

“Amazing Tenderness” // Luke 8:40–56 // #4, *Kingdom Come*

We’ve been on the theme here of “surprises” in the Gospel of Luke.

- Speaking of surprises; my only sister and her husband, who are members of our church here, found out that they are finally pregnant... *with triplets*.
- I think she got tired of me having all the grandkids and decided to change that in one, fell swoop.
- And, it wasn’t *in vitro*, it was just pure surprise.

Surprise, and unexpected, and confusing are words that describe Jesus’ Kingdom in the Gospel of Luke. Here’s a statement: Jesus offered a salvation we weren’t expecting because we had a problem we didn’t know that we had. That was surprising and caused many people to disbelieve, because they didn’t want to admit what Jesus said about them was true. That they needed a Savior. Too proud. Too stubborn.

Not only was Jesus’ message about us surprising, what Jesus showed us about God was surprising. He was at the same time horribly offensive yet unbelievably comforting. The Gospel is that you and I are more wicked than we ever realized, but God cares more tenderly for us than we ever dreamed or hoped.

Luke 8:40–56 [40] *Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him.*

[41] *And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue.*

- This is a very respected man. Held one of the top positions in the city.

And falling at Jesus’ feet, he implored him to come to his house,

- Grown men never did this in Jewish culture. Men of stature wore long robes; they didn’t show a lot of emotion; they would never run or appear to be in a hurry. But this man is desperate...

[42] *for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.*

Jesus listens to this guy’s plea, and starts to go with him to his house. But: *As Jesus went, the people pressed around him.* [43] *And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone.*

- Several important details there:
 - First, **she has an “issue of blood”**: polite way of saying “an uncontrollable menstrual flow.” This meant that not only was she sick, and in pain, and unable to have children; she was ceremonially unclean, which meant that she was not allowed to be touched. She couldn’t go to public worship. She really shouldn’t be in crowds.
 - She’s been this way for **12 years**. In 12 years no one hugged her; no one laid a hand on her to pray for her. She is lonely.
 - She was **incurable**. (Luke was a physician, a doctor, and that’s his judgment.) And she has spent all her money trying to get various doctors to cure her, but she’s beyond anything they can do. She is poor; and now she’s hopeless.
 - Lastly, **she has no name**. In contrast to Jairus, whose name everyone knows, this woman is not even given a name. In other words, in everyone’s eyes, she is insignificant.
 - You see, there is a contrast here set up with Jairus:
 - He’s got a daughter who is 12 years old and sick; she’s been sick for 12 years.
 - He is the ruler of the synagogue; she’s not allowed in the synagogue.
 - He has a name everyone knows; she’s not even given a name.
 - He was respected; she was rejected.

- The point: *There is no one too messed up; too unclean, too insignificant to get Jesus' attention. And there was no one good, or too powerful, to need Him desperately.*
- Some people don't come to Jesus because of unbelief (God can't love me); some won't come because of pride (I don't need Him). Both will keep you away from His love.

[44] *She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment,*

- She thinks, "I bet Jesus can help me... He has so much power that just brushing His clothing might heal me."
- By the way, I love it that the crowds didn't keep this woman from Jesus. B/c a lot of people get kept from Jesus by the crowds.
 - Crowds:
 - What others will say about them. We have people here who are gaining an interest in Jesus but what holds you back is what your parents might say; what your friends might say. This woman says, "Forget the crowds. All I want is the attention of Jesus."
 - For some people, the crowds that keep them from Jesus are all the hypocrites
 - People are like, "People in the church are so hypocritical, and I hate hypocrites." So does Jesus. He is always calling them out in Gospel of Luke and He is clear that on the last day no true hypocrite will have a part in His kingdom.
 - But it seems to me that the greatest hypocrisy is to see the truth of Jesus and allow some lame excuse to keep you from doing what He says. If Jesus is who He says He is, He deserves your full attention.
 - This woman put her eyes solely on Jesus.
- She touched the fringe of his garment: Fringe doesn't mean just the edge... tassles that hang down called zizzots that represented the law. Numbers 15 describes these.¹
- Says she touched them. Interesting thing I found out is that "touched" here, in Greek, the verb in what they call "the middle voice," means clutched. She pulled it... and it's almost like if you're wearing a long dress and someone steps on it...

...and immediately her discharge of blood ceased.

- It's like a bell. She pulls it and power rings out of Him.

[45] *And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?"*

- Now, does He not know? He's the sovereign God. I come down to my 3 girls and the lid is off of the cookie jar... 2 of my girls are sitting there clean, watching TV, and the other has a guilty look and chocolate all over the face, and I say, "Okay, who got into the cookie jar?" It's not that I don't know, it that's that you're giving them an opportunity to repent. (Of course, my kid says, "I don't know... I don't know how the cookie jar got opened. The cookie gremlin came. The cookies disappeared. It was a cookie rapture. They're just gone.")²
- Jesus here is inviting her to come forward and publicly confess what she's done.
- See, you can't stay private forever. You have to acknowledge Jesus. *Public confession is called baptism.*
- If you understand that the Man healed you, this will not be a problem. If you're serious about Jesus, you'll acknowledge Him. Have you done that?

When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!"

¹ Numbers 15:37-41 and Deuteronomy 22:12

² Mark Driscoll, sermon on the same passage.

- Peter has this fantastic ability to fill silence with stupidity. Jesus was like, “Really, Peter? Thank you, I had no idea that these were all people around me, and that many of them were touching me. Whatever would we do without you, Peter... you and all your tremendous insights?”
- This is going to be the leader of God’s church. You ever get the impression that Jesus does His work on earth not because of His disciples, but in spite of them? That brings me a great deal of comfort.³

[46] But Jesus said, “Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me.”

- Yeah, lots of people are touching me, but this touch was different.
- Lots of people touch Jesus casually; few people touch Him intentionally. You don’t get the power of Jesus just by being here. You get it by throwing yourself at His feet and surrendering yourself fully to Him and admitting that there are things that you are hopeless in the face of without Him.
 - Overcoming temptation
 - Raising your kids
 - Being forgiven for your sin
- The question is not “Do you come to church and hear sermons” but “do you desperately lean on Jesus for life and salvation?”

[47] And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed.

- Now, at this point, she’s wondering, “Will he reject me, too? Will he publicly shame me? Is he angry I’ve made him unclean? Will I be cast out? I’m not supposed to be here and He knows that.”
- Now comes the greatest moment in all of time.
- This really is the central question of the Bible. What is it like to be exposed in all of your defilement, guilt, before a holy God?

[48] And he said to her, “Daughter,

- “Daughter” is a term of intimate endearment. This is the only person Jesus ever refers to by that name.
- “Daughter.” He referred to her by a name that expresses the most intimate, tender relationship.
 - The girl nobody wanted is adopted by the ultimate Father... the girl no one touched is embraced by the strongest and most tender arms in the Universe.
- See the contrast? Jairus is a dad who is pleading the cause of his daughter before Jesus. But this woman has no father. So Jesus will be her father. He is a father to the fatherless.
 - Some of you saw on ESPN... UGA (Mark Richt). Adopting girl with facial deformity from Ukraine. who will take this one? That’s what God did for us.
 - The Gospel is that we were deformed... we were unclean... we were fatherless... we were outcast... not because of a birth defect; worse; because of our sin, and Christ inexplicably set His love on us and was tender to us when literally we all would have turned away from anyone else in our condition.
 - The Gospel is that we are more wicked than we probably ever realized, and more loved and accepted than we’ve ever dreamed. Sinners and outcasts are made beloved sons and daughters.
 - (BTW: If you get that, you start to love orphans and giving yourself away to those with no hope around the world.)

your faith has made you well; go in peace.”

³ Ibid., Driscoll.

- Probably the single most shocking thing from this story is what happened when she touched Him. Usually when an unclean thing touches a clean thing, the clean thing becomes unclean. If I'm sick and I sneeze on you, we say "I gave my cold to you." That doesn't mean that I don't have my cold anymore, like I gave it to you, but that now we both have it. Because when the unclean touches the clean, the clean thing becomes unclean.
- But in this case, when the unclean thing touches the clean thing, he doesn't become unclean/defiled, she becomes well/clean. The unclean thing touches the clean thing, and instead of the clean thing becoming unclean, the unclean thing becomes clean!
- That's because the ministry of Jesus is one of substitution.
 - Listen, this is the heart of the Gospel. On the cross He took all of our defilement. On the cross, He took our sin and our sorrow; our defilement and condemnation went into Him so His healing and salvation could flow out to us.
 - He became our sin so that we could become His righteousness.
- I've noticed that it's a common reaction... when your soul feels dirty, people want to take a shower.
 - Sexual addicts; abuse victims.
 - Muslims and Jews go through a rigorous process when they pray. *How do you cleanse your heart?*
 - Water might make you feel clean for a moment, but your soul needs to be cleansed by something deeper. Only the blood of Jesus.
 - *He breaks the power of cancelled sin; he sets the prisoner free; his blood can make the foulest clean, his blood availed for me.*

[49] While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more."

- Do you think He knew that would happen? Was this like, "Oh no. I missed it?"

[50] But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well."

[51] And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. [52] And all were weeping and mourning for her,

- Some of the worst moments I've ever had is being with a friend after their child died. This guy, his 12 year old little girl is dead.
- It says, "*All were weeping and mourning.*" The official funeral has started. They didn't embalm them, so they got to the funeral within hours of death.
- In those days, funerals were noisy affairs. Today, they are kind of quiet. Hushed silence. Then, they just yelled and mourned. Expressed their anguish and emotion. People ripped their clothes.
 - The Jewish Mishnah had 39 rules for ripping your clothes. Had to stand up. If you were a woman, you had to rip your undergarment and then wear it on top of your clothes.⁴

So, he arrives at this place of weeping and grief... ...but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." [53] And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead.

- This is *bitter scorn*. It's almost like he's being cruel. Imagine that you were at the funeral of a child, and I walked in, looked at the body, and said, "Hey wait, I think y'all made a mistake. She's just taking a nap."

Everybody goes out. And just a couple of disciples and the girl's parents and... [54] (But) taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." [55] And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat.

⁴ John MacArthur, message on Luke 8:40-56.

[56] And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

- o Yeah, good luck with that one. Hey, I thought your little girl was dead. Isn't that her playing right there. "Yeah... darndest thing. You know how those things go. It happens?" No, it doesn't.

Now, you remember... Jesus' miracles were signs. Each miracle has something specific about Jesus that it is teaching us. (He was on the way to heal her, and He lets her die. If His intention had been to heal her, why did He do that? I mean, if you read the previous chapter in Luke (7:1-10), He just speaks a word from a distance heals another guy. He could have done that here. So, what is Jesus trying to teach us?

Well, as always, look at the details. He sits down; takes her hand; and then He says two things to her. *Talitha, Cumi.*⁵

1. *Talitha*: Little girl; very, very tender term. Scholars say it could be translated something like, 'Honey.'
2. *Cumi*: "get up." Not "be thou resurrected." Or even "come forth." Nothing regal or resurrection or apocalyptic sounding. Just, "get up."

Jesus is facing the most feared, devastating enemy the human race has ever known, death, and he simply takes the little girl by the hand and says, "*Honey, get up.*"

- o What he's showing you is that when He is holding your hand, even death itself is nothing but a little nap.
- o Or, to quote JRR Tolkienn: in His presence, everything sad on earth ultimately become untrues

You want to know why this is true?

- o Jesus would take the sting out of death Himself.
 - o Shadow illustration.
 - o Death feels so final. It's not.
 - o Death feels so alone: like you're abandoned. You're not. Here you see in death Jesus by this little girl's bed holding her hand. On the cross, Jesus lost His Father's hand.
 - o He died alone.
 - o He faced everything that would bring us fear in death. Aloneness. Condemnation. Finality.
- o For those in Him, Jesus redefined death as temporary. No one in the Gospels ever died in the presence of Jesus; no one in the presence of Jesus really ever stayed dead. If you're going to die, Jesus was a good guy to have around.

So...

- o When I go through death, I don't have to fear it. It was abandonment for Him so it could be a nap for me.
- o More than the moment of death itself; a lot of us have a feeling of death and cursing over our lives. I got a letter this week from a girl who doesn't go to our church (somewhere I was speaking) with just the most despairing outlook on life. Nobody loves me. I'm going to fail. Life will be nothing but torment. That's a feeling of death.
- o The Gospel is that there is a God who loves you so much He's taken every ounce of curse into Himself so that now He can relate to you entirely with blessing and shower you with it.
- o His love is so great that in every situation He's working for your good; His power is so great that nothing is beyond His control.
- o If you believe those two things, there is absolutely NO WAY you could despair about life. You don't have to feel cursed. You can't! He was cursed in your place.

⁵ Here I follow the interpretation of Tim Keller in *King's Cross*: <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2011/02/08/keller-on-why-jesus-said-the-little-girl-was-sleeping-instead-of-dead/>

- And so I don't have to fear suffering: God is working it all for good.
 - His power guarantees that He can; His love guarantees that He will.

The first person she saw when she opened her eyes was Jesus. The first voice she heard was Jesus' voice. The first touch she felt in her newly resurrected body was Jesus. This is a picture of what everyone who dies in Jesus has to look forward to it.

**Now, here's the real reason behind vs. 56: *[56] And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.*

- Why would He do that? Jesus' primary ministry was proclaiming a Kingdom to be believed. As a sign of that, he casts out demons and heals the sick and raises the dead. And he doesn't want his secondary ministry to overtake and overshadow his primary ministry. If too many people know about him raising the dead, that's all they'd care about (this guy can bring back "pa"); we tend to focus more on secondary things like healing than we do on the primary thing, knowing God.
- The greatest gift Jesus can give you is the knowledge of God. And in light of that, even things like bringing back your loved ones and healing your sicknesses are not that important. And if those things get in the way of seeing what Jesus really needs to do for you, they will have become then healing becomes a cursing!
- A lot of people want Jesus to heal their body; take them to heaven; bless their lives. But do you want Him to restore you to God. No one ever turned down one of Jesus' miracles. But when Jesus started talking about His primary mission being to restore them to God, then they got bored, or even angry.
- Some of you want Jesus for what He can do for you. Do you want Him so you can really know God?
- The greatest thing you can do in this life is come to Jesus to have your soul healed, to be restored to God, regardless of whether you live in poverty or pain.

What I most want you to take away from this:

1. Come to Him.

- Don't let the crowds (others) or the law (your past) hinder you.
- Some of you have made a mess out of your life, but Jesus makes all things new.
- Come!
 - (Through our campus ministry, 12 girls in one circle of friends have become Christians since Thursday night. Like a salvation virus. Best one came from NRC: Hank Murphy, our worship pastor there... said, Guy who said, "I became a Christian")
- Come to Him!
- Let me ask you something: Are you like this woman: You've tried everything? Spent all your money on doctors? Now, you have settled just for painkillers. Things to numb the pain?
 - (Your marriage is so disappointing, now you're surviving by pouring yourself into your kids, flirting with an affair, or just entertaining yourself to death).
 - Your job is so disappointing you're getting more and more dependent on beer. You're so wounded from your dad that you find refuge in the arms of a boyfriend... who treats you badly, but you feel like you need him.
 - Jesus can heal the deep part of your soul. Your soul has a void. Created for God. Nothing can satisfy you until you are restored to God. God shaped vacuum.
- Jesus is the one who, when He's sitting by your bedside, make pain and death feel like a nap.
- By the way: I've noticed that people get all sentimental about Jesus at funerals (the Lord is my shepherd). People who don't really live for Jesus at all. Jesus said in Luke 9 that discipleship is total surrender. The sad thing is that these people think they are Christians!

- Listen. A faith that will not change you in life will not save you in death, either. No matter how sentimental you feel about Jesus at a funeral or how many times you quote the Lord's prayer. If you are not His follower, fully surrendered to Him, He will not be sitting by your bedside holding your hand at death. Because you rejected His Lordship. You said, "No, you cannot be My King."

2. Be public about it.

- You got to come forward.
- Jesus called her daughter after she owned it. I know you're afraid... don't be.
- The Gospel is that God turns dirty outcasts into beloved sons and daughters.
- You may think we have it all together and you're screwed up? Think again.
- You think you're dysfunctional, get to know our staff.
- A saying we have: "Everybody's normal until you get to know them."
- One of our campus pastors, Brad, said, "Tell them to take us out to Ruth's Chris and we'll explain to them how messed up we are."
- The point is, "Own it." There is a blessing and fellowship that comes from Jesus when you own Him publicly.
- When He calls you daughter, who cares what everyone else thinks?
- This church is a fellowship of outcasts who have been called sons and daughters. There is such a richer Christian experience being in a small group.

3. You can scarcely underestimate His tenderness and compassion.

- In your small groups, you ought to ask this question: what do you see about Jesus in this story that is surprising? **Tenderness; accessibility; interruptibility.** Who would have known God relateds us like that?
- *Jesus never changes.* (Ever know someone whose personality shifted as they got older? Jesus is not like that. Just as tender; just as accessible; just as interruptible).
- What causes you pain? Bring it to Jesus. I guarantee you'll find compassion and tenderness there.
- I said last week that sometimes people talk like God doesn't care about your pain of oppression or your physical healing (He just cares about your soul)... That's idiotic! Jesus in the Gospels, like here, can hardly resist someone who is suffering who is in front of Him.
- He doesn't change... go to Him now! He cares. You might find the same miraculous power in Him now that He demonstrated then! He can, and this story tells me He wants to.
- If He says no, and death comes (like it did for Jairus' daughter), you can rest in the assurance that He has His reasons, and that even in death He is holding your hand, literally sitting on your bed holding your hand, and ultimately, from the perspective of eternity, even death itself will seem like a nap.
- I believe in physical healing, and some of you who reach out to Jesus can and will be physically healed by Him in this life.
- But I can tell you this, for sure: All those of you who reach out to Him for the salvation of your soul (spiritual healing, cleansing, restoration to God, which is the greater need)—all of you who reach to Him for that will be healed by Him.

4. What you think about God determines how you relate to Him.

- My greatest desire is that you learn the truth about Jesus so that you will relate rightly to Him.
- What you think about God determines how you will relate to Him.
 - Because this woman was sure of Jesus' compassion, she had the faith to come touch Him. Because she believed He was compassionate, she exposed her weakness to Him. And He had enough compassion for her. In fact, He had more than she realized. He didn't want to just heal her body; he wanted to know her as a daughter.
- Some of you won't come to Jesus because you don't know the power and compassion of Jesus. Look at Him!

- Some of you don't pray because you don't understand the tenderness of Jesus. The one thing that is true of people who really pray is that they have soul level conviction of God's care for them and their families and their kids and they know that God wants to help them. Look at Jesus in this story. He doesn't change.
- Some of you won't surrender because you don't know how good Jesus is. That's why you won't let go.
 - Luke 19:11-27: "You are a hard man"
 - if you believe in the tenderness of Jesus, you're not afraid to yield your whole life to Him. To say, "I'll go everywhere you want me to go." You want me to take my family to Afghanistan? I trust you.
 - I can trust my whole life and my family to your compassionate hands.

Bullpen:

- ~~This woman's faith: She didn't let the law keep her from Jesus. She believed only in Jesus' compassion, and that's what she found.~~
 - ~~Jesus says, in fact, it is her confidence in His grace and power that has released His power into her.~~
 - ~~The Gospel is that we are wretched sinners and beloved children, at the same time. Simultaneously more wicked and defiled than we ever realized; more loved and accepted than we ever dreamed.~~
 - ~~The connection is faith. If you believe in God's compassion, that's what you'll find.~~
- ~~The abundance of Jesus' grace and compassion.~~
 - ~~My favorite part of this story is that Jesus acts as if He didn't even have control of the healing power that left His body. He said, "*Who touched me? For I perceive that power has gone out from Me...*"~~
 - ~~Belief in the compassion of Jesus is the key to everything. Surrender; bold answers to prayer.~~
 - ~~Parable of the talents (?)⁶~~

What you think about God determines how you relate to Him (Fitzpatrick)

- "You were a hard man"
- Jonah

[Tim Keller, *King's Cross*, From Justin Taylor's blog:](#)

Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. Taking her by the hand he said to her, "*Talitha cumi*," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement.

⁶ See Elyse Fitzpatrick, chapter 4 of *Fear and Anxiety*

Do you think it is odd that when Jesus arrives at Jairus's house he says that the girl is just sleeping? The parallel account of this story in Matthew and Luke's Gospels make it clear that Jesus understands she's dead. She's not *mostly* dead; she's *all* dead. Then why does he make that reference to sleep? The answer is in what Jesus does next.

Remember, Jesus sits down beside the girl, takes her by the hand, and says two things to her.

The first is *talitha*. Literally, it means "little girl," but that does not get across the sense of what he's saying. This is a pet name, a diminutive term of endearment. Since this is a diminutive that a mother would use with a little girl, probably the best translation is "honey."

The second thing Jesus says to her is *koum*, which means "arise." Not "be resurrected": it just means "get up." Jesus is doing exactly what this child's parents might do on a sunny morning. He sits down, takes her hand, and says, "Honey, it's time to get up." And she does.

Jesus is facing the most implacable, inexorable enemy of the human race and such is his power that he holds this child by the hand and gently lifts her right up through it. "Honey, get up."

Jesus is saying by his actions, "If I have you by the hand, death itself is nothing but sleep." . . .

There's nothing more frightening for a little child than to lose the hand of the parent in a crowd or in the dark, but that is nothing compared with Jesus's own loss.

- Kharis: code yellow

He lost his Father's hand on the cross.

He went into the tomb so we can be raised out of it.

He lost hold of his Father's hand so we could know that once he has us by the hand, he will never, ever forsake us.