

## The Fields pt2

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The Fields / Luke 8:40–48

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We talked a few weeks ago about seeing not just looking. That's our nature. We look. We observe what is going on as if it is a movie. We are really conditioned this way. We look all the time. We consume media like no generation in history. We have the world at our fingertips from as many angles as we can imagine.

This really comes out in the tragedy of the day. The proliferation of cell phone cameras has made it possible for all of us to become citizen journalists and to document both the goodness and the injustice of our culture. That is a good thing. But the byproduct of that access is an indifference to the suffering we see in front of us on the daily. Hashtag activism does nothing for the person in the next cubicle whose husband just left them or the grandparent who is suddenly raising their grandkids or the neighbor who just lost their job and was already behind on their bills.

**That requires something from us- to pause and engage, rather than observe and report.**

That's hard, especially when it interrupts the flow of our already crowded days...where our own personal urgencies often overtake the real needs we see. When we are surrounded by the crowd.

But Jesus...He was different. The urgency of the moment never overrode what He saw, and we need to grasp that lesson in our day and time, because **our culture has no use for a Christianity that refuses to address the needs right before our eyes.**

Read [Luke 8:40-48](#).

Now the first thing I want you to see in this passage is there is an urgent need. Jesus has a guy coming to him and saying...my kid is dying...please come...we need you...and Jesus is more than willing to go. He is here, after all to bring hope and to proclaim the arrival of the Kingdom by doing miracles and preaching and discipling.

### **Luke Comments**

Jairus's action showed his desperation as well as his faith in Jesus.

So he goes.

And as He goes, there are people everywhere. And they are pressing in on Him. It is overwhelming.

Church we face this every day, most of us. We have the key thing we are supposed to do...our job, our kids, our family, the list goes on. AND we have all the other pressing needs...the daily drudgery of life...the lawn, the bills, the meetings, the TV show...you name it. All the other basic parts of life.

**And it can be overwhelming.** Let's be honest. If we are not careful, in the midst of daily life, we can lose sight of the big things. The purpose God has given to us. The calling He has on our lives.

It would have been EASY for Jesus to get overwhelmed by the crowd and to brush aside all that was going on around Him. In fact, the disciples probably thought He should have done that...based on their reactions.

### **Luke Comments**

Peter assumed that Jesus' question was somewhat foolish because Jesus was being jostled by the crowd around him, but he also assumed that Jesus was seeking an answer

But there is a woman in the crowd with a felt need...and it is one that Jesus can address, easily, because of who He is!

## Luke Comments

The exact nature of this bleeding is uncertain, but it may have been some sort of uterine hemorrhaging. The woman's plight is highlighted by the length of her illness (twelve years) and the hopelessness of her situation (no one could heal her

What are felt needs?

Here is a simple definition: **a perceived requirement or desire that a person may feel is necessary or important, but may not be essential for their survival or well-being**

Think of them as needs that are not fatal, but are so overwhelming that they make a person's day to day existence defined by them.

- For our homeless neighbors, that may be food or shelter.
- For a new mom, it may be a lack of sleep or a baby they cannot comfort.
- For a single guy, it may be a constant focus on finding a wife.

It could be ANYTHING, but **the key here is that its VOLUME overwhelms everything else.** They simply cannot focus on bigger reality because the need has them blinded to it.

That's a HUGE issue for the Gospel, because **a person's need for someone to address their spiritual condition can be drowned out by this need.**

Why does this matter?

Because we are so conditioned in American Christianity to speak to the spiritual and ignore the felt need.

The perfect example of this is the abortion discussion that has consumed American Christianity since Roe V Wade.

So many in the church put all their energy into making sure babies were born, but did nothing to address the circumstances into which they were born. The results have been catastrophic.

Remember we are keeping this local: in Oklahoma

“On average, more than 6,500 children are in state custody at any given time. During DHS' fiscal year July 1, 2021, through June 2022, through the combined efforts of all private foster agencies and DHS, 610 new foster homes were recruited across the state. Unfortunately, during the same time, 937 foster families closed their homes, leaving the state with a deficit of 327 foster homes.

Compared to pre-pandemic recruitment numbers, **state and private foster agencies have seen a 34% decrease in individuals and families open to fostering, while the need for placements continues to rise.**

Currently, an estimated 803 foster homes are needed to adequately support children in the system. **By the end of April 2023, only 469 homes are registered, most already with placements.”**

We have a crisis...and this is just one example among so many. How are we to talk about Jesus in this environment with so many homes closed?

And we have people in our state leading national efforts to end abortion (a laudable goal) at the same time advocating for weakening safety nets to help single parents and low income families with kids. This is LUNACY.

**How do we tell people Jesus loves them and their kids and at the same time tell them...and we hope you starve and can't find jobs or shelter?**

And if I sound angry, I am, because I want people to meet Jesus.

Look at Jesus...He has a girl DYING...and yet He stops to address a felt need.

(Go back to v43-46)

Someone touched me. The disciples...no crap Jesus...there are a BUNCH of people who touched you. Priorities Jesus! Girl dying. Ignore these people. Stay focused.

### **Luke Comments**

Was this an actual question or a device Jesus used to bring the woman before him? The question and what follows in 8:45b–46 suggest that Jesus did not know who touched him (cf. Mark 5:32). Luke in his orderly fashion (Luke 1:3) placed Jesus' question before the explanation of why he knew he had been touched

### **Luke Comments**

Peter assumed that Jesus' question was somewhat foolish because Jesus was being jostled by the crowd around him, but he also assumed that Jesus was seeking an answer

But Jesus won't. A felt need has been addressed. And He wants to seize the moment.

### **Luke Comments**

Luke did not explain how she came to this conclusion. Perhaps she saw that Jesus would not rest until what had happened to him had been explained.

Look y'all, the lady is healed. Her felt need is addressed. But that's not what is at stake. Her soul is open. She will never be open to the Gospel than in this moment. He will not surrender the moment.

Church, when we meet the felt need, we have earned a moment to say why. That's why keeping our eyes and ears seeing is so vital. **We can address a felt need and gain a hearing for the deeper need- the soul, the salvation of a person.**

Now some cynical people are going to say...that's manipulative. Nope. Manipulative is when we say "listen to this sermon and then I will give you food." Pray this prayer and I will fix your car. and on and on. That's manipulation. This is a God moment.

**Jesus isn't manipulative, but He is intentional.** And we should not feel weird about seeing a moment to address a felt need as an opening for the Gospel and friends let's be honest...meeting a felt need is an odd thing in our day and time. That's a platform few will even assume.

(Go back to v47-48)

So Jesus won't be deterred. And the woman comes forward. And she is scared. She knows she was healed. She also knows she wasn't supposed to touch Jesus (clean/unclean explanation) and she has no idea what the reaction will be.

Her action has healed her physically but it has also done something else- led to her spiritual transformation. She is at peace with God.

### **Luke Comments**

Healed you" is literally saved you. It was not simply the woman's touching of Jesus' garment that healed her, for others pressed against Jesus as well; it was the faith that caused her to touch Jesus that brought healing. Yet something more happened than the cessation of her bleeding. She experienced physical healing but even more. **If Jesus' concern for her involved physical healing only, what occurred in Luke 8:45-48 could have been omitted. Luke reported that Jesus sought out the woman because something greater than physical healing was taking place. Through faith the woman also received spiritual healing**

Team she would not know that if Jesus didn't tell her. People around us won't know either.

We cannot get so focused on addressing felt needs that we fail to share the Good News about Jesus. It is not an either/or it is a both/and.

And many churches and Christians struggle with this and we cannot be them. In the culture we are in, we have to walk that third way...that middle line...where we do both/and.

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