

## **Matthew 9:18-26 – More Than A Healer**

*St Mark's Northbridge – 19/09/21*

***BIG Idea:*** Jesus raises the dead, so trust in Him

**Title:** More Than A Healer

**Passage:** Matthew 9:18-26

**Reflection Question:** What comfort does Jesus give you in the midst of grief?

### **Intro: Same Same Different**

“History never repeats, I tell myself before I go to sleep”. Those words come from a Split Enz song. And like a lot of songs, the words are from someone reflecting on their love life. In this case, that their experience now, will not be like what it was in the past. That history never repeats.

You see this is a common way that we can think about our lives and the world. That everything is changing and different and hopefully better than what it used to be. That with the passage of time comes change, and hopefully change for the better.

And we can sometimes take this approach to the Bible. That when we read about what happened thousands of years ago, and what happened during the time of Jesus, that it was all very different back then. And today we have come a long way from those times, and our society is more advanced and we know much more about the world than people did back then.

But of course, it doesn't take long for us to see that we still inhabit the same world as the Bible. A world with kingdoms and conflicts, plagues and uncertainty, rejoicing and celebrating, as well as grief and death. And hasn't the last 18 months brought that to light.

It's no longer too hard to imagine what the world of the Bible is like because we've been confronted by just how common that world is with ours.

And this next part of Matthew's Gospel brings this into focus but shows that there is hope. For all the pain and grief which we experience in this world, we are not trapped in some cyclical view of life and history with no escape. Because as we heard last week, the arrival of Jesus brings great disruption and change, and everlasting hope for a world which needs healing.

So let's pick it up Matthew chapter 9 from verse 18:

*<sup>18</sup> While he (Jesus) was saying this, a synagogue leader came and knelt before him and said, "My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live." <sup>19</sup> Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples.*

*<sup>20</sup> Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. <sup>21</sup> She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed."*

*<sup>22</sup> Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed at that moment.*

*<sup>23</sup> When Jesus entered the synagogue leader's house and saw the noisy crowd and people playing pipes, <sup>24</sup> he said, "Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him. <sup>25</sup> After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. <sup>26</sup> News of this spread through all that region.*

Well this all sounds familiar. Here is Jesus encountering some different people and performing more miracles. But of course this time with a big difference. A person is raised to life!

Over the next few minutes I want us to look at this brief episode through the eyes of those people who encountered Jesus and had their lives changed by him on that day.

### **- A Grieving Father (v18-19)**

So Jesus is at Matthew's house and He is interrupted. We are firstly introduced to a man, a religious leader who comes to Jesus. But he's not just a man. He's a father. And his daughter has just died. You can imagine the grief and shock that this man would be feeling. The death of a loved one shakes us, but the loss of a young child rattles us even more. And that's this man right here.

In verse 18, coming to Jesus, he lets it all out:

<sup>18</sup>... *"My daughter has just died..."*. This man is grieving and helpless. But in his grief and helplessness, he has hope. He says to Jesus:

*But come and put your hand on her, and she will live."*

It's quite extraordinary. In the midst of his grief, this man is so sure and confident that Jesus can bring his daughter to life. It's so definitive '*If you come, she **will** live*'.

Lately we've become a bit more cautious in making definitive statements, haven't we?

We no longer say with as much certainty that we're definitely going overseas for our

next holiday, or in three years' time I'm going to have a career change. It's hard to be certain when things keep changing!

But this man is certain. In the midst of his grief and distress, he is certain that Jesus can bring his daughter back to life. And that's because he knows who Jesus is.

Do you see that this man kneels before Jesus. He bows down before Him. He lowers himself before Jesus as a servant would before their master, as a subject before their king. It's a picture of worship and dependence on Jesus.

This man knows that He is under Jesus and completely dependent on His power. And He goes to Jesus with absolute confidence that Jesus can do the impossible.

And the way that this man turns to Jesus makes us consider how we respond in the midst of sorrow and hardship – our gut reaction or instinct in times of despair. What do we do? Where do we turn? Because there are many things we can instinctively turn to in the midst of grief and hardship. It might be food and alcohol, entertainment and leisure, social media or exercise, and of course other people.

And we often turn to these things, helpfully or unhelpfully in our grief.

But this man turns to Jesus. His instinct in grief and hardship was to go to Jesus. And he did that because he knew who Jesus truly is – that Jesus could raise his daughter back to life.

So Jesus gets up and goes to this man's house to see his daughter.

### **- A Long-Suffering Woman (v20-22)**

But along the way Jesus is interrupted. He and his disciples encounter another person, a woman. A woman who we read there in verse 20 had been bleeding for 12 years.

Another person who is in great pain. This time physical and chronic pain. But not just physical pain, but the pain of being alienated from others. Someone who would have felt the immense social stigma of simply leaving the house and being seen out in public.

So it's amazing when we see that she comes to Jesus. Like the man just before, she comes to Jesus in the midst of grief and hardship. And like that man she is certain that Jesus can bring healing:

*'If only I touch his cloak, then I **will** be healed'.*

Again, such certainty and confidence in Jesus and His power over her sickness.

And Jesus responds to her in the most tender way:

<sup>22</sup> .... *"Take heart, daughter," ... "your faith has healed you."*

You see, this woman is not an unwanted interruption. Jesus commends her for her faith.

And she is healed.

Now it's worth briefly thinking about this relationship between faith and healing. This woman had faith in Jesus and she was healed. And for many of us this is a great word of encouragement. That in our grief and pain we can turn to Jesus, the Almighty one who can bring healing.

But it can also be discouraging for others of us. Because we may be afflicted with sickness, and trust in Jesus, but there's still no healing. And it doesn't help when people falsely teach that if you're not healed of your sicknesses, then it's because you have weak faith in God.

So how are we to think about the connection between faith and healing? Well, it's important that we remember the purpose of Jesus healing people. Back in chapter 8, Matthew tells us that the reason Jesus healed people was to fulfil the words of the prophet Isaiah – that Jesus came to earth as the one who bore the pain and took on himself the suffering of the world. And this of course was pointing to a greater healing that He would perform in cleansing and curing the world of its sin. So when Jesus heals people of their physical sickness, He is pointing to a greater and more significant healing that He has come to perform.

And that's the same in this instance with the long-suffering woman. She is another example of the power that Jesus has to heal a broken world. And that's how we are to understand Jesus' healing ministry.

And when it comes to faith, both this woman, and the grieving father show us what faith is. That it is: knowing you are helpless, knowing who Jesus is and that He can help, and coming to Him in your need. And all of us come to Jesus as morally bankrupt people in need of forgiveness.

Because Jesus cares, we can bring all our griefs and sorrows to Him. But when it comes to faith and healing, it doesn't automatically mean that when we trust Jesus, we will instantly be healed. God is powerful and can heal, but He might not as well.

But lest you despair, Jesus can do something even better than healing us of sickness. Because Jesus is more than a healer. And that's what we see next.

### **- A Resurrected Girl (v23-25)**

Jesus finally gets to the house of the grieving father. And He arrives to find a house full of mourning and in deep sorrow over the death of this girl.

But Jesus sees things differently. In verse 24 He says to those in the house that:

*"...The girl is not dead but asleep."*

Now this could either be the most insensitive thing someone could say on this occasion, or everyone else has made a massive mistake thinking that this girl is dead. It's that nightmare scenario of the body in the coffin still being alive.

Well the crowd laugh at Jesus. "Don't be ridiculous, we've checked, she's definitely not alive".

But what Jesus does next fits with everything we've seen so far. He's the powerful one whom this girl's father has come to in great confidence that He can make her live.

And that's exactly what Jesus does. He takes the girl by her hand and she gets up. Jesus raises this girl to life. He doesn't just heal people of their sicknesses, but He raises the dead!

What's impossible for man is possible for God. Jesus has come to bring life to a dying world – which gives comfort to a grieving world. The comfort that those who know Jesus do not grieve without hope.<sup>1</sup> Because of Jesus' resurrection power there is comfort, and there is hope. We can have rock solid confidence that the dead will be raised to life, just as this girl's father did.

### **- A Spreading Word (v26)**

Well in the aftermath of this amazing event, it would be hard to contain what had just happened. How could you not talk about this! Someone was just raised from the dead. So we read there in verse 26 that: *News of this spread through all that region.* Or in the modern lingo, it was trending.

And for the disciples there with Jesus, this wouldn't be the last time they saw someone raised from the dead. Because history would repeat as Jesus Himself would rise from the dead and this news too would spread across the whole world. Sorrow and grief would be turned into celebration and hope as His own resurrection would remove death from the world.<sup>2</sup>

Maybe for some of you tuning in today, this is news that you are hearing for the first time. This is news that literally changes your life. News of Jesus having resurrection

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. 4:13-14 – *13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. 14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.*

<sup>2</sup> It's why Easter Sunday is a great day of celebration and hope. Jesus has conquered death. He rose from the grave, and there is hope.

power. That when you trust in Jesus as your master and king, then you can be absolutely confident that you will be raised back to life on the last day.

And that is news that our world could do with. More than ever our world needs resurrection hope in Jesus. So, who can you be sharing this with? Is there one person this week that you could share this news with? Who could this be? A neighbour, a colleague, a friend at school. You could share this in a text, an email, or you could be old-fashioned and letterbox drop your neighbours.

Jesus came into this very same world. He knows the griefs and burdens that we bear. And how good is it that we can come to Him in faith, knowing that he raises the dead.

**Let's Pray.**