

The dead girl, the sick woman and the blind men

“What does it take to come to Jesus?”

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III – When I was 14, someone was silly enough to give me an electric chainsaw to cut through some tree branches. I remember that day because it was the first time I cut through an electrical power lead! It was a shocking experience. It was that day I recognised the power of electricity. A few weeks ago I had a similar experience with heat. I re-discovered the power of heat as I stuck my hand in the oven and the element seared across the back of my hand.

It's often hard to *recognise* the power of something unless you “encounter” it. We can hear a lot about the power of a V8 car, or the power of a hair dryer, or the power of a stereo, but until we actually experience it, it's hard to fully *recognise*, and *understand* that power.

It's hard to recognise and understand who Jesus is, unless we give ourselves the opportunity to *encounter* him, to meet him. It's hard to fully understand Jesus' power, unless we come into contact with him. And these passages we read from the Bible today help us to do that. Through these events we can begin to understand and encounter the power of Jesus.

The **4 events** we heard give us **4 pictures** of faith.

Let's have a look at them again briefly...

PPT – “A ruler came and knelt before Jesus and said, ‘My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live.’ ”

1. The first man is a ruler. A man with power. A leader among his people. And he comes to Jesus and kneels at his feet. Why?

Because his daughter has just died. And he's heard that Jesus is a man who has the power to actually bring her back from the dead. This is a man who has come to Jesus in faith when **no-one else** could help him. His daughter's DEAD! And when this man comes to Jesus, **Jesus accepts him**, just as he is, and offers to help him.

Let's look at the second event:

PPT – “If only I touch his cloak, I will be healed.”

2. Here is a sick woman. This is a woman who has been subject to bleeding for 12 years. And what a demeaning and horrible 12 years this would have been! In Mark chapter 5 we learn more about this woman. All her money was spent on doctors who took all her money but could not treat her. A life of bleeding meant, in this society, a life of being an outcast. A woman bleeding like this was considered “unclean” and was not allowed to be touched by anyone, or *they* would become unclean. Yet there she was in the middle of a crowd. A woman who knew that no-one else could help her.

She's tried everything. She has no money left, she has no friends, and she has nothing to lose. So she goes into the middle of this crowd thinking: “If only I touch his cloak, I will be healed.”

And Jesus accepts her, just as she is. At her lowest point. And he heals her.

So after Jesus' short delay in healing this woman, he continues on to the house of the ruler with the daughter who has died. There are flute players and mourners surrounding the house, wailing and crying at the loss of this child. And Jesus arrives.

“Go away” he says. “The girl is not dead but asleep.”

The crowd laughs. Jesus enters the house, takes the girl's hand, and she gets up from death.

PPT – Then we have two final stories. Two blind men and one demon-possessed man who can't speak. Again, these are people who have no hope. People who are social outcasts, people who have nothing. They have no living, no money, no future. They are helpless in society. They cry out to Jesus, they come to Jesus, and they are healed. The blind men see, and for the demon-possessed man, the demon is driven out and the man is able to speak. Jesus accepts them at their lowest point. And he heals them.

5 people come to Jesus, and he performs miracle after miracle after miracle. A sick woman healed after 12 years. A dead girl brought to life. Blind men healed, demons driven out.

Let me ask you a question:

PPT – “**What does it take for *you* to come to Jesus and trust him with what's happening in *your* life?**” (repeat).

Think about what happens in each of these events. They all go like this:

PPT - A person is in **need**. There is no-one else who can help them. They **come to Jesus**. They **recognise** who he is and they put their faith in him. And Jesus **heals** them. Jesus meets them at perhaps the lowest point in their life, when no-one else can help them. he **accepts** them because they come to him in faith, and he **heals** them.

What does this mean for us today? That if we come to Jesus in faith, he will heal us of **all** our sickness or raise the dead for us? No. Not always. Sometimes people pray and they aren't healed in a way they would like. Usually people die, and they stay dead. So what is Jesus showing us by doing these miracles? Why does he only help **SOME** people? Why not everyone? Why not heal everyone and raise everyone from the dead now?

It's because these miracles are a picture of what is to come in the future. Jesus is showing, on a small scale, what he **can** do and what he **will** do when he returns. This is a small “snapshot”, a “sample”, of what is to come in the future.

III – For example, the other day I went down to the butcher in Hornsby – the one that sells all those great gourmet sausages. And much to my joy, they had the little BBQ out the front and were doing sample tastings of Spicy Italian Sausage. They cook up little bits of sausage on a toothpick so you can taste it and see if you like it. Now, when I tasted that little piece of sausage, which was very tasty(!), I didn't say to the guy - “Gee, that wasn't very filling! Give me a whole sausage!” Because you know that these things are just a **taste** of what they're offering. They're a **SAMPLE** of the real thing. If it tastes good, you need to go inside and get some. That's the decision you need to make. he's not going to just keep feeding you little pieces of sausage until your full! The real deal is inside!

These miracles in Matthew 9 are a **sample tasting**. Jesus is offering us a sample of what he is able to do, a sample of what he **WILL** do. He **CAN** heal the sick, He **CAN** raise the dead, He **CAN** give sight to the blind and He **CAN** cast out demons. He can help us when no-one else can. he can help us at our lowest point. And when he returns to this earth, He **WILL**. He will make all of those things happen completely and eternally, for those who trust in him. The dead will be raised forever, the sick will be healed forever, the blind will see and Satan will be defeated forever. As Revelation 21:4-5a says:

PPT – “*He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne (that's Jesus) said, “I am making everything new!”*”

Jesus has **shown** he has power over all these things. And often we even get a taste of those things here on earth when we see prayers answered. But it doesn't mean we will see **every** sickness healed while we live on this earth. It doesn't mean we will see **every** blind man given his sight back. it doesn't mean every day on earth will be perfect for us. But when Jesus returns, it **WILL** all happen for those who trust in Jesus. No more death or mourning or crying or pain.

PPT – Our question today is still this: “***What will it take for you to come to Jesus and trust him with what's happening in your life?***”

If you already believe and follow Jesus, these events should **remind** you of Jesus' power over all things, [[[just like our kids have learnt this week at HAWK]]]. There is **nothing** in your life that is out of Jesus' control. We can trust him with **all** things, even at our lowest point, because he has **SHOWN** us that he has the power over **all** things. If there is anything in your life that perhaps isn't going quite right, then remember that Jesus has shown his power over all things on earth, no matter how large or small your problem is. Jesus cares about you, no matter what your life looks like. And he not only promises to bring you **through** that situation. Jesus also promises that when he returns, he will restore everything to perfection and we won't need to go through these trials ANY MORE.

If you haven't come to a place in your thinking where you trust Jesus with your life, and with your eternity, then please think about these events, these miracles. Jesus accepts us **AS WE ARE**. No matter **who** we are or **what** we have done in our life, Jesus accepts **you**, if you accept **him** as Lord and King. Which means you have a future, an eternity, with him.

The verse our kids learned this week at HAWK was this:

PPT – “*I want you to know God's power for us who believe. It is the power that raised Christ from the dead. Ephesians 1:19*”

I want **YOU** to know God's power. If you're a believer, or if you're not, my prayer for you today is that you will **know** and **experience** God's power in your life **every** day.

Let me finish with a prayer.