

NOTES FROM STEVEN DRIVER'S SERMON 26th March 2023 am

SERIES FROM LUKE'S GOSPEL "God's love for the lowest" Part 14

"How to live a confident Christian life" Scripture references from the ESV

Luke 8:40-9:6 Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. ⁴¹ And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, ⁴² for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

As Jesus went, the people pressed around him. ⁴³ And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians,^[f] she could not be healed by anyone. ⁴⁴ She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased.

⁴⁵ And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter^[g] said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!" ⁴⁶ But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me." ⁴⁷ And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. ⁴⁸ And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

⁴⁹ While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more." ⁵⁰ But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well." ⁵¹ And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. ⁵² And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." ⁵³ And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴ But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." ⁵⁵ And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. ⁵⁶ And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

9 And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, ² and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. ³ And he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. ⁴ And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. ⁵ And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." ⁶ And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

Jesus commissioned his disciples to drive out demons, cure diseases and to proclaim the kingdom of God, and to do all this with nothing but the basics for the journey. (9:1-3 above).

Jesus sent them to the impossible, to live on the edge and to expect results.

All believers are called on to live out this life so that we

- Proclaim the good news of the gospel
- Pray with confidence that healing will happen
- See the strongholds of evil fall in answer to our prayers

To live this bold, adventurous life, we must find confidence that we have all that we need to do this in his word. We do not all have to pack our suitcases and go on overseas mission, but we are enlisted, and are on mission in the UK with the people we meet on a daily basis.

The Christian life is a missional life

It is not an easy life, and we can feel inadequate and ill-equipped, as well as being worried about people will think of us. We do not want to set our work colleagues against us, or feel that members of our family dread hearing us speak about Jesus. We may have started boldly but over time our boldness has waned.

How did Christ give his disciples confidence to go on their mission and how can we have that same confidence?

We can live a confident Christian life because Jesus' power has no limit.

We have already seen how Jesus displayed his power and authority over the forces of chaos and the powers of evil (Luke 8:1-39).

However, disease and death remained strongholds. We all fear the idea of our body fighting against us, and the sense of our mortality. In Jairus' daughter and the haemorrhaging woman, we see death and disease on display.

As Jesus made his way to Jairus' house (v42 above), a crowd followed, wanting to see a display of his power, but it was

the woman who was most in need of him (v43). After 12 years of trying anything and everything, she was healed by a mere touch of the fringe of Jesus' garment.

Jesus' power has no limit.

Jesus was in control and knew that his power had been used to minister to this woman. He did not hold back his power just to use it for moments of showmanship. It was freely available to all who came to him.

Jesus' power is like an overflowing fountain pouring out on all who come to drink from it.

He was not concerned about using his power in this way. Rather he wanted to show everyone how easy it was to drink from this never-ending fountain. Whenever someone comes to him, there should be an expectancy because his power has no limit.

Yet is there something that even Jesus cannot do? What happens when time runs out? It seemed to be too late for Jairus' daughter, and the people thought that Jesus could not reverse the unreversible. They laughed at the idea (v53) but we need to recognise and find delight in the truth that **Jesus' power has no limit**. At Jesus' word, the daughter's spirit returned and she had something to eat, showing that she was truly alive.

Jesus' power has no limit

and the disciples could know that this power and authority were with them as they went out (9:1 above).

They might not have food, clothing or money but what they did have was the unlimited power of Jesus. They could go out and do everything that Jesus commanded them to do, knowing that whatever happened, Jesus was in control.

- If their lives were at risk, it would be by Jesus' authority, because Jesus had ordained it for them.
- If they were sustained, it would be by Jesus' power because of his provision for them.
- They could know that people would be healed by Jesus' power and that death would not limit this mission
- They could know that, by Jesus' power, they would have the right words to proclaim his name and show that the Kingdom of God had drawn near.

Jesus' power has no limit

That is what we need to know for ourselves and it remains true 2000 years later. So often:

- We rely on our own strength and abilities, accepting the world's evaluation of our gifting and thereby limiting ourselves. We may be told we are good at a specific task and so we cease to rely on Jesus, whose power could give us so much more.
- We tie ourselves up in knots and lose confidence in our participation in the mission we are called to. That may be out of fear or because of a bad experience, but the result is that we decide that sharing Jesus is for the extrovert person who knows their Bible really well and has read lots of books on mission.

It is true that some people are uniquely gifted for evangelism, but we are all called to share Jesus with others, to be witnesses and to live out our new identity in him in this world. If you are a Christian, you are on mission.

**We can live a confident Christian life because we can know that,
whatever happens, it is Jesus who has ultimate authority**

Why did Jesus come in the first place and why does he bother with us? We do not deserve to live because our sin has separated us from God. Our lives are a gift of God's common grace to all humanity. So why did Jesus display his power, empower his disciples and why does he now empower us? The answer is in the title of this series:

God's love for the lowest

If we just look at Jesus's display of power, we will marvel at him as a miracle man. To marvel at him is a good thing but it leaves out a significant and essential element, and means that everything about Jesus just stays in our head.

- When we look at who Jesus does it for, then we discover why he did it. It comes out of his love for the lowest – his love for us - and that revelation moves marvelling about Jesus from our head to our heart.

Jairus was a powerful man, well respected in the synagogue, and he knew the law of Moses and all the Old Testament teaches about God. Yet his knowledge and power counted for nothing in the face of his daughter's imminent death. Jairus knew in his heart that Jesus was the only means for his daughter to survive. Even though Jairus was a religious leader, one of those who so often rejected Jesus, Jesus did not reject him. He knew that Jairus' heart was right and Jesus has a love for the lowly.

The woman who was bleeding was considered unclean. For 12 years she would have been shut out of religious and social life. When she touched Jesus, she risked making

him unclean too, but he did not reject her. She was made clean by the light of Jesus' power and he called her 'daughter' (v47 above).

Jesus embraced her with fatherly love, displaying his love for the lowly, revealing why he came and who he came for.

Jesus restores, Jesus saves and Jesus loves the lowest.

- Her faith in Jesus did not come from her head. It came from her heart.
- Jesus responded to this, out of love for the lowly of heart.
- Jairus' daughter had nothing to give Jesus
- Jesus gave her new life with a word, out of love for the lowly of heart.

Luke is painting a picture for us. Indeed, this is us. We were dead in our sins and we have nothing to give.

It does not matter how smart, how rich, how powerful or even how well-behaved we are. We have nothing to offer.

*Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were an offering far too small
Love so amazing, so divine
Demands my life, my soul, my all.*

We sing those words (from **When I survey the wondrous cross**) because it is true. His love is so amazing and divine. We cannot offer anything in return but that love demands our all.

- Jesus saves us. We are bought at a price.
- Jesus restores us and raises us with him so the Father calls us 'sons' and 'daughters'

This fountain of power is also a fountain of love

- However much the disciples fell short, however inadequate or ill-equipped they felt in their own strength, however fearful of other people they might be, they knew that Jesus loved them and would not reject them
- They could have the confidence to know that the message they had was for everyone, because Jesus came so that all might hear about his power and love.

Their job is to tell others that they need to drink of this fountain too. No matter how people respond to the message, the disciples could rest in who they know they are in Jesus.

It is hard to live the Christian life – to be a people on mission. We will face rejection and be looked down on., but we can know that Jesus came for us, the lowly and that he has restored us. Then through his love for lowly people, we can rest in our new identity in him.

- You do not need to be defined by how your family react to the message. You can be defined by who you are in Jesus, when you drink from this fountain of love.
- You do not need to be defined by trying to please your friends. Instead you can desire to grow closer to Jesus. You can drink from the fountain of love and hear his voice calling you his son or daughter.

That is why we need to keep looking to Jesus, reminding ourselves of who he is, of his power and love.

We need to come daily to this fountain of love and power, and drink.