

HEALED BY FAITH

DEVOTIONAL READING: Proverbs 3:1–8

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Matthew 9:18–26; Mark 5:21–43; Luke 8:40–56

MATTHEW 9:18–26

18 While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

19 And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples.

20 And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,

24 He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.



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KEY VERSE

Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. —[Matthew 9:22](#)

CONFIDENT HOPE

Unit 1: Jesus Teaches About Faith LESSONS 1–5

LESSON AIMS

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. Identify common elements of the two miracles of the lesson text.
2. Explain the significance of the two miracles of today's text.
3. Distinguish circumstances when retelling of the two miracles would be appropriate or not in counseling contexts.

LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction

- A. Go to the Specialist
- B. Lesson Context
- I. A Grieving Family (Matthew 9:18–19)
 - A. A Father’s Request (v. 18) *Prayer for Hope*
 - B. Jesus’ Response (v. 19)
- II. A Story Interrupted (Matthew 9:20–22)
 - A. A Woman’s Need (vv. 20–21)
 - B. Jesus’ Healing Answer (v. 22)
- III. A Child Resurrected (Matthew 9:23–26)
 - A. A Noisy House (vv. 23–24)
 - B. Jesus’ Power and Fame (vv. 25–26)
Prayer for Healing

Conclusion

- A. Abundance in the Midst of Suffering
- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

HOW TO SAY IT

Capernaum	Kuh- <i>per</i> -nay-um.
Elijah	Ee- <i>lye</i> -juh.
Galilee	<i>Gal</i> -uh-lee.
Israel	<i>Iz</i> -ray-el.
Jairus	<i>Jye</i> -rus or <i>Jay</i> -ih-rus.
Moses	<i>Mo</i> -zes or <i>Mo</i> -zez.
Sabbath	<i>Sah</i> -bawth. synagogue <i>sin</i> -uh-gog.

Introduction

A. Go to the Specialist

Have you ever had to see a specialist? You went to see your regular physician, and, for whatever reason, he or she sent you on to a specialist— someone better trained or with more experience for your situation. When the need is critical, you want the very best help.

Jesus is the ultimate specialist! He specializes in the critical needs of the body and of the soul. As people need to have confidence in a physician's knowledge and skills to treat our needs, so our text challenges us to put our faith in Christ, even in (or especially in) the darkest hours. When others are not specialized enough to help, Jesus is!

B. Lesson Context

Today's lesson takes place late in the second year of Jesus' public ministry. He conducted much of the early part of His ministry around the Sea of Galilee. Specifically, much of the ministry was on the north end, in and around the village of Capernaum. Jesus' popularity was very high (example: [Luke 8:4, 19](#)). He taught about life and the kingdom of God in the rural areas and towns along the western side of the sea (example: [Matthew 5–7](#)). His teaching was pointed, His spirit magnetic. And having already healed so many people, His reputation had spread far and wide. (See [Lesson Context: Sea of Galilee](#) and [Lesson Context: Miracles](#) in lesson 2, pages 354–355.)

But public opinion had begun to polarize. People watched and listened to Jesus very closely, but for different reasons. Not everyone adored Him. Today's text occurs in a section of Matthew that contrasts Jesus' authority and power, as demonstrated in miracles, with the objections of religious leaders. Jesus raised their ire by forgiving sins ([Matthew 9:2–3](#)), by associating with marginalized people ([9:11](#)), and by violating certain traditions ([9:14](#)).

Despite the objections of the powerful, Jesus brought God's grace to bear for the blessing of God's people. As Jesus dealt with the crowds, He never lost sight of the individual (example: [Matthew 8:1–3](#)). Our text today witnesses to two examples in this regard. Both circumstances involve tragically common instances of human suffering.

The events considered below occurred after Jesus ended His response to a controversy over fasting. He was doing something fundamentally new in God's plan, something that required people to lay aside the old ([Matthew 9:16–17](#)). This was no time for mourning and fasting but instead for rejoicing because God's promised redeemer had arrived ([9:15](#)). The deeds that followed provided a glimpse of that newness in the kingdom of God. ([Mark 5:21–43](#) and [Luke 8:40–56](#) offer parallel accounts.)

I. A Grieving Family ([MATTHEW 9:18–19](#))

A. A Father's Request (v. 18)

18a. While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him.

The interjection *behold* draws the reader's attention to what happens next (see [Matthew 9:20](#), below). The *ruler* who approached Jesus held a prominent position in the local Jewish community in that he oversaw the day-to-day operations of the synagogue. This man's title suggests that he was respected and mature in his faith in God. Though Matthew did not name the ruler, Luke identified him as Jairus ([Luke 8:41](#)).

The ruler *worshipped* Jesus in the posture of a supplicant approaching his king. Though the term can apply to the worship given to God (example: [Matthew 4:10](#)), it can also simply indicate great respect for someone of honor or power (example: [2 Samuel 16:4](#), same word in the Greek version of the Old Testament). Either way, it is a humble posture. The ruler might not have realized Jesus' divine identity. But, like many others, he did recognize Jesus as a man of exceptional authority, and probably at least considered Him to be a great prophet (compare: [Luke 7:16; 9:19](#)).

What Do You Think?

What mental posture will you assume the next time you approach God in prayer regarding a need you have? Why?

Digging Deeper

What positive and negative elements of the account of Job help you answer this?

18b. Saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

It must have wrenched the ruler's heart to announce that his *daughter* was *dead*. Again, Luke gives more detail: she was 12 years old ([Luke 8:42](#)). But the man did not ask Jesus to join him in mourning. Rather, this father made the statement of remarkable faith that we see here. He sought the reversal of his loss, the restoration of his daughter to life.

How did the man come to believe Jesus was capable of miracles, including raising the dead? Certainly he must have heard of Jesus' healing miracles ([Matthew 4:23](#); [8:16](#); etc.). Perhaps he had witnessed one. But to this point in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus had not raised someone from death. Still, the story of Elijah raising the widow's son ([1 Kings 17:17–24](#)) serves as precedent for a prophet's being able to raise the dead. The ruler surely knew the account. The connection is strengthened by the fact that, when the crowds misidentified Christ, they sometimes believed Him to be Elijah ([Matthew 16:14](#)). In any case, the father's hope was that Jesus was able to bring the dead back to life.

PRAYER FOR HOPE

I entered the hospital room, ready to offer comfort to a mourning family. But I did not want to interrupt the voices quietly singing hymns in a language I did not know. An immigrant couple stood cradling their baby. The mother sang along with two friends who had come to support them. The father prayed over his infant daughter, who had died. He prayed for strength for his family and for the welcome of his daughter into the arms of God.

The depth of the parents' grief was coupled with a hope and peace I've rarely sensed at the death of a child. Their friends' support, the reassuring sound of the hymns, and, most importantly, the presence of God in the room reminded me that we can find hope in the midst of suffering. Even when God chooses not to provide healing on earth, His presence can bring peace and hope to the family left behind. Will you ask Jesus to journey with you in sorrow?

—L. M. W.

B. Jesus' Response (v. 19)

19. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples.

Probably some of the ruler's friends were certain that *Jesus* would not go with *him*. But the great physician, Jesus, makes house calls. And, as usual, *his disciples* followed.

II. A Story Interrupted

(MATTHEW 9:20–22)

A. A Woman's Need (vv. 20–21)

20. And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment.

This transition repeats *behold* (see [Matthew 9:18](#), above), alerting the reader that a new piece of narrative is interrupting. The second account, of an unnamed *woman*, begins here (see [Lesson Context](#)). This method of telling the two stories builds tension in the first, as we wait to see what will happen with the ruler and his daughter. It also invites the reader to feel the exasperation that the ruler and the disciples might feel at being stalled on their important errand. Will the girl live or not? We must read on to find out.

The woman's *issue of blood* was what we would call hemorrhaging. This was probably from constant menstruation, a debilitating physical condition. The woman's body would have needed to replace lost blood constantly for *twelve years* (the same amount of time the ruler's daughter had been alive; see [Luke 8:42](#)). All her energy would go to that vital need, leaving her weak and vulnerable to other sickness. Furthermore, she "had spent all that she had" going to physicians, who only made her condition worse ([Mark 5:26](#)). There had not been any specialist in 12 years who could treat her properly.

This illness also made her life intolerable in being a social outcast. According to the Law of Moses, any flow of blood made a woman ceremonially unclean ([Leviticus 15:25](#)). This law was meant to illustrate to the entire nation of Israel the need all people have for God's repeated cleansing. But in application, it meant that the unclean woman could have no social contact with anyone except another woman who was currently menstruating. The clean became unclean by contact with the unclean (examples: [Leviticus 15:16–27](#)). So for this woman, the Law of Moses was a curse (compare [Galatians 3](#)).

The hem of his garment may refer to one of the tassels that the Law of Moses specified for the garments of the Israelites ([Numbers 15:38](#); [Deuteronomy 22:12](#)). Being ritually unclean, the woman could not approach Jesus directly. Thus she attempted to slip in unnoticed. Even so, she risked putting many into unknowing states of being unclean when they brushed against her in the crowd.

21. For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

The woman did not give in to the despair. Though contact with the unclean normally contaminated the clean person (see commentary above), the woman believed that the reverse would happen. She, like the girl's father, apparently believed that Jesus' power, demonstrated in other miracles, could meet her need as well. Just the slightest *touch* would be enough for a great healing.

The word translated *be whole* is translated "be saved" in other contexts (examples: [Matthew 10:22](#); [19:25](#)). Though we usually think of saving and salvation in spiritual terms, the word could indicate physical healing (as in this text), political release (a typical reason for Roman emperors to refer to themselves as saviors), and other forms of liberation, depending on context.

Understanding the many uses of this word points us to the ways that Jesus intends to save us. Though we will have everlasting life with Him, we can also experience now the kinds of renewal that this woman desired. She wanted an end to her physical suffering; she wanted an end to her years of social ostracism. She needed help that wouldn't cost her money she didn't have.

We too can experience healing and community in Christ. Realizing that she had nowhere else to turn, the woman put her trust in the one whose power could make her well. In her weakness she reached out to Jesus, believing that a mere touch would be enough.

What Do You Think?

Which actions of the woman and/or the ruler can and should you imitate in approaching Jesus to have your needs met?

Digging Deeper

How should passages such as [Matthew 18:6](#); [Mark 10:13–15](#); and [John 1:44–46](#) inform your task with regard to others who would approach Jesus?

B. Jesus' Healing Answer (v. 22)

22. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

Jesus possessed not only divine power to work miracles but divine knowledge as well. He recognized the touch, even though it was slight and He was in a crowd (compare [Mark 5:24, 30](#); [Luke 8:42, 45](#)). He realized that this slight touch signified something of great significance.

This proves that the woman's healing was not some kind of psychosomatic reaction. There was something more here than a woman having believed so strongly that she was going to be well that she actually willed herself to be well. That possibility could not be true because Jesus felt the power go "out of him" ([Mark 5:30](#)). Her faith made the healing possible, but the healing power came from outside her.

Seeing the woman, Jesus addressed her with respect and kindness. *Daughter*, a term of endearment, also indicated her need for help and Jesus' acting on her behalf like a good father (another tie to the story of the ruler, which has been paused). Jesus' encouragement *be of good comfort* reassured the woman that she had done nothing wrong and had no reason to fear Jesus' reaction. The other Gospels make clear that the woman was indeed afraid ([Mark 5:33](#); [Luke 8:47](#)).

The account comes to its climax as Jesus says *thy faith hath made thee whole*. This is precisely what the woman hoped for (see [Matthew 9:21](#), above). The Law of Moses had separated the woman from society. But the one for whom that law prepared the faithful of Israel to expect had given her new life.

Some conclude from Jesus' words that if a person needs God's miraculous help and does not receive it, then that person does not have enough faith. This is not at all the meaning of Jesus' statement. Jesus commends and celebrates the faithful who seek what He alone can give. When He says words such as "Your faith has made you well," He also acts on their behalf. Effective faith believes that what God supplies will meet the real need regardless of whether or not a miracle is involved. Thus prayers are not necessarily answered on terms we expect. Even Jesus' own prayer to the Father in [Luke 22:42](#) was not answered on the terms Jesus wanted. Yet He committed himself to the Father's will, confident that the Father would be faithful. As important as the greatness of our faith is, the greatness of the Lord's faithfulness is more so.

What Do You Think?

Without giving directive advice, how would you counsel someone who had been told by a “faith healer” that the person’s infirmity was not healed because of a lack of faith? *Digging Deeper*
What Scripture passages will support your counseling?



Visual for Lesson 3. Point to this visual as you pose for class discussion the What Do You Think? question associated with verse 21.

III. A Child Resurrected
(MATTHEW 9:23–26)

A. A Noisy House (vv. 23–24)

23a. And when Jesus came into the ruler’s house.

Having successfully resolved the issue of the woman’s bleeding, *Jesus* continued on His way to *the ruler’s house* (see [Matthew 9:18](#), above). Jesus had not forgotten the need there.

23b. And saw the minstrels and the people making a noise.

Mourning in ancient Israel was not quiet. Minstrels, likely paid to mourn, played their instruments. Family and neighbors would gather to show support by joining in. The *people* expressed sorrow with loud wailing and songs of lament (compare [Matthew 11:17](#); [Luke 7:32](#)). The result was much noise in order to demonstrate just how loved the deceased person was.

24a. He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.

Jesus' telling the crowd of mourners to *give place* is a command to withdraw, as the word is also translated in [Mark 3:7](#). But here Jesus was not asking merely for quiet in order to concentrate. Rather, the fact that *the maid is not dead, but sleepeth* meant that there was (or shortly would be) no reason to continue mourning. By this statement Jesus was not implying that the girl was in a deep coma that had been mistaken for death. Nor did He mean that she actually was sleeping naturally. He meant that she would not remain dead. Later, Jesus would speak similarly at the death of Lazarus ([John 11:1–11](#)), a declaration that the disciples misunderstood ([11:12–14](#); compare and contrast [1 Corinthians 15:51](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:13](#)).

24b. And they laughed him to scorn.

Jesus' remark seemed absurd to the mourners. They knew death when they saw it. All their own life experiences told them that there was no logical reasoning behind Jesus' statement. Thus their laughter was one of derision (compare [Psalm 44:13](#)). Unlike the girl's father, these mourners held out no thought that Jesus could do anything to reverse the state of death.

B. Jesus' Power and Fame (vv. 25–26)

25. But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

Matthew described the miracle in terms that match Jesus' declaration that the girl was asleep. Like a parent might take a sleeping child's *hand* to awaken her, so Jesus woke the girl from death. Her resurrection came as a simple touch from Jesus, like the healing of the sick woman. Though most of *the people* were not with Jesus in the room (compare [Mark 5:40](#)), they surely saw that the girl was alive again (see [Matthew 9:26](#), below).

What Do You Think?

What should you do, if anything, were you to discover that your class's prayer list was overwhelmingly for physical healing, with few if any requests for spiritual healing?

Digging Deeper

In addition to [Luke 11:2–4](#); [22:31–32](#); [1 Thessalonians 3:10](#); [Philemon 6](#); and [James 5:14–16](#), what texts would support your actions?

PRAYER FOR HEALING

Working as a chaplain, I received a page that a patient was experiencing an emergency. I arrived to find medical personnel scurrying into and out of the room, doing everything possible to save the teenage girl in their care. I stood with her mother, waiting as I listened to her explain her daughter's complicated medical history.

This mother expressed hope that God would heal her daughter, even while knowing that the girl's condition was very poor. I prayed for healing for the girl, who had suffered a great deal because of her illnesses over the years.

A few months later, I learned that the daughter had improved so much that she was able to help other girls in similar situations! Her mother's prayers had been answered. May you also persist in your prayers, even for years, and expect that the Lord hears you.

—L. M. W.

26. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

This great miracle, the results of which were seen by many, could not be kept quiet. The spread of this news surely contributed to the crowds that followed Jesus or came out to meet Him when He came near their areas.

Their numbers made it clear that the people needed more attention than Jesus alone could give them. So He sent His disciples out to declare the coming of the kingdom of Heaven ([Matthew 9:36–10:8](#)). That initial missionary commission was a prelude to the commission Jesus gave to His followers after His resurrection, a commission that we share today to make disciples of all nations ([Matthew 28:18–20](#)).

What Do You Think?

How can you turn your own most serious health problem into a ministry of support for others with the same issue?

Digging Deeper

Think in terms of either your own single-person ministry and a broader church ministry involving others to help you.

Conclusion

A. Abundance in the Midst of Suffering

Matthew introduced the interaction between Jesus and the synagogue but then interrupted it with a second encounter before returning to the first story to wrap it up; the parallel accounts in [Mark 5:21–43](#) and [Luke 8:40–56](#) do so as well. By this arrangement, we note related themes in the two accounts. The themes are that of (1) a 12-year-old girl who had not yet attained womanhood when she died and (2) a woman for whom womanhood has become the source of suffering for as many years as the girl had lived.

Perhaps you see in yourself characteristics of the people in these two accounts. Perhaps you are like a family member of the dead girl, mourning the loss of someone you love. Perhaps you are like the sick woman, suffering with a chronic condition that does not improve. Certainly we all know that grief and suffering will come for us, even if we presently enjoy a moment of calm.

The miraculous power of Jesus does not assure us that we will have no loss or pain. But our text tells us what we can do in the midst of suffering and loss: we can put our trust in the Lord. Our ultimate destiny is a life in which the Lord wipes away our tears ([Isaiah 25:8](#); [Revelation 7:17](#)). Even if our pain lasts for years, the Lord will heal it when He raises us with all His people to live with Him forever ([21:4](#)). Even when death separates us from those we love, even when we face that separation in our own death, the Lord will reunite His people when He returns ([1 Corinthians 15:51–57](#)).

We sometimes refer to Jesus as “the great physician.” But He is more than a great medical doctor who knows how to treat and cure diseases. There is power and authority in Jesus, power that eradicates death.

There is the power and authority in the resurrected life in Jesus—power and authority for life both now and in eternity.

B. Prayer

Almighty God, we cry out to You in our suffering and our grief. We long for the life that You have in store for us. As we do we recognize the abundance that we now possess through Jesus—even abundance unto eternal life. We thank You for this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

C. Thought to Remember

Jesus’ power and authority are greater than the worst of our circumstances.

INVOLVEMENT LEARNING

Enhance your lesson with KJV Bible Student (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at www.standardlesson.com or in the back of the KJV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition).

Into the Lesson

Write this phrase on the board:

I remember a time when I was really ill ...

Ask class members to find partners and to take no more than one minute each to tell a story of a dire sickness—a story that may be shared, without breaking expectations of confidentiality. After two minutes (that is, one minute for each story), allow time for whole-class discussion.

Make a transition by saying, “It’s clear that physical illness is an experience common to everyone. But if we see the accounts of Jesus’ healings only in terms of ‘He can heal me too,’ then we miss the bigger picture. Let’s see why.”

Into the Word

Ask each pair formed for the first activity to join with another pair so that your class is grouped into fours. Distribute handouts (you prepare) that feature three columns like this:

What Do We Learn About ...

Jesus?		Faith?		Healing?
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Challenge groups to answer these questions from [Matthew 9:18–26](#) alone, pretending that they knew nothing about Jesus or faith before reading this passage. After about five minutes, call for group reports to the class as a whole. Use the discussion to explore how Jesus can be misunderstood when His actions are interpreted apart from the context of His ministry as a whole.

Option 1. Explore that context by distributing copies of the “Jesus in Context” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Depending on the nature of your class, either have learners stay in their groups of four to complete this or return to their original pairs to do so. During whole-class discussion of results, stress that this listing is itself only partial in helping us understand Jesus’ mission.

Option 2. Have learners work individually for no more than one minute to complete the “Reactions to Healing” exercise on the activity page as indicated. After calling time, surprise your learners by ignoring what they wrote and instead polling them on which of the four characters they chose to evaluate. Focusing on the reason why, explore what their choices say about them personally.

Write this question on the board for whole-class discussion:

Why did Jesus heal people?

Put responses on the board as they are voiced. If no one mentions it, be sure to stress that Jesus’ healings and other miracles were intended to prove that He was God ([John 20:30–31](#)). Explore how we run the danger of committing the error Jesus notes in [John 6:26](#) as we consider our own prayers for healing today.

Into Life

Display the following sentence on the board:

Pray as if everything depends on _____; take action as if everything depends on _____.

Ask students to guess what words go in the two blanks. After a learner (or you yourself) reveals that the proper words are *God* and *you*, respectively, explore how the main characters in today’s story demonstrated this principle.

Wrap up by considering this hypothetical case study: a person with a stage 4 cancer approaches you in despair regarding that diagnosis. What regarding the cancer patient’s state of mind and faith would indicate that studying [Matthew 9:18–26](#) together would be helpful? What state of mind or faith would indicate that such a study might be counterproductive? (*Option.* Depending on the nature of your class and being sensitive to the needs of those present, this can be considered either by the class as a whole or in small groups.)

ACTIVITY PAGE

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