

**TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, NOVEMBER 13/26, 2006**

**EPH 2:14-22**

**ST. LUKE 8:41-56**

by

Fr. Dr. Photios+ (W)

*Gospel: And, behold, there came a man named Jarius, and he was a ruler of a synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought Him that He would come into his house:*

*For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as He went the people thronged him.*

*And the woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any.*

*Came behind Him, and touched the border of His garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.*

*And Jesus said, Who touched Me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng Thee and press Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?*

*And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched Me: for I perceive that virtue hath gone out of Me.*

*And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before Him, she declared unto Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately.*

*And he said to her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.*

*While He yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.*

*But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.*

*And when He came into the house, He suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.*

*And all wept, and bewailed her: but He said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.*

*And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.*

*And He put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.*

*And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and He commanded to give her meat.*

*And her parents were astonished: but He charged them that they should tell no man what was done.*

Returning from the country of Gadarenes,<sup>1</sup> the multitudes received the Lord gladly. They had been waiting for Him “eager for both His teaching and His miracles”.<sup>2</sup> Jairus, one of the more significant society members at that time, a ruler of the synagogue, fell down before Jesus and pleaded for Him to come to his house to heal his only child, a daughter, 12 years of age, who was dying. This is an example that sometimes suffering and disease compel us to do better.<sup>3</sup>

En route to Jairus’ house, a woman having an issue of blood of great faith approached Him. She had suffered her affliction for 12 years, spent all her living on doctors, but none had been able to cure her. She was a woman of exceedingly great faith. Her faith was greater than Jairus’- he wanted Jesus to come to his house and lay hands on his daughter. The woman, on the other hand, had known in her heart that all she had to do was *touch* his garment, and she would be healed. She cast aside all the past, the inability of her physicians to cure her, and the lengthy time she had suffered.

All of this was irrelevant to this woman of great faith. She *believed* in Christ. Immediately upon her touching His garment, she was cured. Since she believed, her prayers were received and fulfilled:

As Christ said, All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. and again. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.<sup>4</sup>

Ask, seek, knock – receive. It’s as easy as that! She believed *first*, and then she touched the Lord’s garment. Blessed Theophylact expresses it this way: “She only believed and was made whole. Understand that first she touched Jesus noetically, and only then did she touch Him bodily.”<sup>5</sup> She touched Him with her unconditional faith.

Christ asked Who touched Me? He wanted to draw attention to her faith. She had not crowded Him, pushing as the crowd had done. All she did was have complete faith in the Lord, that all she had to do was touch Him, and she was saved! Christ was really asking Who touched me with great faith?<sup>6</sup> His public recognition of her faith served another of the Lord’s purposes- to encourage others to imitate her in her faith and to make Jairus confident for the healing of his daughter.<sup>7</sup>

Our Saviour remarked that He perceived the power going out of Him when she touched His garment because He is “the Source of all power, has power going out from Himself, and heals

the infirmities and illnesses of our souls and bodies”.<sup>8</sup> Christ is the original Source of the miracles contrasted with the power of the holy prophets, who did not have this original power “but worked miracles by divine grace, Christ”.<sup>9</sup>

The Lord heals this woman of great faith twice; once healing her infirmity and then, again, calming the trembling of her soul.<sup>10</sup> As He was speaking words of comfort to her, He heard that the daughter was dead and He was not to be ‘troubled’ to come. If one believes in Christ, what difference would this have made? Nothing. As the Lord said, don’t be afraid, *only* believe, and she will be saved. “Look, he said, at the woman with the issue of blood, who was healed before thine eyes on account of her faith; be like her, and thou wilt not err.”<sup>11</sup>

When Jesus came to Jarius’ house, He said that his daughter was not dead, just sleeping. This was greeted with scorn because it was clear she was dead. The Lord had arranged beforehand that His remark she was asleep would be mocked so it would be much more difficult later for those slandering Him to deny her resurrection.<sup>12</sup> He put every one out of the house, but allowed Peter, James and John, the father and mother of the daughter to be present because he knew these disciples would keep the matter quiet. He didn’t want the miracle to be disclosed before the appointed time. He healed the daughter in the presence of a few, rather than many, to teach us not to perform miracles for glory or show. It is better to be alone or in silence. Christ then returned to her the same soul that had gone out of her dead body. He commanded she be fed to provide greater ‘evidence’ that she had risen from the dead.<sup>13</sup> Notice that the Lord receives nothing in this process. He gives all, receives nothing. He charged the parents not to tell anyone what had occurred. This shows Christ is not a fame seeker.<sup>14</sup>

The Fathers support another understanding of today’s Gospel:

The woman with the issue of blood represents “every soul which pours forth bloody and murderous sin”. Each and every sin murders and slays the soul. But when the soul touches the clothing of the Lord, it touches His Incarnation, “believing that the Son of God took on human flesh, then the soul is healed”. Healing and salvation are possible “even if someone should be a *ruler of a synagogue*, that is, if someone has a *mind* (emphasis supplied) which rules over the many things it has collected in its greed. Then the daughter of that mind, its thought, is sick. But let that mind only call upon Jesus and believe, and his thought will be made whole”.<sup>15</sup>

Brethren, unconditionally believe in Christ. Ask, seek, knock – receive!

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> St. Luke 8:26-39.

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<sup>2</sup> Bl. Theophylact's *Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to Luke, Vol. III* in the series, Bl. Theophylact's *Explanation of The New Testament* (tr. from the original Greek by Fr. Christopher Stade, Chrysostom Press, House Springs, MO, 1997, p. 90).

<sup>3</sup> *id.*, and see Hieromonk German Ciuba (tr. from the Slavonic into English; tr. from the Greek into Slavonic in the year 6851, in the 11th Indiction), *The Gospel Commentary*, Russian Orthodox Church of the Nativity of Christ (Old Rite), Erie, PA, 2002, p.495.

<sup>4</sup> Ciuba, *The Gospel Commentary, id.*, p.496 (citing St. Matthew 21:22 and St. Luke 11:9-10).

<sup>5</sup> Bl. Theophylact, *op. cit.*, p.91.

<sup>6</sup> *id.*

<sup>7</sup> *id.*, and Ciuba, *op. cit.*, pp.496-497.

<sup>8</sup> *id.*, p.497 and Bl. Theophylact, *id.*

<sup>9</sup> Ciuba, *id.*

<sup>10</sup> *id.*, p. 498 and Bl. Theophylact, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

<sup>11</sup> Ciuba, *id.*

<sup>12</sup> Bl. Theophylact, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

<sup>13</sup> *id.*, p. 93 and Ciuba, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

<sup>14</sup> Ciuba, *id.*

<sup>15</sup> Bl. Theophylact, *op. cit.*, p. 93.