

“Do Not Fear; Only Believe”

Hello Osaka International Church people! Many of you know me and some of you may not. I am Daniel Parry. I lived in Osaka for a total of 23 years with my wife and children. We’re now ministering at a church in Kansas, right in the middle of the USA.

I wish I could be there with you and talk with you. We miss our years of living there and the special fellowship we had with you. May God bless you. You are often in our prayers.

Today I’d like to share a message from Luke 8:40-56. It’s titled, “Do Not Fear; Only Believe.” It is about two miracles that Jesus did. One was a healing miracle and the other was actually bringing a little girl back to life after she’d gotten sick and died.

40 Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him.

41 Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus’ feet, pleading with him to come to his house 42 because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. 43 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. 44 She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

45 “Who touched me?” Jesus asked.

When they all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.”

46 But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.”

47 Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. 48 Then he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.”

49 While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” he said. “Don’t bother the teacher anymore.”

50 Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, “Don’t be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.”

51 When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child’s father and mother. 52 Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. “Stop wailing,” Jesus said. “She is not dead but asleep.”

53 They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. 54 But he took her by the hand and said, “My child, get up!” 55 Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. 56 Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

I see four points for us to take away from this passage and apply in our lives and in our witnessing to others:

1. Do not fear; Only believe. This is seen in both of these people we read about today.
2. Humbly come to Jesus.
3. Speak up about what Jesus has done for you. It is important for your faith and it brings glory to him.
4. Never assume it is too late for forgiveness and restored relationship. The idiom, “Better late than never,” really is true.

ONE - Do not fear; Only believe.

Both of these incidents have to do with fear and receiving a blessing from God. The woman was afraid to come directly to Jesus, so slipped in behind him. She thought she could receive a miracle without being seen or heard, but Jesus stopped and searched her out.

She overcame her fear and came trembling to him and declared in front of everybody what had happened and how Jesus had healed her. Then He comforted her and told her, “your faith had made you well, go in peace.”

In the case of the little girl, she was dying already when the father came to Jesus. Walking to her home took time and Jesus seemed to have other things going on at the same time. He didn’t drop everything, ignore everyone and rush to the little girl’s side. When the announcement came, “The girl is dead, Don’t trouble the Teacher anymore,” Jesus told the father, “Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well.”

Fear comes when we don't believe. John writes in his first letter that as we know God, and believe in the love that He has for us, we do not need to fear his judgment.

And if we don't need to fear his judgment,

which is the worst thing that will ever happen to those who aren't in Christ,

we really don't need to fear anything.

If you're not afraid of the worst thing that will ever happen, then what else is there to worry about? 1 John 5:18 "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear."

TWO - Humbly come to Jesus.

Jairus was a man of status, a leader in his community and in charge of the worship of the people. But he wasn't afraid of acting undignified. His daughter was dying, maybe already dead, and he was desperate.

He was not above falling at Jesus' feet asking for help. Jesus, had no money, home, or position, but lived on the road with his ragtag band of followers. But that didn't stop the man coming very humbly before him to ask for help.

Hebrews 12:2 Jesus is the author of our faith. Being the author means He is the one who created it. He wrote the story of our life before we were born and He wrote the story of our redemption. He also writes the finish of the story as well.

If He, the one who came up with our life story, was not afraid of being humbled and shamed before others, then we shouldn't be either.

Be willing to be like Jesus who was humble in his life and especially in his death, being striped, whipped, spit on, mocked and hung on the cross – and He endured it all.

This does not mean to do shameful things. This means to do good things, seek God while others are watching, and pay them no mind if they think we are silly.

Actually, this sense of shame about what others might think of us as Christians comes from the devil. He is the one who warns us not to be too extreme. He gives us rationalizations for not doing what we should. Or excuses to do what we should not.

For instance, "if you go out and pray publicly for the lives of the mothers and the babies in front of an abortion clinic, it will make Christians look bad (not to mention yourself)."

Or, how about this one, "If you tell someone that the Bible really is the word of God, they may laugh at how naive you are."

Many people around us are walking in spiritual darkness and do not know about God.

And if we keep quiet about it because we don't want to look bad or bring shame on ourselves, then they will stay in the darkness.

THREE - Speak up about what Jesus has done for you. It is important for your faith and it brings glory to him.

The Old Testament law, which thank goodness, I mean literally thank God, we are no longer bound by, required that when a woman had her time of the month, she was ritually unclean. Anyone or anything she touched was also unclean.

If this poor woman had been having this discharge of blood for 12 years, that means for 12 years she was not able to be a part of society. She had to stay away from people. It was incredibly embarrassing and lonely for her.

Then there was the drain on her health, low iron in her blood, low energy, and the drain on her finances as she desperately tried to find a physician who could cure her.

She wasn't supposed to be in this crowd of people. But she risked it all. She waited for her chance as the crowd of people came by. She slipped in, probably with her head covered and trying to keep her identity private, reached out her hand past some other people, and touched the fringe of Jesus' robe.

Immediately, she could feel that her bleeding stopped. She was cured! Now to slip away without being noticed.

Oh, no! What is this! The crowd stopped. Everyone is quiet and looks around while Jesus searches their faces, "saying someone touched me. I know it. I felt the power of healing go out to them."

I imagine that Jesus could have just given her a knowing look and a nod, and discreetly let her go and live her life. . . . But no.

In front of this large crowd He made the point to stop and search out who had touched him. I think Jesus already knew who had touched him. But He stopped and asked, even though He knew. This is one of the ways that God works with us. He gets us to confess. That's important to him.

Think about it. In the Genesis, the first book of the Bible, chapter 3 it tells about how the first man and first woman disobeyed God. They lived in the Garden of Eden, where it was a beautiful paradise. After they had disobeyed it says that God came walking and saying, "Adam, where are you?" He knew. Then when Adam admitted they were hiding God asked, "Have you eaten of that tree I commanded you not to eat?"

This is the point of the conversation where Adam should have said, “Yes, I did. I was wrong and disobeyed you. I am sorry.” But no, what did he do? He blamed Eve. “That woman you gave me....”

And when God asked Eve about it, she did the same, blaming the serpent for tempting her.

When we confess before God, we are forgiven. Our human tendency is to try and cover up what we’ve done. That might work on other people, but not on God. He knows us better than we know ourselves. There is nothing you do or even think, that God doesn’t know about.

Woo, that’s kind of scary. But that’s the way it is.

Now, the good thing, no the great thing, is that God does love us. And when we humbly come to him and confess what we’ve done, He forgives. It’s gone, as far from us as the east is from the west.

But don’t confess, keep it buried down inside, and it just gets worse.

We had a rat die in our house one time. It was between the living room ceiling and our second story bedroom floor.

You couldn’t see it. But as it decomposed it was awful. Jill and I slept with the window open in cold weather of early winter. Even with the window open, it still smelled bad.

Finally I taped over the cracks in the floor where the boards came together. That kept down the smell. But that rat stayed there until the house was finally torn down.

How much better it would have been if we could have torn the floor out and gotten rid of the rat. That’s what God does when we confess to him. Don’t try to cover anything up, let God get rid of it.

The woman could not remain hidden. Her secret was being exposed. So she came to Jesus trembling, and falling before him she declared before him, and all the people around, what her problem had been.

This confessing publicly on her part cemented the healing. Not only in her body did she feel it but she had proclaimed it before all the people. And then Jesus said to her, “Go in peace your faith has made you well.”

FOUR - 4. Never assume it is too late for forgiveness and restored relationship. The idiom, “Better late than never,” really is true.

While Jesus was talking with the woman, some people from Jairus' house came and said, "It's too late. She's dead. Don't trouble Jesus anymore." Jairus didn't have a chance to say anything.

Jesus heard this and immediately he answered Jairus. "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed."

The people were assuming it was too late.

But Jesus did the impossible for the little girl.

I've met people who say it is too late for them. They think they have done things that God will never forgive or fix. They don't even ask for his help, though He is the only one who can help them.

I read a story by Vic Pentz that shows what I mean. It starts with a nursery rhyme – the picture that always was associated with Humpty Dumpty was a big egg man. He had a face and wore clothes, but his body was a big egg. Like an egg when it falls, he cracked open. Listen to the little nursery rhyme.

Humpty Dumpty sat on the wall.

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.

All the King's horses and all the King's men

Couldn't put Humpty together again.

But the King heard about Humpty's fall and was deeply disturbed. Disguising himself in peasant's clothing he left his palace and wandered the streets, looking for Humpty.

After three days he found him. His body was scattered over a three meter circle in a back ally, surrounded by broken glass and flattened beer cans.

Rushing to his side he cried, "Humpty! It is I—your King! I have powers greater than those of my horses and men who failed to put you together again. Be at peace. I am here to help."

Humpty grumbled, "Leave me alone. I've gotten used to this life and I like it the way it is. That trash can over there, and the way the sun sparkles on the broken glass. This must be the garden spot of the world."

The King said, "But there is so much more than this in my kingdom, green mountains, rolling surf, exciting cities..."

But Humpty wouldn't hear it. Sadly the King went away. But only a week later he came again. "I've come to help." he stated firmly.

“Leave me alone,” retorted Humpty, “I’ve just seen my psychiatrist. He says I’m doing a great job of coping.”

The King asked, “But don’t you want to walk?”

“Look, once I get up and start walking I’ll have to stay up and keep walking. At this point in my life I’m just not ready to make that kind of a commitment.”

Sadly the King went away. It was a year later before he came again.

This time, Humpty was ready. When he heard the sure steady strides of the king, he turned an eye toward him and his mouth managed the words, “My King!”

The King immediately knelt down beside him on the glass covered pavement and began to gently pick up the fragments of Humpty and piece him back together.

After some time the King stood up and pulled up another figure, a strong young man.

Together they walked hand in hand throughout the kingdom. They stood on top of green mountains, ran on the beach in the surging tide. They laughed and joked together as they toured the gleaming cities.

Of their friendship there was no end. Once as they were walking together, Humpty overheard a remark that made his heart leap with joy in his new life and the bitter memory of the back alley. Someone said, “Who are those two men?”

Another replied, “Well, the one on the left is old Humpty Dumpty. I don’t know the one on the right—but they sure look like brothers!”

Aren’t you glad, it is never too late? This is great news for us, and great news for us to share with others.

And the more Holy Spirit works in us, the more we look like Jesus. What that little story didn’t show was how the Holy Spirit keeps working in us. He isn’t done yet, but He won’t quit until He is.

What to take away from this today:

1. Do not fear; Only believe.
2. Humbly come to Jesus.
3. Speak up about what Jesus has done for you.
4. Never assume it is too late for forgiveness and restored relationship.

Pray