

RELYING ON GOD

by Brian Hackman

KEY VERSE:

Luke 8:49-50

“Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the teacher any longer.” When Jesus heard this, he replied, “Do not fear. Only believe, and she will be saved.

FAITH STORY:

Luke 8:40-56

FAITH FOCUS:

Jarius, a leader in the synagogue, knelt down at Jesus’ feet and cried out for Jesus to save his 12-year-old daughter, who was on her death bed. Then another woman who had been bleeding for 12 years touched Jesus’ prayer shawl so that she could be healed. Jesus knew that power had gone out of him. Jesus wanted to know who touched him, so the woman fell down before Jesus and admitted that she had touched him. Jesus told her, “Your faith has made you well; go in peace.” In the meantime, the people surrounding Jarius’ daughter were weeping and wailing for her because they thought she was dead. When Jesus arrived and heard these cries, he told them “Do not fear. Only believe, and she will be saved.” They laughed at Jesus because they knew she was dead. Jesus then raised her back to life.

SESSION GOAL:

To encourage students to rely on God and have faith that God will take care of them.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this session, the students will:

- Know the stories of the woman with the hemorrhage and Jarius’ daughter and how trust in God brought healing to their lives.
- Identify problems or situations in which they need to trust God.

MATERIALS NEEDED AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 Bibles, pencils, note paper
- 2 *The Matrix* movie, set it for 13:30 to 16:54—the part where Mr. Anderson receives a cell phone from Morpheus in the mail.
- 3 Large bed sheet and leaves for Response Option 3
- 4 Prayer shawl for Response Option 2
- 5 Permanent markers
- 6 Chalk board or newsprint
- 7 Copies of the student sheet for each person

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS: (40 minutes)

Watch the selected clip from the movie *The Matrix*. Ask the students: “Who does Mr. Anderson have to rely on?: Does Mr. Anderson trust Morpheus’ directions?”

CONNECT: (5 minutes)

Ask students “Have you ever been in a situation where you needed to have faith in a person to help you out?”

After students have shared their examples, say: “Many of us are probably like Mr. Anderson—we trust someone to help us out until the risks involved become too severe or seem foolish.

Ask: “What if Mr. Anderson would have followed Morpheus’ plan?”

EXPLORE THE BIBLE: (15–20 minutes)

Read the Bible story out loud, then ask students to act it out. Invite them to either put it into a contemporary story, or to act it out as presented in the Bible. They will need to choose a narrator and the other characters in the story, including the crowd and the professional mourners. (See Insights from Scripture.)

After students have acted out the story, ask them to compare the differences and similarities between the two different healing stories. Make a list on the chalkboard or newsprint.

Give a mini-lecture, utilizing the Insights from Scripture.

APPLY: (10–15 minutes)

Hand out the student sheet and pencils and ask students to silently write down their answers.

When students have completed their sheets, lead a class discussion on the questions, but allow students to pass if they don’t want to share their answers.

RESPOND: (10 minutes)

Option 1: Divide students into pairs. Ask them to share with each other areas in their life in which they would like to receive healing from God, or areas in their life where they put their faith in God, and they have felt God’s presence with them through their struggle. Encourage them to pray for each other.

Option 2: Have a time of prayer during which a student holds a prayer shawl and the other students come up one at a time and touch the fringe while they silently offer a prayer to God for healing in a certain area of their life. Explain that touching the fringe of the shawl is a way for them to say: “I believe in you, Lord!”

Option 3: Hand out leaves and markers and ask students to write a problem that they want to give to God on a leaf—one problem per leaf. Then take the group outside and place all the

leaves in a large bed sheet. Ask students to hold the sheet around the edges. Offer a prayer to God, giving God the problems and troubles named on the leaves. Then on the count of three, everyone lifts up the sheet, launching the leaves in the air.

INSIGHTS FROM SCRIPTURE:

There are a number of things worth noting about this passage. In the Jewish culture of that day, families who could afford it would hire mourners during the hard times, such as the one that Jarius' family was going through. This is important to know so we do not mistake the family's tears with the mourner's tears, for it was the mourners who were able to laugh at Jesus when he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping."

Leviticus 15:25-30 states a law pertaining to the woman Luke wrote about. The law says, "If a woman has a discharge of blood unrelated to her physical cycle, she is considered unclean." A woman possessing this condition contaminated everything she touched, and would be considered an alien in her own home, in society, and at the synagogue. According to the law, Jesus would be unclean if she touched him, and he would have to wash his clothes and take a bath. However, "the one who gave the law is above the law"—God gave the law and God/Jesus cannot be contaminated by those who violate the law. This detail helps us better understand the woman's bravery and the fact that with Jesus, there are no barriers.

Several other factors stand out. First, we can see the power of touch. The contact with the woman was personal, for Jesus knew he had been touched, and he wanted to meet the person who had received his power. Their encounter was made possible by the woman's faith. Jesus said to the woman "Your faith has made you well; go in peace." This is the same blessing Jesus gave to the prostitute who had anointed him with oil (Luke 7:50).

Secondly, the people of Jesus' day believed that the Messiah had healing powers in the fringe of his prayer shawl. So when the woman touched the fringe, she was proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah.

Third, for the most part, the crowds Luke mentions usually desire Jesus' healing power and favor him. But in this passage the crowd is more of a spectator crowd, for they want to watch, but do not want to get involved with what is taking place.

Finally, the relationship of the woman with Jesus is not private. The woman does not get an "easy" escape because Jesus calls out into the crowd asking who has touched him. Jesus gives her two options—she can either deny him or give a sincere public confession of her faith.

WORK CITED:

Craddock, Fred. **Luke Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for teaching and Preaching.** Louisville: Jonaknox, 1990.

NRSV Harper Study Bible. Lindsell, Harold. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989.

STUDENT SHEET

1. Have you ever been in a hopeless situation and wanted to release your burden to someone? What was that situation? What happened?

2. Put yourself in Jarius' shoes. What would you have done?

3. Do you think it is okay to cry out to God for help, or do you think we should have faith that God's presence is already with us?

4. How do you think we can still have faith in miracles if Jesus isn't walking around performing them anymore?