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Q&A#86 Jairus' Daughter and the Woman with the Issue of Blood

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Today's question: "What's going on with the story of the healing of Jairus' daughter and the woman who touches the hem of Jesus' garment? I know there are similarities between the two, but I'm not sure what to make of them."

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Transcript

Welcome back. Today's question is, what is going on with the story of the healing of Jairus' daughter and the woman who touches the hem of Jesus' garment? I know there are similarities between the two, but I'm not sure what to make of them. We find this account of Jairus' daughter and the healing of the woman with the issue of blood in all three of the Synoptic Gospels.

They each have an account that intertwines these two stories. These stories are not seen as just detached stories. Rather, we have the announcement of either the death or the fact that Jairus' daughter is dying and then Christ is on his way to heal her when his garment is touched by the woman with the issue of blood.

So in each of these accounts, these stories are intertwined, which suggests that we should consider the relationship between the two of them. The way the story is told

differs slightly. So in Matthew's account, he's told that Jairus' daughter has died.

In the other two accounts, he's told that Jairus' daughter is dying and then later, while he's on the way, after the woman has been healed, that she has died. And so Matthew's account is a bit more condensed. But Matthew's account does give us a number of clues as to the meaning and the significance of what's taking place in a way that the other accounts might not.

And that's found particularly in the surroundings. Some other details to notice. Both of these cases were cases of uncleanness and touch.

So the woman with the issue of blood, who would render anything she touched unclean, touched Jesus' garment and power came out from him. So we've had a woman with an issue of blood or flow of blood and then power flows out from Christ to heal her. Christ is not made unclean.

She is made clean and whole. Likewise, with touching a dead body. To touch a dead body would render you unclean.

But Christ touches the dead body and he's not made unclean, rather the body is raised to life. So in both of these cases, we're seeing similar themes at play. Other things to notice.

In both cases, the people are addressed or spoken of as daughter. So the woman, when she's healed, we see that she is told, be of good cheer, daughter. Your faith has made you well.

And when the woman is healed and when Jairus' daughter is healed, she's described as a daughter too. And in all of the different accounts, we have the description of the woman as having suffered for 12 years with this illness. And in Mark and Luke's account, we're told that the child who's healed is 12 years of age.

So again, this is a significant parallel and relationship between the two. We're not usually given these numbers, but when we are given these numbers, we should pay attention. A man who's by the sheep pool for 38 years.

38 years is a significant period of time. It's the period that Israel wandered on account of sin in the wilderness. They were in the wilderness for 40 years, but 38 years of that were because of their sin and failure to enter into the land.

We see a similar thing with Anna, for instance. Anna is 84 years old. 7 times 12.

And she represents something of Israel at that point. We have 42 generations of Christ leading to Christ. 14 times 3 in the beginning of Matthew.

We have all these numbers that are significant. And the fact that we are given one

number that's the same in both of these accounts and these intertwined accounts that there's a number that's the same should peak our attention and our interest. And I think the meaning of it is quite natural that Jairus' daughter and this other woman with the issue of blood represent Israel.

They stand for Israel. And Israel is, of course, defined by 12 tribes. And as they have 12 tribes, so these 12 years represent the fullness of Israel.

Israel has daughter. And so we have the woman who's addressed as daughter and then the daughter of Jairus who's, and Jairus, he must be remembered, is a ruler of a synagogue. And so both of these are associated with Israel in a particular way.

Jairus' daughter is raised to life and the woman with the issue of blood is raised to ceremonial cleanness again. So she's now renewed to God's presence, whereas previously she would have been kept out as a result of her uncleanness because of her illness. Now she is restored to life and fellowship.

How does Matthew's gospel shed light upon the possible meaning of this? Well, immediately beforehand, this passage we read in verses 14 to 17 of chapter 9. Now the theme here that is significant in the section that immediately follows is Christ as the bridegroom. Christ comes as the bridegroom who brings life to the bride, the bride who has been impure, and then brings life to the bride who has been, to the daughter who has been, who is dead and restores her to wholeness. Later on, we see in Matthew 11 similar themes come to the surface.

Comparison of John and Jesus. Jesus comes drinking wine and fellowshiping with tax collectors and sinners. And John the Baptist was one who fasted.

And it says, but to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions and saying, we played the flute for you and you did not dance. We mourn to you and you did not lament. And so in both of these cases, we have the friend of the bridegroom, John the Baptist, who's preparing for the bridegroom.

And then the bridegroom comes along and there is feasting. And this maybe sheds light on the peculiar feature of the story. In verse 23 of Matthew's account in chapter 9 of Matthew.

And when Jesus came into the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, he said to them, make room for the girl is not dead, but sleeping. That is not something that we'd expect to find in the context of mourning. Lots of flute players.

Flute players later on in Matthew, just a couple of chapters later, are associated with dancing and celebration. And that passage talks about the incongruity of responses. So when someone's playing the flute and people don't dance, when someone's mourning

and they don't lament.

And here Christ comes and he acts in an incongruous manner. And there are people who are acting in a strange manner, too, that they are playing the flute as he arrives. And I think that is associated with some of these broader themes that are playing in the background of Matthew.

Christ is the bridegroom come on the scene. And he's going to raise the bride to life, to restore her to holiness, to purity and to fellowship with God's people. And so Israel, represented by the daughter in both cases, is restored to life.

And I think this is the way that the two accounts are connected. They're very much interwoven within the narratives of Matthew, Mark and Luke. But what we have is a picture of Israel, a picture of God raising Israel to life and his son and Israel being restored by the bridegroom.

I think this helps us to see some of the deeper themes that are playing out throughout these books as well, that these stories of the miracles are not just detached. Look at this wonderful thing that Jesus did. They are representations, they're signs, they're manifestations of Christ's deeper identity.

That this healing of the woman and this healing of Jairus's daughter are representations of how Christ stands in relationship to Israel. And also we see marital themes in the story of the woman with the issue of blood. It's worth paying attention to.

She wants to reach out and touch the hem of his robe. And the corner of the robe, the hem of the garment, is associated with the tassels. It's associated, maybe represent the blue tassels with water flowing out from the garden.

But it can also represent the hem of the robe that's put over the marital in the marital context. So, for instance, if we look in Ezekiel 16, we find, And when I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed, your time was the time of love. So I spread my wing over you and covered your nakedness.

Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you and you became mine, says the Lord God. And wing is corner of the garment. So she reaches for the hem.

That's a marital theme. She's reaching for the hem of the bridegroom. And so Christ takes the bridegroom, the bridegroom in her blood.

And as we see within Ezekiel 16, and when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood live. Yes, I said to you in your blood live. And in both of these cases, I think that Christ's healing is representing something of his relationship to the bride.

And the marital theme should not be missed. Whether those themes are prominent or not, I think they are present and they may not be as prominent as other themes. It's clear that these figures are representing Israel and it's also clear that they are connected.

And beyond that, there are a number of other things going on, I think, but I'll leave that for you to decide. I think that there's a lot to reward exploration of these particular miracles and their connection to each other. If you have any further questions, please leave them on my Curious Cat account.

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