows enough to think that once Jesus agrees to come, if he can just get Jesus to his house in time, Jesus could make his daughter well again.

But on their way, Jesus has been stopped. He's brought out this woman. And Jairus has stood there while the whole crowd heard the woman's whole story, which could have taken quite some time.

And he's getting more and more worried. And then in verse 49, tragedy, isn't it? Verse 49, while Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader.

Your daughter is dead, he said. Don't bother the teacher anymore. It's game over, as far as they think. These crowds, they've already come to think the unthinkable, that this man Jesus actually has supernatural power, that this universe is not a closed system of cause and effect, for they've seen with their own eyes, this man Jesus must have come from God.

He can heal people who are unwell. Even his enemies admit that he has supernatural power. They can't deny what's going on. He could snatch people from the jaws of death.

[13 : 02] But surely, once those jaws have closed on somebody, surely, once someone has actually died, it would be too late. So the messenger's saying, leave Jesus alone now.

It was worth a try. It's too late. And by the time they arrive at the house, in the courtyard, everyone is wailing and weeping, grieving for the loss.

And we can imagine that, because as Trevor's just led us in our prayers, we know, don't we, that death is a horrible thing. We've seen it last week in Sri Lanka, in the churches and the hotels.

We saw in the refugee crisis, little Alan Kurdi, I don't know if you remember that photograph of the Syrian boy, three years old, washed onto a beach in Turkey, and the soldier picking him up and cradling him, just this lifeless body as he cradled him in his arms.

And the photograph almost sort of shamed the world into action about refugees. People suddenly realize, what are we doing here? As people are dying in the sea.

[14 : 02] But whatever we've done since, it didn't do any good for little Alan. We can't bring him back. He's dead. And many of us know in our own lives the pain of death. I had a cousin, Simon, seven years younger than me, and a fellow Middlesbrough fan like me, grew up near me, my cousin Simon.

And when I was away at university one night, on a Saturday night, I was on a night out actually, and my sister phoned me, and she said, Martin, I'm so sorry, have you got people with you? Something's happened.

Simon was being chased by some boys, and he ran into a road, and a taxi knocked him down, and he's died. Simon was the same age that Jairus' daughter was in these events here.

And I can't tell you how much I wish somebody had been there to save his life, because my auntie, his mum, and my other cousins have lived every day with that. Last Wednesday, his big sister got married last Wednesday, and he's not there.

His picture's on the mantelpiece. He never gets older. The birthdays go by. It's a horrible thing. And when the news reaches Jairus, I take it that his life collapses.

[15 : 16] And that's what makes the three things the man Jesus of Nazareth says here absolutely astonishing. The first one is in verse 50. If you just have a look at verse 50. Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, don't be afraid, just believe, and she will be healed.

I don't know what you think about that. That's pretty gutsy, isn't it? Of Jesus. To a man who's just heard the news that his daughter has died, it's either a lie, and it's horribly cruel, or it's true, and it changes your whole worldview.

And then comes the second of Jesus' three astonishing statements. In verse 52, to the crowd of mourners outside the home. Verse 52, Jesus says, stop wailing, she's not dead, but asleep.

They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. He goes inside with just the mum and dad, and Peter, and James, and John. And then the third shocking statement, this time to the girl herself.

Verse 54, 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 eat.

[16 : 31] Her parents are astonished, Luke says, and no wonder, for he was a man who can raise somebody from the dead as easily as you or I can lift someone out of sleep. Just wake them up, a little child.

He just has to command, and by the power of his word, he gives life. And notice that Luke tells us who the dad was. He wants his first readers to know as he investigates.

Go to the town, go to Galilee, find out who the synagogue leader was. It was a man called Jairus. Go and see him. Ask him what happened to his daughter. He wants us to know the whole crowd was there when that woman told her story.

They were pressing in on Jesus. It was chaos. Ask any of the witnesses. They were there. Luke is not making it up. So we've heard about the woman. And we've heard about the girl.

And now we draw the thread together between the two stories because Luke wants us to see that they're closely connected. I don't know whether you've spotted that. The age of the girl and the length of the illness of the woman.

[17 : 33] 12 years old and a woman who's been bleeding for 12 years. And did you notice what Jesus called the woman in verse 48? Daughter, your faith has healed you.

Just as people arrived to say to Jairus, your daughter is dead. The two events are closely connected so that through them we get a picture of what we can trust Jesus for.

What is this salvation that he's come to bring? So that's our third point. We've seen a desperate outsider need healing and peace. A religious leader need life from the dead. And our final point, a wandering preacher has power to save.

Jesus is a savior. Who is his salvation for? What kind of a person is interested in Jesus?

What kind of a person needs him? Is it just medical students? We've heard from James and Tom, haven't we, today? Maybe you're here and you've got your own ideas. What kind of a person would be interested in this?

[18 : 38] But you think even, it's not for me. Well here Jesus meets two people who in a sense are complete opposites. They couldn't be more different, this man and this woman.

Is Jesus just for people with nothing else for them? For the global poor? For the powerless? That's where the church is growing today, isn't it? Around the world? While in the affluent west it declines, people in the global south are putting their trust in Jesus.

Is that who he's for? Look at Jairus. A respectable man. A synagogue leader. Morally upstanding. Everyone thought he was a good man. He comes to Jesus.

So is Jesus just for people like Jairus? Do you have to have your life sorted out before you come to him? Well look at the woman. Religiously, a complete outsider.

Excluded from the synagogue. Shut out from her community. The only thing that this man and this woman have in common is they know they need help and they trust that Jesus could help them.

[19 : 42] So they ask him for help. This salvation is for everyone. And what is the salvation that Jesus has come to bring? Well we heard Jesus' words to the woman he healed.

Daughter, your faith has saved you. We know from the previous chapter what that means. It means your sins are forgiven. You have peace with God. But then put her salvation together with this little girl, Jairus' daughter.

Why did Jesus let this woman interrupt her and leave Jairus' daughter to die? It's because Jesus wants us to know that we can trust him with our future.

that what he's offering us is nothing less than resurrection life. Life that goes beyond the grave. You come to him for salvation if you want an answer to the problem of death.

It's not a promise to us today for healing and the here and now. Jesus is not here with us in person to do that. But ultimately, Jesus promised resurrection life to everyone who trusts him.

[20 : 47] He said, I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live even though they die. And whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?

That's his claim. So he makes this promise about our future if we'll believe in him, if we'll trust him, beyond the grave. And here in these events that Luke records for us, what was happening was Jesus was demonstrating that day that he can keep that promise.

the future broke into the present that day so that he can say, will you trust me with your own death? Just over a week ago, Millie and Toby Saville, a couple of teachers from London, were killed in Santorini when their buggy crashed.

I don't know whether you saw this. They hadn't been married long. They were on holiday. They were driving and they fell into a 200-meter deep ravine. They were 25 and 26 years old. Look, I can't imagine how hard that must be right now for their families.

But Toby's sister said this, she said this, Our loss of Toby and Millie is inconceivable, something that will take a lifetime for so many to come to terms with. But we are confident of the joy they are experiencing right now with Christ on high.

[22 : 04] We continue to grieve, but we will never lose sight of this certain hope. Friends, there's lots of ways that being a Christian makes a difference to your life.

But when you're at the graveside, when you're next to the hospital bed, there, things couldn't be any more different whether or not you're a Christian. And that is good news for us, isn't it?

Maybe if you're someone here who's grieving the loss of a loved one who is a Christian. Well, we mustn't feel guilty about grief. Grief is a very real thing. Death is a horrible thing.

It's natural to grieve. But wonderfully, as we grieve as Christians, let's never lose sight of the confidence we have that the future hope of a Christian who has died is totally secure.

We grieve, but we grieve with certain hope. Jesus' salvation is resurrection salvation. And maybe we need to hear that today as well if you're disappointed with God.

[23 : 05] If you're someone who was a Christian and you're not anymore because you were just disappointed with how life went. Or you're still a Christian but you just feel a bit disappointed about something that's happened in your life.

There's been something about your life that is a tremendous disappointment. Well, let's remember, Jesus has saved us from our biggest problems. He forgives us and he holds the keys to death so that he can unlock it for us and we'll live with him forever in the world put right.

And if you're just looking into that, if you're just looking into the Christian faith, here we are just a week after Easter. That's the place to go to see if Jesus is good on his promise. As he was definitely dead and the tomb was definitely empty and he was definitely seen alive again by people who went and died for their claim that they'd seen him alive again as though they had no fear of death anymore.

So what do you have to do to get this resurrection life? He says to Jairus, don't be afraid, just believe. You just rely on him.

You just trust his promise. And if you've never done that, you can do that today. Today would be a great day to do that. Why does he keep a lid on it?

[24 : 25] Did you notice that? He only lets three disciples go with him, with Jairus and his wife into the room. The people outside are left to grieve. Why doesn't he show them what he's done?

I wonder, is it because at this point in his ministry he can't reveal the magnitude of his power? Already the crowds are crushing him, but they don't yet understand, and they need to understand, how serious the problem is we need saving from, and what it will cost Jesus to save us from it.

He has to go to Jerusalem and die on a cross. He has to die the death we deserve to die so that he can offer us this resurrection life.

And when you grasp that about Jesus, you realize those three statements we looked at that Jesus makes, they're not just astonishing statements.

They are overflowing with sacrificial love. They might just be the most wonderfully kind words you've ever heard. To the dad, when he hears the news, don't be afraid, just believe.

[25 : 34] To the crowds, stop crying, she's not dead, but asleep. To the girl, my child, get up. Here is Jesus on his way to endure the grief of the cross so that he can cancel the funeral in Jairus' home.

He dies the death we should have died so that he can offer us promise of life. It is a wonderful thing to be a Christian.

For my money, if ever there was a man worth giving your life to, this is him. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, we praise you for your power to help where nobody else can help.

To save us from our great problems of sin and death. We praise you for your compassion, your kindness, the way you treated this woman, this untouchable outsider, the way you stopped for her, healed her, restored her for the life you brought back to Jairus' home that day.

Lord Jesus, these events make the question of who you are a matter of life and death. And so we ask that by your spirit, among us today, you will help each one of us to see clearly who you are, to lean on your promises this week, and to live lives that bear witness so that others might come to you and be saved.

[27 : 06] In your name we pray. Amen. Amen. S ung