

O Love That Will Not Me Go
{based on Luke 8:40-56}

Before we fix our attention on today's lesson about Jairus, I've got a story for you. A father and his son went on a fishing trip. When they returned home, the father was talking to a friend and, at the same time, the son was talking to a friend of his.

The father's friend asked him how the trip went. The father's response, "Absolutely miserable, worse day of my life. We struggled getting the boat ready to go, had to get gas, got to the lake late, and all the good fishing spots were already taken. Finally, we found a place, only to discover that the lines were all tangled together. No matter what kind of bait I was using, the fish were biting on something different. The sun was hot, and the mosquitoes were biting, and we didn't catch a thing!"

The son's friend asked how the trip went, and the son replied, "Best day of my life! Didn't catch a thing, but I got to spend the day alone with my dad."

I believe that most children, in every generation, can remember such times. Alas though, some sons and daughters throughout the years have different memories...Dads who had to have two jobs just to make ends meet, resulting in time for work but not for family. Dads who had 'high powered' jobs that took them around the world, leaving their kids to wonder why daddy wasn't home. Military dads who were often away more than they were at home. Dads who didn't live at home because of divorce. Dads who were in prison.

There are many more individual stories, and each unique, but some responsibilities, like showing the children how God works in their life, are left undone.

Listen to these stats. Research reveals that if a child is the first person in a household to become a Christian, there is a 3.5% probability that anyone else in the household will become Christians...not good numbers at all. If the mother is the first to accept Christ, the percentage goes up, and 17% of the homes will see other members of its family become believers. But if the father is first, there is a 93% probability that everyone else in the household will follow.

When father goes first spiritually, good things happen at home. Let's all pray that God will call even more men to spiritual revival and renewal. Never has there been a generation in our nation, where fatherhood has been more important, than now.

Today, we are going to focus our attention on one particular father and his love for his child.

Jesus and the disciples have just made their way to the city of Capernaum. Jesus is well known there, but this is also the place where he has had some run-ins with the leaders of the synagogue.

The common people loved Jesus, but the religious leaders held him at arms length. One of those same religious leaders was a man named Jairus, a father with one child, a sick daughter about 12 years old, and Jairus came seeking the healing hands of Jesus.

This was quite a high risk move for Jairus, because the Jewish elders who would have appointed him, were opposed to Christ's ministry. Clearly Jairus was confident that Jesus had the ability to heal his daughter, or he would never have put his position as a synagogue leader, on the line in such a bold move.

And it is here that we see what a good family man Jairus really was. Imagine the responsibilities inherent in his job, yet, he was not too busy to be a good father. He put his daughter's well-being as his uppermost priority.

If you think about how medicine worked in those days, this man doesn't have any other options... "Jesus, if you will come and lay your hand on my daughter, she will live."

This is faith. This is a father who loves his child. He will do whatever it takes.

Jesus, agrees to go with the man. But the trip to the home of Jairus is fraught with a number of obstacles. The first one was the effort it took for Jairus to make his way through the crowds that always seemed to be following Jesus, at this point in his ministry.

Having actually succeeded in asking Jesus for his help, the trip to his house was met with a substantial delay. With the vast crowd pressing in on them at every turn, the trip seems to be taking an eternity.

While they were walking, a woman, clearly in great need, pushes her way into the crowd. This woman is not allowed to have contact. She had a ceremonial uncleanness, having suffered for 12 years with a haemorrhage.

She, like Jairus, has only one hope, and that is Jesus. She has heard what he can do, and sure enough, by simply touching his clothing, she is healed.

She thinks she can simply draw back into the crowd without being noticed. She doesn't want to make a scene. She just wants to be healed and to slip away, quietly.

But not so fast! Jesus stops the crowd and asks, "Who touched me?"

The disciples say, "Jesus, look at all these people, how can you tell someone has touched you? Everyone is touching you!" But the crowd is stopped, and there is silence.

But what about Jairus? His daughter is dying, perhaps already dead. He doesn't need this interruption. I'm sure most of us would be impatient, but he doesn't say a word.

Ladies, I can just hear you thinking that patience and staying silent are two things that we men don't do very well!

Jesus looks over the crowd - it is obvious he isn't moving until the person who touched Him, owns up to it. Finally, the woman confesses. She tells Him all that has happened. Why does Jesus demand this action? She has the mistaken idea that she can get this healing, without having to come face- to-face with Jesus.

She needs to acknowledge Him for who He is, her Lord and Saviour! She does so, and Jesus says to her, "Your faith has healed you." The woman goes away rejoicing.

But even as Jesus speaks, some friends of Jairus come up to him, and you can tell by the look on their faces, that the little girl has died.

They say to him, "It's too late. It's no use. There is nothing that can be done. Leave Jesus alone and come and deal with the death."

The father is probably thinking ... maybe if we hadn't stopped; maybe if I hadn't waited to find Jesus; maybe if Jesus had been here sooner. Who knows what thoughts went through his mind? His only child is gone. He is numb. He came looking for help, and now she is dead.

The Reverend Doctor Al Hughes, pastor of the Bible Baptist Church in Port Orchard, Washington once said, "When your problem takes a turn for the worse, it may be God testing your faith."

Jesus, who already knows this, speaks these words of assurance to Jairus, "Don't be afraid, only believe."

Notice that Jesus was not upset by the delay. He would get to the home of Jairus whenever he got there! Jesus, you see, is NEVER late!

Taking only Peter, James, and John with Him, they continued to Jairus' house. Already, the mourners are there. Jesus stops them, "Why all this commotion? The girl is not dead - she is only asleep." They laughed at Him.

Jesus tells them to leave so that all who remained were the father, the mother, the disciples and Jesus. He speaks to the girl in a soft voice, "Little girl, get up." She immediately *gets up*.

And what makes this miracle, well, so 'miraculous'? She got up because of the faith of her father. Jairus trusted that the Lord God would meet his need. Jairus was the epitome of a good father. He worshipped God; believed in the power of Jesus Christ; prayed believing; waited for the Lord to answer prayers on His timeline, and believed in the amazing power of the Almighty God.

Fathers ... and mothers ... one of our greatest concerns in life is the well-being of our children and grandchildren. We must be prepared to set good examples. Children process the behaviour of others. They may "see" actions by watching television families, but it is by living inside a family community that the role models are really established.

In our household, not a day goes by without Sherry or me talking about our fathers. Sherry's father, Dave Cretney, had the most infectious sense of humour that I have ever encountered.

Now, Dave was the son of an Englishman from Manchester.

He had a regional accent that Dave teased him about. Then I came into the family, and he loved to unmercilessly tease me about the way I spoke, and for some reason I loved it.

My own father, Walter, was not as quick to laugh as David was, although he did have a good sense of humour. However, he had qualities that I never appreciated when I was young. Uppermost in my mind is the numerous repairs Dad made to my first vehicle.

My family, with the exception of my mother, were not very demonstrative. One day I was 'on-the-phone' with dad. Our conversation was winding up. As a parting greeting to him, I said, "I love you, Dad."

Now, you have to realize, I had never told my dad that I loved him, nor he, me. He choked up and then he said the same thing back to me, for the very first time.

Friends, fathers are special humans, with enormous influence upon their kids - their education, their responsibility, their honesty, their tolerance, their empathy, and their emotional stability. Don't ever sell them short.

I loved my dad, I loved my father-in-law, and we can most assuredly state that Jairus' daughter loved her Daddy. AMEN