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Sermon Notes

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Two Desperate Beggars Put Christ On Display

Matthew 9:18-26

I. Human Powerlessness Puts Christ on Display

A. Human Power

1. 20th century a great demonstration of human power
2. Immense advances in science
 - From Kitty Hawk to landing on the moon... in less than seven decades
 - From water-cooled computers to quantum computers that store data at the molecular level
 - From standard farm practices at the turn of the century to the use of cloning to engineer livestock genetically
 - From explosives based on TNT to thermonuclear weapons equivalent to 9 million tons of TNT and capable of erasing whole cities in one moment
 - Countless diseases conquered through the advancement of medical science: polio
3. Seemed to be almost no problem that human beings cannot conquer

B. Human Powerlessness

1. YET for all of that... we humans are still frail, weak, powerless beings
2. Powerless over weather, powerless to stop earthquakes and hurricanes
3. Powerless over our own bodies... we can't stop from getting hungry or sick
4. Powerless to stop sin, divisions between people and nations
5. Greatest powerlessness of all: powerless in the face of death

6. Being honest about our powerlessness enables us to stop relying on ourselves

2 Corinthians 1:8-9 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

7. Our powerlessness also puts Christ's glory on display!!

C. Christ On Display

1. Gospel accounts use human powerlessness to put Christ on display

Essence of Kingdom of Heaven: spiritual begging

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the spiritual beggars, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Two accounts here: two totally weak, powerless human beings—a man and a woman—come to Jesus as destitute beggars, one of them powerless to save his daughter from dying, the other powerless over her own body to stop bleeding

2. Here: Christ's awesome power over disease and death

3. Also: Christ's incredible accessibility... His compassion and gentleness

Psalms 103:13-14 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

II. Jesus Is Accessible

A. God Come Near

1. God's transcendence

Jeremiah 23:23-24 "Am I only a God nearby," declares the LORD, "and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.

2 Chronicles 6:18 "But will God really dwell on earth with men? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!

Isaiah 40:22 He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

God is absolutely immense... so awesome in His person that the mighty angels who serve Him day and night cover their faces in His presence

Yet God desires to be close to us... to be so close we could reach out and touch Him; the incarnation of God the Son was the tangible evidence of God's desire to be close to us

2. God's immanence

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

Matthew 1:21-23 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us."

Christ lived and moved and had His being right in the middle of His people... He breathed the same air they did, felt the same hot desert wind on His face, saw the same reddish sunsets, smelled the smoky fires they did... His clothes were covered with the same dust and His stomach filled with the same barley loaves and broiled lake sardines from the Sea of Galilee.

And most of all, Christ could be touched... physically touched, and emotionally touched

B. Jairus's Desperate Plight: A Dying Daughter

vs. 18-19 While he was saying this, a ruler came and knelt before him and said, "My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live." Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples.

1. Jairus was a synagogue ruler...
 - a. one of the most important men in Capernaum
 - b. probably a Pharisee
2. "Desperate"... daughter sick and about to die when he first came to Jesus
 - a. desperate because no other man could save her life
 - b. desperate enough to come to Christ even though Jairus was a Pharisee

- c. Pharisees already had blacklisted Jesus
 - d. Jesus in middle of feast with tax collectors, prostitutes... last place a synagogue ruler would want to be seen
3. Desperate: daughter about twelve years old... deep affection between father and daughter
 4. Risked reputation, threw dignity to the wind... PROSTRATED HIMSELF before Jesus

Illus. Desperate need makes us single-minded about Christ; *Pilgrim's Progress* Christian runs out of City of Destruction with his fingers in his ears calling, "Life, life, eternal life" and will not stop as townspeople and family members are calling after him not to go!!

5. Single-minded faith
 - a. knew Jesus had power to heal
 - b. would not have risked all this if he didn't have SOME faith in Christ
 - c. BUT faith was limited
 - d. "come and put your hand on her" = you must get up and go

C. The "Synoptic Problem"

1. Absolute perfection of Scripture... no flaws or errors at all

Psalm 18:30 As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless.

Psalm 12:6 And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times.

2. Gospel accounts also perfect... everything happened as written
3. BUT Synoptic Problem looms... Gospel of Matthew is perfect, but so is Gospel of Mark and Gospel of Luke
4. Their accounts are slightly different... Mark and Luke are the same as each other

Luke 8:41-42 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. (49-50) 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."

5. So also the accounts of the woman's healing are different

Luke 8:42-47 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.

6. How to account for this?

- 1) Matthew constantly seeks to shorten the healing accounts... leaving in only the bare necessities
- 2) He leaves out the messengers from Jairus's house as extraneous to his point of showing Jesus' power and compassion... so he merely puts in Jairus's mouth at the beginning of the encounter the faith he eventually had before Jesus went to his house
- 3) In other words... Matthew leaves out the intermediate steps of the daughter's death, Jairus's reaction of fear and unbelief, Jesus' words of comfort and reassurance, and Jairus's final faith in Jesus' power not just over sickness, but over death itself
- 4) Jairus's faith grows step by step... but that journey is beside the point that Matthew seeks to make... of Jesus' compassion and power
- 5) So also Matthew leaves out the intermediate steps of the woman's healing... power moving through Jesus without Jesus knowing about it
- 6) Synoptic problem usually not a problem when you realize the Gospels each follow their own ordering and accounting of events, omitting material according to the Spirit's leading... yet everything in each record is perfectly accurate

D. Jesus Accessible

1. Jesus reclining at feast with Matthew
2. Jairus interrupts Him
3. Jesus humbly stoops to His need and weakness... though He could heal the daughter without leaving Matthew's house, His own convenience is not the point

4. He accepted Jairus's faith where it was and went with him
5. Jesus was SERVANT OF ALL!!! No "office hours"

Mark 9:35 Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

Philippians 2:5-8 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

"Servant of all" meant that other people's needs were more important to Him than His own... He never refused, or said "Can't you see I'm busy here?" or thought Himself too important for others, or rolled His eyes and said "What, more healings... I've already done enough for one day!"

We are so selfish, passing every request or demand on our time through the filter of our own likes and dislikes... Jesus was totally accessible, available, never refusing a beggar who came with a need

III. Jesus Is Touchable

vs. 20-21 Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. 21 She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed."

A. The Woman's Desperate Physical Plight: Constant Bleeding

1. Mark gives fuller account

Mark 5:24-29 So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. 25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26 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. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." 29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

2. Probably chronic bleeding from the womb
3. Suffered much from doctors... brutal procedures that cost her all her money, her dignity, and her hope

4. Only got worse and worse

B. The Woman's Desperate Spiritual Plight: Ceremonially Unclean

1. Constant bleeding from the womb left her constantly ceremonially unclean

Leviticus 15:25-27 *"When a woman has a discharge of blood for many days at a time other than her monthly period or has a discharge that continues beyond her period, she will be unclean as long as she has the discharge, just as in the days of her period. 26 Any bed she lies on while her discharge continues will be unclean, as is her bed during her monthly period, and anything she sits on will be unclean, as during her period. 27 Whoever touches them will be unclean; he must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening.*

2. Could not join synagogue or temple worship
3. Anyone who touched her would be unclean
4. Picture of all of our natural state apart from God

Isaiah 64:6 *All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.*

The word "filthy" literally relates to the rags the woman would have used to stop her flow. This is how God sees our good deeds apart from faith in Christ... we are perpetually unclean, filthy in His sight until we come to Christ for cleansing.

C. The Woman's Indomitable Faith: Refusing To Be Stopped

1. Huge crowd pressing in on Jesus... almost crushing Him!!
2. Jesus was **so** accessible He became practically INACCESSIBLE
3. She realized this was her last hope... she believed with all her heart Jesus could heal her
4. Ceremonially unclean, she should have been separated from that crowd
5. BUT she refused to be stopped

She KEPT SAYING TO HERSELF, "If I only touch the tassel of his garment, I will be healed."

Illus. Totally focused... like a magnifying glass and the rays of the sun, burning a leaf; her eyes burned a hole on Jesus' tassels!!

Note: Jewish males wore ceremonial tassels on their cloaks to remind them to obey God's commands

Number 15:37-40 The LORD said to Moses, 38 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. 39 You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the LORD, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by going after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes. 40 Then you will remember to obey all my commands and will be consecrated to your God.

The woman totally focused... perhaps even a little superstitiously... on Jesus' tassels

It seems obvious she hope to be healed without embarrassment, without face to face interaction

D. Jesus Is Touchable

1. In the days of His Incarnation, He wanted to TOUCH people physically... many of His healings done with touch

The amazing healing of the centurion's servant from a distance with a word shows Jesus could have done all His healings that way

But He took on a human body in part to be able to touch us personally

- He touched the leper and cleansed him
 - He touched Peter's mother-in-law and healed her fever
 - He touched the eyes of the blind and healed them
 - In a few moments, He would raise Jairus's daughter from the dead by taking her hand
2. This woman wanted an anonymous healing... Jesus would not permit it!!

Luke 8:43-48 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."

Apparently the Father healed this woman directly through Jesus without Jesus' direct knowledge

YET Jesus wanted personal interaction... He wanted to look her in the eyes, touch her life personally

He wanted to touch her and be touched by her

3. Jesus can be touched to the core of His being

KJV Hebrews 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Jesus is a merciful, compassionate High Priest, able to be moved with compassion... touched to the core of His being with our infirmities

He yearns for an intensely personal relationship with each of His children... that He be touched with our feeling, and we be touched by His feelings as well!!

IV. Jesus Is Impartial

A. What Christ Requires

1. Deep-felt intense personal need
2. Genuine faith that Christ, and Christ alone, can meet that need!

B. What Christ Does NOT Require

1. Position
2. Prestige
3. Possessions
4. Power

The very things the world esteems as of great value is nothing to Christ

Luke 16:15 What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.

No advantages before Christ if you have them

No disadvantages if you don't!!

Jairus came as a desperate beggar, with no hope other than Christ... he did not come as a powerful synagogue ruler, with position, prestige, possessions, and power...demanding this or that from Christ; he came as a humble beggar with nowhere else to turn

This bleeding woman came as a desperate beggar, anonymous, without position, prestige, possessions, and power... and it didn't hinder her in the least

C. "No Respector of Persons"

Matthew 22:16 "Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are.

On Judgment Day, Jesus will take His seat on the Great White Throne, and all people will be gathered before Him for judgment... and He will judge them all, from the mightiest emperor who held a powerful scepter and whose decisions made nations tremble, to the lowliest slave whose life was lived in obscurity

On that day, He will not respect position, prestige, possessions, and power... they will not sway Him at all, nor will He be impressed in the slightest by them

On that day, all that will count is simple faith in Christ:

"Come ye sinners, poor and needy, weak and wounded, sick and sore... Jesus ready stands to save you, full of pity love and power."

"Let not conscience make you linger, nor or fitness fondly dream; all the fitness he requireth is to feel your need of Him."

V. Jesus Is Powerful

A. Powerful to Heal the Sick

vs. 22 Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment.

1. From mark and Luke, we learn that power came through Jesus to heal the woman
2. Here, Jesus is careful to ascribe the instrumentality for the healing to her faith
3. In any case, it was Jesus who was powerful to heal her sickness
4. What doctors, what medical science could not do, Jesus did effortlessly

5. Jesus is powerful to heal the sick

B. Powerful to Save Sinners

vs. 22 *Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has SAVED you."*

Usually, Matthew uses the words *therapeuow* or *iaomai* to refer to cures for illnesses

Here Matthew uses *sodzo*... the word usually reserved for salvation... a total healing from all the effects of sin... salvation from the wrath and curse of God

Remember that Jesus has power on earth to forgive sins, and it is faith in Christ alone that justifies a sinner

Illus. Ten lepers... ten of them cleansed (physically healed) ... one of them saved! The one who came back to say thank you!!

C. Powerful to Rebuke Unbelief

1. First for Jairus

Luke 8: 49-50 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."

Jairus had faith for a healing; he needed to be encouraged into faith for a resurrection

2. Second, for the cold-hearted professional mourners

Matthew 9:23-25 When Jesus entered the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd, 24 he said, "Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him. 25 After the crowd had been put outside, he went in

First century Israel, wealthy people would hire professional mourners to wail and cry at their funerals... it was a mark of prestige to have many of these mourners... they collected their tears in bottles as evidence of their sincerity and were paid for their services

These were the flute players and noisy crowd that mocked Jesus

The insincerity of their mourning was demonstrated by their mocking laughter when Christ said she was "asleep"

NOTE: Jesus did no miracle in front of them, but had them put outside

D. Powerful to Raise the Dead

vs. 25-26 *After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. News of this spread through all that region.*

1. Jesus said the little girl was “asleep”... Jesus had absolute power over death and looked on it as merely asleep
2. Same He said about Lazarus, when he had been dead for four days!
3. Jesus merely took the girl by the hand and spoke gently to her

Mark 5:40-42 *After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. 41 He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). 42 Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished.*

4. Crowd’s reaction: total astonishment... widespread report

Imagine the joy that Jairus and his wife felt when their little treasure sat up and smiled at them

Imagine the shock of the mocking professional mourners when she came outside, looking right at them

Imagine the faith of the disciples who saw Jesus’ absolute power over sickness, sin, unbelief, and death

VI. Application

A. Jesus is Accessible, Touchable, Impartial, Powerful: So come to HIM!!

1. Coming to Christ At First for Salvation
2. Coming to Christ Daily thereafter... for cleansing, healing, wisdom, encouragement

B. Imitating Christ in Ministry

Be Accessible: don’t think too highly of your own plans for yourself

Be Touchable: be able to be moved by other’s grief, pain and needs

Be Impartial: don’t care a whit about someone’s position, prestige, possessions, and power

C. Relying on Christ's Power... We Are Still Powerless (apart from Him)!!