

LENT 3

Jairus' Daughter

Read Luke 8:40-56

This amazing story can be intersected in so different many ways! It is a story of a father's love and dedication for his little girl, the suffering hopelessness of an unnamed woman, the demands and expectations of the crowd, and the issue of dealing with interruptions and conflicting needs. How does Jesus, without annoyance or anger, cope with being pressed upon on all sides, and still offer compassion, healing and individual respect and connection? So much juggling! Have you ever felt that way?

But let's focus in, as Jesus did, upon the individuals amid the crowd who so desperately needed help. Interestingly, both the girl and the woman have no name and no voice in the story. This highlights the voiceless, powerless "least" of Jesus' day- women and children. But Jairus' daughter is privileged to have a father who is a prominent synagogue leader, willing to speak for her, and even humbly beg for help in public. He falls at Jesus' feet- no doubt a position unfamiliar for him. He does it for love.

The penniless hemorrhaging woman has only her desperation, faith, and courage, propelling her to chance a touch of Jesus' garment. Jesus could have rushed on to his "important" task but instead stops to "see" her, and pronounce a blessing upon her in front of all.

"Daughter, your faith has made you well." She, too, is a daughter of someone very important! Her witness of trust in God is important enough to stop Jesus in His tracks. What good news for the crowd, and what challenging news for Jairus and all the "important" leaders in the village. They, too, need to see and care for all God's daughters and sons.

The story closes with the poignant scene of Jesus ignoring the jeering crowd and healing Jairus' daughter. Taking her hand tenderly he lifts her up to new life, instructing her parents to "give her something to eat". Jesus has enough love and healing for all.

What about us? With over 385 million children living in extreme poverty in our world, the majority in India and sub-Saharan Africa, it is easy to get overwhelmed and give up in despair.

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But focusing in on what we can do is a way of following Jesus' example of compassionate care. When Mother Teresa was asked once how it was that she was able to help so many, she answered "If I had never picked up the first person, I would never have picked up the 42,000 in Calcutta."

Orphaned children, especially girls and young women, are still among the most voiceless, powerless, and abused in our world today.

Let's visit Joselyne and her sister in Rwanda and hear how these girls, alone and desperate, were touched by Zoe Empowers.

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The story of Aness in Malawi also highlights the vulnerability of young women left fatherless. Let's hear her story now.

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Questions for Reflection & Discussion

1. What do you notice in these young girls' stories? How does their story intersect the biblical story?
2. How do you deal with overwhelming or conflicting needs and demands on your time? What can you learn from Jesus?
3. How do Jesus' words and actions impact the woman and the girl in our text? How do the words and actions of Zoe Empowers impact the lives of the girls in our videos?

Prayer

God of grace and unlimited love, we thank you for seeing us and calling each of us your beloved child! Help us to turn to you when we feel overwhelmed by the needs around us. Inspire us to find joy in helping the ones we can. Give us generous hearts for those who suffer in silence. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Action

In gratitude for all the blessings you have received, especially times of healing, place an offering or IOU in your Zoe box, to help bring protection, hope and healing to more children in need.