

## Home Group Leaders Discussion Guide

### Luke 8:40-56

(note...discussion questions are at the end.)

One of my favorite psalms is Psalm 62, which ends *“One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard; that You, O God, are strong, and that You, O Lord, are loving. Surely You reward each person according to what he has done.”* (Psalm 62:11-12) God is strong and God is loving. We’ve seen over the past couple of weeks just how strong God is, calming the wind and the waves, and casting out a legion of demons. In this week’s passage, along with His strength/power we’re going to see how loving He is.

Upon returning to Galilee from His short excursion to the region of the Geresenes, Jesus was welcomed by a crowd...a pretty excited crowd it would seem. And we’re also introduced to a man named Jairus who was a ruler of the synagogue. This was a fairly distinguished and respected position that we might equate to an “operations manager”. A ruler of the synagogue would take care of the facility as well as all the goings-on of the synagogue. And keep in mind that the synagogue would be the central focus of town, a religious and cultural hub if you will. So to be the one who ran the place would be a rather prestigious position, relatively speaking.

But Jairus had a dilemma, a big one. His 12 year old daughter was dying. We can probably assume that being the ruler of the synagogue would have made Jairus privy to all the hub-bub surrounding Jesus. He would have likely sided more with the religious leaders (Pharisees, teachers of the law) in being rather suspicious of Jesus. But when you’re desperate, and with the news of Jesus being a healer/miracle worker, and Jesus was now in town, well let’s just say that being concerned with appearing respectable went out the window. He fell at Jesus’ feet asking Him to come to his house and lay hands on his daughter that she may be healed and live (see Mark 5:22-23)

We don’t read much reaction out of Jesus from any of the Gospel writers at this point, but apparently Jesus agreed to go to Jairus’ house. (Interestingly, Matthew’s version of the story says that the girl had already died, but Jairus trusted Jesus could bring her back to life.)

We are also introduced to another desperate soul in a nameless woman who had been suffering from bleeding/hemorrhaging for 12 years. By all accounts this was some sort of gynecological disorder, which may explain why the woman would prefer to remain anonymous. But she had great faith in Jesus, thinking that to even touch the hem of His garment would heal her. And her faith was not misplaced. Sure enough, at the touch of His garment she was healed.

Now let me ask you...do you think Jesus ever asks a question He doesn’t already know the answer to? Think back to Genesis, immediately after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. God came walking in the garden, they hid, and God asks, *“Where are you?”*. It’s safe to assume He knew where they were. He wanted to give them an opportunity to fess up. Likewise, when Adam responded *“I heard You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”*

And God responded back with *“Who told you that you were naked?”* Did He not already know the answer to the question?

So I suspect that when Jesus asked the question in the midst of this pressing crowd, *“Who touched me?”* it wasn't out of curiosity, it wasn't that He didn't know or couldn't have figured it out on His own pretty easily. Rather, He wanted to give the woman the opportunity to come forward. He wanted to do more than simply heal her of her ailment (though that was a BIG deal too). He wanted to bless her. He wanted to look her in the eye (perhaps more importantly, allow her to look into His eyes) and hear the words, *“Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.”* This demonstrates God's great love. He is not content to simply heal/save us (by the way, the word “heal” in the text is more frequently translated “save”). He desires a deeper connection with us. He understands that whatever we think our greatest need might be, our true deepest need is connection/relationship with Him. So beyond whatever is hurting us in the moment (or even long-standing pain like this woman), He desires to give us Himself.

Now, unfortunately for Jairus, the delay caused by this woman with the issue of blood took too long and his daughter passed away. We can only imagine the weight of those words upon Jairus when receiving the news that his daughter had died. But it appears that Jesus intervened very quickly before the full force of the news impacted Jairus. Jesus immediately jumped in and said, *“Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.”* (again, “saved”). I imagine as Jairus' headed is sinking at the news, Jesus catches eye contact with him, and is like, “I got this.” At the point when all seemed lost, Jesus injects hope. Imagine the emotional rollercoaster that Jairus experienced in such a short amount of time. Hope in the fact that the miracle worker was in town that caused him to make his initial plea to Jesus. Hope dashed upon hearing the news that his daughter had died. Hope revived upon Jesus' words of confidence.

Jesus apparently didn't want to make a spectacle of this event (though it's recorded in 3 Gospels...so kind of a spectacle), so He left the crowd and most of His disciples outside and only went into the house with Peter, James, and John and the girl's parents. This is the first of a handful of times we see Jesus give Peter, James, and John “special access” to something, and in part why we consider them the “inner 3”). Luke is the only Gospel writer that states that these 3 were the only ones of His disciples allowed in the house.

The mourners and wailers (and Matthew adds flute players) were making quite a commotion (which was culturally typical for such occasions). Essentially, Jesus told them to stop because the girl wasn't dead. This caused a different commotion...one of snide laughter at Jesus by the mourners (which was very insensitive to Jairus and his wife if you think about it). But we know the story, Jesus took her by the hand and said, *“My child, get up!”* and her spirit returned to her. This, of course, is a precursor/preview of Jesus defeating death with His own resurrection. Grief, sadness, mourning, and even jeering laughter, is turned to wonder, amazement, astonishment.

In both of these incidents we see Jesus overcome the fear of those who are afraid. The woman with the bleeding, was afraid to even ask for what she needed, and afraid of the crowd and people knowing her true condition. But Jesus helped her by making her confront her fear with His help. Jairus was afraid of the loss of his daughter. In both cases Jesus brought hope and wholeness. Now you and I don't have any guarantees that Jesus will "fix" the various issues of our lives (though we are certainly encouraged/invited to ask Him to), but He does promise to give us His Presence, and with that, hope and courage to overcome the fear that plagues us.

- Q. (possible icebreaker) How do you feel about crowds? (Drawn to them...that's where the action is. Avoid them like the plague. Indifferent. Depends on the reason there is a crowd to begin with. Etc.) How many people is a "crowd" to you?**
- Q. Describe a time in your life when you felt especially desperate. (What was the occasion? How was it resolved? How did that occasion impact/shape you?)**
- Q. As you consider God's power and His love, which are you more drawn to...His power or His love? Explain.**
- Q. Have you ever felt stigmatized? Have you even felt isolated? Have you ever felt hopeless? Have you ever felt less than whole? Describe. (\*\*HG Leaders, please be sensitive with this one should you choose to ask it. Someone might be in the midst of experiencing this right now.\*\*)**
- Q. How as Jesus brought hope, wholeness, and courage to your life?**
- Q. Why do you think Jesus made the woman reveal herself? For His sake or for her sake? Explain.**
- Q. Throughout chapter 8 of Luke we've seen Jesus demonstrate His power (calming the sea, healing the demon-possessed man, healing the woman, raising Jairus' daughter)...which stands out to you, or impacts you the most? Why?**
- Q. With all the miracles in this chapter, Luke is definitely trying to build the case for his readers that Jesus is God. How did you become convinced that Jesus is God?**
- Q. In the case of both the woman and the child Jesus demonstrates great care, concern, and sensitivity. You and I may not be able to do miracles and perform the supernatural like Jesus, but we can show care, concern, and sensitivity. Is there any situation or relationship you are currently dealing with that may require you show care, concern, and sensitivity?**