

Jesus Heals

November 2, 2025

Lesson Summary

Main Passages

Matthew 9:18-26

Session Outline

1. Jairus's Faith (Matthew 9:18-19)
2. The Woman's Faith (Matthew 9:20-22)
3. Spreading Faith (Matthew 9:23-26)

Theological Theme

God can miraculously restore all areas of our lives.

Call to Action

To live in God's kingdom is to be a missional person. What local mission or global mission might be the way for you to radically seek the outcasts' well-being and share the gospel of Christ?



Leader Guide

Jesus Heals

Introduction

In May 2009, Greg Thomas learned that the terrible headaches, jaw aches, and earaches he had been experiencing weren't normal. It was stage 4 cancer of the head and neck, and it was inoperable. It got to the point that the doctors even told his family to start planning his funeral.

For years, Greg had stopped on the steps of a small, abandoned church to pray when he was out walking his dogs, and one evening, as he was crying out to God on the steps, he told God, "Before I leave this earth, Lord, I'd like to do something for you."

The "something" Greg had in mind was fixing up the decaying church. It would be slow going. He was 66 pounds lighter after three rounds of chemo and 40 sessions of radiation. The association in charge of the church's upkeep agreed to accept both his help and one condition (that he be given a key so he could worship there at any time).

As he began restoring the church, he was surprised to find restoration somewhere else: in himself. He started feeling stronger and so much better that he felt like he didn't need the strong pain meds his doctor had prescribed. While working on the restoration of the small church, Greg's medical scans showed something amazing: his tumors were shrinking. He was able to take out the feeding tube doctors had told him he'd have for the rest of his life, and he eventually was pronounced in remission. It was a miracle. Greg was quoted as saying, "While I was restoring the church, God was restoring me."¹

God still heals today. If you look, you'll find stories just like this, of people who experienced healing that defied doctors' expectations and understanding. God also heals today through the miracle of modern medicine, a common grace available to all image bearers.

Today we are going to read a story of faith and healing when Jesus miraculously healed two people in ways that defied medicine and understanding in that day (and in ours!).

- ❓ Greg's story gained fame through the internet, but there are likely stories like this in our own community. Does anyone know of someone who was miraculously healed in our church or community?
- ❓ What biblical accounts of miraculous healing stand out to you?

Session Summary

In our study today, we will read the account of Jesus healing two individuals. The first was a ceremonially unclean woman who had persistent bleeding. She had faith that if she touched the fringe of Jesus's garment, she could be healed. The second was the daughter of a synagogue leader. Her father, Jairus, had faith that if Jesus laid His hands on her, she would be healed. She had died, but Jesus raised her from the dead. In both accounts, we are reminded our faith matters, and God is able to do the miraculous.

1. Jairus's Faith (Matthew 9:18-19)

- ❓ Read the other gospel accounts of this event (Mark 5:22-24; Luke 8:41-42). What similarities and differences do you notice?
- ❓ What do we learn about Jairus's character? Why was his position significant?

The events we'll read in our study today are recorded in all three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke, identified as such because of the similar material contained in the writings). This is an indicator that the Gospel writers believed these were significant events, and helpful to their goal of aiding the reader in understanding the truth about Jesus and then, consequently, believing in and following Him.

In today's passage in Matthew, we meet "one of the leaders" (v. 18). The other Gospel accounts of this moment name this man as "one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus" (Mark 5:22). Jairus would have been a respected leader of the synagogue, with many administrative duties², in charge of overseeing the synagogue and activities happening there.³ We often think negatively about the religious leaders of Jesus's day (and with reason), but the story of Jairus, a respected Jewish synagogue leader, stands out from the norm.

Mark and Luke recorded that Jairus initially said his daughter was dying, while Matthew's account recorded Jairus initially saying that his daughter had just died. Scholars understand this discrepancy as an attempt on Matthew's part to condense the story (the accounts in Mark and Luke record that Jesus and Jairus learned of the girl's death before reaching his home).⁴ We shouldn't read this as "less accurate" because this would have been an acceptable way to present the story when Matthew wrote it.

Jairus had evidently heard of the healings Jesus had been performing and sought Jesus to do the same in his household. Jairus came and knelt before Jesus because he believed Jesus could do something about his tragic situation. He didn't ask Jesus if He can do anything to help. No, Jairus's request assumed that when Jesus laid His hand on the girl, "she will live" (v. 18).

Upon hearing Jairus's request, Jesus and His disciples followed Jairus to his home.



Application: When have you felt a desperate level of faith—when you knew God was able to do something about a situation and you eagerly sought that He would? What happened?

2. The Woman's Faith (Matthew 9:20-22)



Read the other Gospel accounts of this event (Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48). What similarities and differences do you notice?



What do we learn about the woman's character? What do you make of her decision to touch Jesus's garment but not speak to Him? What does that speak of her faith but also possibly her pain?

How different the last twelve years of this woman's life looked compared to Jairus the synagogue leader. For the last twelve years, while Jairus had been enjoying the blessing of his only daughter (Luke 8:42), this woman had been suffering (v. 20). Mark and Luke's account of this story add extra details about her life. She had spent all the money she had on many doctors, enduring much (Mark 5:26), and no one could heal her. This was a woman at the end of her rope.

On top of her physical suffering, because of her bleeding, Mosaic law declared this woman ceremonially unclean (Leviticus 15:19-33). Being "unclean" would have greatly affected her everyday life. As a ceremonially unclean person, she would not have been welcome in the synagogue

(under penalty of physical punishment or death⁵) and would have likely been shunned by her community because of the negative ramifications of being around an unclean person.⁶ Not only would she have been ceremonially unclean, but so would anyone who touched her (or any of the furniture she occupied), creating a taboo around touching anyone suffering like this (especially for a Jewish rabbi, or religious teacher, like Jesus).⁷

But she had great faith. She believed that if she could just touch the end of Jesus's robe, she would be healed (v.21), but her faith may go even deeper.

Jewish rabbis in Jesus's day would have worn a garment called a tallit, a prayer shawl with the tassels dictated by Old Testament law in Numbers 15:37-40 and Deuteronomy 22:12. The Hebrew word used to describe the corner of these garments (kanafayim), also means wing. When the woman with the issue of blood reached for the healing of Jesus at "the end of his robe" (v. 20), her actions illustrated Malachi 4:2, some of the very last written prophecy before the arrival of Jesus:

"But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings, and you will go out and playfully jump like calves from the stall."

Her faith in God's character and His promises gave her the courage to act. It would not have been socially acceptable for a woman like this to touch the edge of a rabbi's garment (remember, she is ceremonially unclean and touching someone would make them unclean by association). Where this might have been received harshly by other rabbis, Jesus, as usual, responded differently.

When this woman braved the crowds (Luke 8:42) to touch Jesus's robe, Jesus saw her (v. 22). What a gift for any of us to be truly seen by our Savior and Redeemer. She, probably a social outcast, was seen by the Messiah. He didn't dismiss her or scold her. He responded in love. In all three Gospel accounts, Jesus called her daughter. And when Jesus saw her, He honored her faith publicly: "Your faith has saved you" (v. 22). Don't miss the significance of this. By praising her and announcing her healing publicly, he not only healed her physical affliction, he also restored her to the community she had been missing.



Application: Have you ever had a moment of faith when you acted in courage? What happened?

3. Spreading Faith (Matthew 9:23-26)

A Greater Miracle

En route to Jairus's home, Jesus stopped the flow of blood from a chronically hemorrhaging woman. The delay resulted in His not merely curing Jairus's daughter but actually raising her from the dead.



Read the other Gospel accounts of this event (Mark 5:35-43; Luke 8:49-56). What similarities and differences do you notice?



Compare Jesus's response to those who were not showing faith to those who did. Which group would you likely be in?

Consider when Jesus stopped His journey to Jairus's house to interact with the woman with the issue of blood. In Mark and Luke's accounts, the fuller details could be read as though Jesus wasn't in a hurry. He made time for the woman, and Jairus was left to be patient, and though Matthew didn't specify, if we put ourselves in Jairus's shoes, we might imagine him on edge, maybe even frantic. But God doesn't work on our timeline. His timing is always better.

The flute players and lamenting crowd (professional mourners) Matthew referenced in verse 23 were commonplace in this day. Matthew painted a specific scene here. Imagine mourning with your family and friends at a funeral only to see Jesus walk in and raise the dead to life! Matthew wanted us to understand—Jesus completely turned things around for this family.

When Jesus arrived and asked the mourners to leave, they laughed at Him, but this public ridicule didn't stop Jesus. When we, likewise, are laughed at for walking out our faith, it shouldn't stop us from continuing.

Simply, Matthew recorded Jesus took the girl by the hand, and she got up (and thus Jesus's power over death was demonstrated). Note that touching a dead body also made a person unclean, but Jesus did it anyway (Numbers 19:11-13). Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus consistently cared more for people than following the religious leaders' example (who often followed the rules at the expense of the people).

Even though Jesus told the girl's parents not to tell anyone about this event (Mark 5:43; Luke 8:56), "news of this spread throughout that whole area" (v. 26).



Application: Have you ever had to wait through a tense season for God to work in your life? What happened?

Conclusion

In our passage today, we read about two miraculous healings: a bleeding woman and a dead girl.

God still heals and restores today. Even though God can heal and restore any situation, He doesn't always choose to. When we face times when the healing we hope for does not come, we can trust that God is still good. He still loves us and is walking with us through any tough road we may be facing.

- ❓ Where do you currently need to come to Jesus, even in an “unclean” state? How can we have confidence that He will respond in love and grace?
- ❓ How can we support one another in going to Jesus in faith for the things we need?
- ❓ How might living with this type of faith give us further opportunities for gospel conversations?

Prayer of Response

Thank God for the restoration he has given you personally, maybe not physically but certainly spiritually. Praise Him for working in ways we cannot understand. If anyone needs physical healing, pray for them by name now. Ask that He would lead your group to greater faith, fully trusting that God is able and good, even if God doesn't offer healing and restoration in the ways we want.

Memory Verse

Jesus turned and saw her. “Have courage, daughter,” he said. “Your faith has saved you.” And the woman was made well from that moment. —Matthew 9:22

Additional Resources

- *Be Loyal* by Warren Wiersbe
- *Exalting Jesus in Matthew* by David Platt
- *The Gospel of Matthew* by R.T. France

Disciples Multiplying Disciples



Historical Context of Matthew

Purpose

Matthew probably wrote his Gospel in order to preserve written eyewitness testimony about the ministry of Jesus. Matthew's Gospel emphasizes certain theological truths. First, Jesus is the Messiah, the long-awaited King of God's people. Second, Jesus is the new Abraham, the founder of a new spiritual Israel consisting of all people who choose to follow him. This new Israel will consist of both Jews and Gentiles. Third, Jesus is the new Moses, the deliverer and instructor of God's people. Fourth, Jesus is the Immanuel, the virgin-born Son of God who fulfills the promises of the OT.

Author

The author did not identify himself in the text. However, the title that ascribes this Gospel to Matthew appears in the earliest manuscripts and is possibly original. Titles became necessary to distinguish one Gospel from another when the four Gospels began to circulate as a single collection. Many early church fathers (Papias, Irenaeus, Pantaenus, and Origen) acknowledged Matthew as the author. Papias also contended that Matthew first wrote in Hebrew, implying that this Gospel was later translated into Greek.

Setting

Determining the date of composition of Matthew's Gospel depends largely on the relationship of the Gospels to one another. Most scholars believe that Matthew utilized Mark's Gospel in writing his own gospel. If this is correct, Matthew's Gospel must postdate Mark's. However, the date of Mark's Gospel is also shrouded in mystery. Irenaeus (ca AD 180) seems to claim that Mark wrote his Gospel after Peter's death in the mid-60s. However, Clement of Alexandria, who wrote only twenty years after Irenaeus, claimed that Mark wrote his Gospel while Peter was still alive. Given the ambiguity of the historical evidence, a decision must be based on other factors.

Special Features

This Gospel was written from a strong Jewish perspective to show that Jesus is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.

Extended Commentary

Matthew 9:18-26

After a stretch of non-miracle narratives in Matthew 8–9, Matthew recorded a flurry of miracle activity in 9:18–34.

9:18–19. Not all religious leaders were hostile toward Jesus. We do not know the attitude of this synagogue ruler before his daughter's illness and death, but desperation can soften even the strongest critics. This man, like the rest of the seekers in Matthew 8–9, was at the end of his resources. He had no place to turn except to the king. The official showed reverence for Jesus. Recognizing him as a prophet from God, the official knelt before him.

His request revealed great faith. To this point, Jesus had performed all of his healing miracles on people who were still living. This is the first instance in Matthew where he ministered to a dead person. The official's confidence in Jesus is evident in his bold assertion that Jesus' touch would bring her back to life.

Touching a dead body was considered the most defiling kind of uncleanness (Num. 19:11–22). Most religious leaders and teachers would have refused to come anywhere near the dead.

9:20–21. Even as Jesus made his way to touch a dead girl, he came into contact with another threat to his ritual purity. According to Old Testament law, a woman having her monthly menstrual period was unclean for seven days, and anyone who touched her would be unclean "till evening" (Lev. 15:19–33). This woman, with her continual bleeding, would have been considered continually unclean, and was probably a social outcast. She acted boldly to come into close contact with a revered teacher. But she also limited her action, touching the edge of his cloak to minimize the likelihood of making Jesus unclean. In fact, she did not even want Jesus to know she had put him at risk.

This woman was another of the desperate, helpless people cataloged in Matthew 8–9. She was willing to go beyond the bounds of culturally acceptable behavior to draw on help from outside herself.

9:22. Jesus detected her presence and touch. The fact that he had to turn around and look for the woman further emphasizes that she tried to do this secretly.

In Jesus' initial words of comfort, Take heart, daughter, notice the parallel to his words to the paralytic, Take heart, son (9:2). Rather than becoming angry at an unclean woman for touching him, Jesus showed compassion toward the woman's need and expressed affirmation for her faith. She displayed both components of faith: she recognized her helplessness and she went to the appropriate person for help.

The power of Jesus' touch and the power of his word are highlighted in this account. From that moment, with his declaration of her healing, she stopped bleeding. Both the touch and the word of Jesus were instrumental in her healing.

9:23–24. Having postponed a mission of healing to deal compassionately with the bleeding woman, Jesus resumed his walk to the synagogue official's home. When he entered the official's house and saw the flute players (hired as part of the mourning process) and the noisy crowd, Jesus spoke to the mourners as though they were not necessary. They laughed at him as though he was crazy. The girl was dead, but death was no obstacle to Jesus. Because the girl would be alive soon, Jesus told the mourners she was asleep. He would awaken her.

9:25. Jesus was not interested in masses of witnesses for this miracle. As usual, he seemed to be most interested in the training and education of his disciples (9:19). In taking the hand of the dead girl, Jesus would have been seen as defiling himself, according to Old Testament law. But instead of death defiling him, he defied death: she got up. This is one of the most powerful examples of Jesus ministering through touch.

9:26. This miracle serves as a climax for Matthew 8–9. None of the enemies Jesus had conquered so far in these two chapters (illness, demons, nature) had been as formidable as death. The resurrection of a child would have reminded people of similar miracles by Elijah (1 Kgs. 17:17–24) and Elisha (2 Kgs. 4:18–37), and the prophecies about the return of the prophet Elijah (Mal. 4:5–6). It is no wonder that news of this miracle spread through all that region. Jesus' growing notoriety set the stage for the first major grumblings of the Pharisees (9:34). Things were going to get a bit rougher.⁸

References

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