THE GOSPEL READING
Luke 8:41-56
[Jairus’ Daughter Raised, a Woman Healed]

At that time, there came to Jesus a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue; and falling at Jesus’ feet he besought him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. As he went, the people pressed round him. And a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years and had spent all her living upon physicians and could not be healed by anyone, came up behind him, and touched the fringe of his garment; and immediately her flow of blood ceased.

And Jesus said, “Who was it that touched me?” When all denied it, Peter and those who were with him said, “Master, the multitudes surround you and press upon you!” But Jesus said, “Some one touched me; for I perceive that power has gone forth from me.” 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. And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.”

While he was still speaking, a man from the ruler’s house came and said, “Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more.” But Jesus on hearing this answered him, “Do not fear; only believe, and she shall be well.” And when he came to the house, he permitted no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child.

And all were weeping and bewailing her; but he said, “Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But taking her by the hand he called, saying, “Child, arise.” And her spirit returned, and she got up at
once; and he directed that something should be given her to eat. And her parents were amazed; but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

THE SERMON

Twelve years tells the story of two daughters: a child, and an adult. Both daughters encounter Jesus and come back to life as they are touched by Christ, who is the Giver of life. The child is the daughter of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, which means he was not a priest but the administrator of the local Jewish congregation. He was not yet a follower of Jesus, but undoubtedly, he had heard of Jesus of Nazareth, anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all because God was with Him.

The Jewish authorities rejected Jesus and were Jairus’ superiors and employers, so Jairus would risk his position by coming to meet Jesus. However, Jairus’ daughter was sick and dying, and so in desperation, Jairus overcomes his fear and seeks the compassion and power of Christ. Because of his love for his daughter, he was not afraid of the repercussions this might have had. Jairus comes to Jesus, falls at His feet, and begs Him for help.

The hope of having his daughter healed, his only daughter (in Greek, μονογενής, the same word used for the Only Begotten Son of God), was worth all things. Jairus’ pain provided an opportunity for great faith in a time of desperation. He believed Jesus could save his daughter, and the Son of God rewarded his faith. Jesus recognizes his faith and has compassion, and so He responds to the call and starts making his way to Jairus’ home.

On the other side of this story, there is another daughter of God. Like Jairus’ young daughter, this older daughter remains nameless. Yet, twelve years prior, about the same time when Jairus’ daughter was born, this woman became ill in a way that made her ceremonially unclean. According to Jewish law, she was unable to worship in the temple. She began to die slowly, and at the same time, the child was growing. Twelve years later, the physicians could save neither the child nor the woman. We are told that for twelve years, the woman had spent all her living upon physicians and could not be healed by anyone.

Meanwhile, Jairus did not consider the repercussions and took a leap of faith to reach out to Jesus, hoping to save his daughter’s life. At the same time, this woman does the same. She boldly takes a leap of faith and reaches out to Jesus, touching the hem of His garment because of her great faith in a time of desperation.

The Lord notices great faith and responds in a personal and compassionate way. He stops to attend to the one who placed all her faith and hope in Him. And says, “Who
was it that touched me?” He asked not because he did not know but to honor her faith. Apostle Peter said, Master, everyone is touching You. There is a crowd pressing on You as You walk. But Jesus said, someone special, with great faith, touched Me.

This was not a mere rubbing of shoulders with the multitude, but someone who believed in Him for eternal life and placed all her hopes in Him. Jesus instantaneously heals her the minute she touches Him because of her faith. “I perceive that power has gone forth from me,” the Lord says. And when the embarrassed woman realized God the Son was calling her, she came trembling and fell before Him.

The Lord calls her daughter and says, “Your faith has made you well; go in peace.” Because of His great love, the Lord Jesus calls this woman’s daughter and saves her through her faith. Saint Ephraim the Syrian says, “Faith is the means by which anyone now may enter the family of Jesus, and peace is the crown of victory she receives because of her faith.” An ancient hymn of the Church says, “Then a woman, weak and timid, touched his sacred garment’s hem: instant was his blessed healing, and the pallor left her cheek, as the hemorrhage she had suffered through so many years was stopped.”

At the same time that Jesus heals the woman, messengers come to Jairus with the word that his daughter has died. The roles of the two daughters are now reversed. When that child was born, the woman began to die. Now, the child died when the woman began to live again. Jairus was there with Jesus and witnessed the healing of the woman, but the messengers tell him that his daughter is dead and not to trouble Jesus anymore. However, Jairus also had the same faith that the woman had in the face of hopelessness, and he wanted Jesus to still go with him. “Do not fear,” Jesus said, “only believe, and she shall be well.” In Greek, the text literally says, “only believe and she will be saved.” This means that not only will her body be well, but she will be saved as a whole: body, mind, and soul. It shows us how faith can save us, help us to follow Christ and the Gospel, and enter into union with God in His Kingdom.

The entire passage presents two daughters, two sicknesses, and two resurrections. All is made well by the unwavering faith resulting in new life. Faith is the opposite of fear. “Do not fear,” Jesus said. The Lord said that many times in the Gospels to His beloved ones.

Such as, when the disciples were in a storm, afraid they were going to sink, they saw Jesus walking on water toward them in the middle of the night and thought it was a ghost. Immediately, Jesus spoke to them and told them not to be afraid because He was with them.

Also, when Jesus was transfigured before His disciples, they fell on the floor with their faces down. Jesus came and touched them, telling them not to be afraid. When Jesus appeared to his disciples, risen from the dead, they took hold of His feet and worshiped him, and He told them not to be afraid. The presence of the Lord takes away fear, because He is the Son of God who loves us, and who can do all things.

Out of faith, the woman with the flow of blood had overcome her fear and touched His garment. Jesus healed her. Now Jesus tells Jairus not to fear. Therefore, with faith,
Jairus accompanied Jesus to the house, and the Lord came to the child. In Christ, death is defeated, because He destroyed death by death. In Christ, death is like momentary sleeping. As the woman had touched Jesus, now Jesus touches the child, takes her by the hand, and says, “Child, arise!” When the Son of God, speaks, life defeats death. Immediately, the child’s spirit returned, and she rose from the dead.

The child became a type of Christ, risen from the dead, as the woman with the flow of blood also became a type of humanity, wounded after the Fall and restored by Jesus. Both daughters were saved by faith – one, by her own faith, the other, by the prayers and faith of another, that is, her father. We are also the sons and daughters of Christ, who, by our faith, and by the faith and prayers of the Saints in heaven and the prayers of the Church on earth, are touched by the Lord and restored unto life.

Let us trust Christ without fear, even in the darkest moments of life. He calls us sons and daughters. Let us pray for one another as well. All it takes is for us not to be afraid but only believe in Him, Who rose from the dead. The Lord loves us and always responds to our cries for help, even when we face the darkest of situations.