

September 28, 2003
AM Service
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

Last week:

1. All (Christians & non) will face some kind of tragedy sooner or later in their life.
2. We will be tempted to think that Jesus is indifferent to our problems. But
3. Christians must cling to faith that Jesus is too loving and good to be indifferent.
4. And in due time we shall see that indeed God does care for us.

Our life in this world will not long be at ease. Problems will come - you can depend on it. But when they come Jesus commands you, "don't be afraid."

(Luke 8:41-50 NLT)

a man named Jairus, a leader of the local synagogue, came and fell down at Jesus' feet, begging him to come home with him. 42 His only child was dying, a little girl twelve years old.

As Jesus went with him, he was surrounded by the crowds. 43 And there was a woman in the crowd who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years. She had spent everything she had on doctors and still could find no cure. 44 She came up behind Jesus and touched the fringe of his robe. Immediately, the bleeding stopped.

45 "Who touched me?" Jesus asked.

Everyone denied it, and Peter said, "Master, this whole crowd is pressing up against you."

46 But Jesus told him, "No, someone deliberately touched me, for I felt healing power go out from me." 47 When the woman realized that Jesus knew, she began to tremble and fell to her knees before him. The whole crowd heard her explain why she had touched him and that she had been immediately healed. 48 "Daughter," he said to her, "your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

49 While he was still speaking to her, a messenger arrived from Jairus's home with the message, "Your little girl is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now."

50 But when Jesus heard what had happened, [it was at that point that] he said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Just trust me, and she will be all right."

There can be nothing worse than when your child is sick or in danger of dying. The only thing that can be worse is the death of a child. Luke records that Jiarus came to Jesus and fell at His feet but he does record his condition/attitude. I believe that Jiarus was weeping loudly as he cried out to Jesus in fear and hopelessness for his only child, a twelve-year-old daughter, who was dying, begging Jesus to come to his home. Jiarus was a lay leader in the local synagogue. It would have been an unusual scene to have a leader of the synagogue fall begging at anyone's feet. But he was desperate. He put aside any

concern for himself, he put aside his pride and went directly to the only one he had ever seen heal others perhaps he even witnessed Jesus doing healings in his own synagogue.

There was someone else in the crowd who had come to find Jesus that day. She had a physical problem for as long as Jarius had a daughter – twelve years. She had spent all her money on doctors but none could cure her. By now there was a large crowd surrounding and following Jesus and Jarius back to Jarius' house. She thought and believed that if only she could touch the hem of His clothing she could be healed. She worked her way through the crowd perhaps crawling on the ground between people's legs and when she got close enough she reached out to touch just the fringe of His cloak. Immediately she was healed. The women wanted to go unnoticed. Her problem was bleeding and in those days she would have been considered unclean. No one would go near her. But Jesus wasn't like everyone else. He knew that healing power went out from Him and He asked, "Who touched me?" Can you imagine the fear, impatience and perhaps anger of Jarius as Jesus stops to ask, "Who touched Me? He came to seek out Jesus to heal his child, who was at the point of death. Not a moment was to be wasted. Every second must have felt like an eternity to him. I wonder what Jarius was thinking. Perhaps he was thinking harsh things of Jesus and His apparent indifference.

Peter says look at this crown everyone is pressing on you (how can you ask, "Who touched me? Everyone is touching you, or trying to.) But this was not just the touch of people pressing on Jesus this was the touch of someone in need and Jesus wanted to not only heal this woman physically He wanted to heal her spiritually as well. The women realized that Jesus knew and she fell on her knees before Him. She admits what she did, so the crowd could hear. She may have been expecting harsh words from Jesus. Instead He spoke to her with gentle words, and said, "Daughter your faith has made you well. Go in peace." Jesus lets her know that it wasn't the touch that healed her, it was not His clothes that healed her, it was her faith in Him that healed her and not only was she healed but she found peace with God.

Could it be that Jesus was using this woman's story to build faith in Jarius? Jarius *must* have had hope after hearing her story. But even while Jesus was still speaking to her, just as Jarius felt some hope and an increase to his faith, someone arrived from Jarius's home with the message, "(It is too late) Your little girl is dead. There's no use bothering the Teacher anymore. Don't bring Jesus into your home or into your life for that matter – what you feared the most has come upon you." Don't bother with Jesus. I tell you *that* is just like the enemy. As soon as he sees a little growth in your faith he will do something to try and snatch that faith away. He will do anything so that you will not bother with Jesus anymore. You start to turn toward Jesus, something bad happens and the devil will tempt you to think, "See you come to Jesus, you try to do what is right, you trust Him and look what happens." But immediately in the mist of despair Jesus said, "Don't be afraid. Just trust me, and she will be all right."

Today I would like to look at this statement that Jesus makes in Luke 8:50: Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed."

Luke 8:50 NLT

... Jesus...said, "Don't be afraid. Just trust me, and she will be all right."

First He says, "don't be afraid" – He forbids fear (it's a command)

Last He says "it will be all right" – He gives hope (this is a statement of hope)

And sandwiched between the command to not fear and a reason to have hope is the statement, "just believe"

"Don't be afraid." This statement must have seemed ridiculous to Jairus. His last bit of hope must have gone out of him. How irrelevant, if not cruel, the statement, "Don't be afraid" must have sounded. "You waste time talking to this woman, who was already healed, you didn't need to talk with her and now I get word that my little girl is dead, all hope is gone and you say, 'Don't be afraid.' You say, 'she will be all right.'" It's absurd. And yet, because of the words in the middle, the words embedded between the reason for hope and the prohibition to fear neither statement is ridiculous, "just believe." The command, "Don't be afraid" would be an outrageous command without the word, "'believe!" on one side of it, and on the other side, "hope!" would be impossible apart from faith. Many times we are stretched to the limit, it seems, of our faith. Just when we are ready to despair Jesus shows up (like the story last week of the disciples in a storm in a boat with Jesus asleep. They were in danger of drowning before Jesus did something.) But how about this case with Jairus? His situation seems hopeless all together. But friends it is always too soon to give up on your faith no matter how hopeless the situation seems. God does care about you and He will act, but not necessarily the way you expected or wanted him too. That's what Jairus discovered. And Jesus is saying the same thing to us that He said to him, "Just believe!" Just believe and you will have courage that stands firm and a hope that does not despair... but faith is the condition. Jesus says just believe; just trust in me – this act of our will is what makes us capable of receiving His blessing. Others may say to us in our time of need, "don't worry it will be ok, have courage." But they give us not means of keeping up our courage. Jesus says don't fear, have hope but also gives us the means: "Trust Me" He says, "Believe in Me." Jesus is letting you know that He is aware of your situation, He is in control of your situation, and He cares for you and about you. And He will take care of it. Not, perhaps, the way you want or think and it is not for you to understand what He is doing. But it is going to be all right. Don't be afraid. Friends, there is a war going on that is fiercer than any other war in history. It is a war for your soul. And spiritual forces we cannot see are waging it. Something much more important than our few years here on earth is at stake. Cling to Jesus. Don't give up on Jesus. Rest on Jesus. Feel His touch, feel His arms around you. (Deut. 20:1-4) Have peace because you know Jesus can do miracles. Have peace because you know Jesus always works out things for good. Have peace because even in death there is life with Jesus (one day we will discover that those who died in Christ were freed and rejoiced in leaving this earth even though we mourned for them). Have peace because there is victory in Jesus. Here are words of encouragement to sustain a weakening faith: "Don't be afraid; just believe, and it will be alright." From a simple faith springs a mighty hope. "Just believe," then on one side "don't be afraid" and on the other "always hope." Because of Jesus we can have perfect hope.