

**HEALING OF THE WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD
AND THE RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER
Luke 8:41-56**

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When we go to our icon corner to say our morning or evening prayers, sometimes we go with great faith and love, yet at other times we go grudgingly, considering our prayers to be burdensome and a chore. Sometimes we are filled with strong emotion and our thoughts are focused on our prayers, but there are also times when our thoughts and our mind are miles away, thinking about everything and anything except the words that we are saying.

What do you think about the two individuals who approach our Savior in today's Gospel? Are their prayers filled with deep emotion and is their attention deeply focused on our Savior, or are their thoughts miles away? And if one or the other, why or why not? Let's take a look first at the woman with an issue of blood. This poor woman has suffered for twelve years, yet she has never despaired or given up hope. She has approached every physician and tried every means of medical treatment available at that time; to the point where she has not spared any expense. She wants a life and she wants to be healed. Living with her illness was no life at all, but she never gave up, and always clung with faith and hope that one day she would be cured. She endured and persevered for twelve years. She has now heard about a new hope, a new chance. She has heard about this man who can give sight to the blind and make the lame to walk. No physician that she has ever encountered could make such claims. She searches out our Savior, this amazing wonder-worker. Prayer does not always have to use words. Prayer can also be silent. An intense heartfelt emotion filled with faith and desire, albeit nonverbal, is also a form of prayer, a "silent prayer." Her entire heart and soul is filled with powerful faith. She approaches the Lord from behind, and her mind and heart are intensely focused on her hope. She has unwavering faith that if she merely touches the fringe of the Lord's garment, it is enough for her to be healed. The Lord, knowing all, perceives that power has gone out of Him, and He proclaims in the hearing of all, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace" (Lk 8:48).

Now let's take a look at the second example of prayer. Jairus, the ruler of a synagogue, is suffering the worst grief that a parent can experience. His beloved twelve year old daughter is lying in bed at home and is dying. Jairus has also heard about this wonder-worker and healer, and his heart is also filled with unwavering and powerful faith. His request, his prayer to the Lord, is not only verbal but also physical. So intense is His request that he falls at Jesus' feet and begs the Lord to come to his home to cure his daughter. What does Jairus and the woman with the issue of blood share in common? First, both exhibit extreme *humility*. Jairus is a ruler of a synagogue, but the love he has for his daughter has no bounds, and he will fall at the feet of the Lord and beg this poor uneducated carpenter for help. It is unlawful for the woman to touch even the garment of the Lord, because she is hemorrhaging. She also falls to the ground, and with great courage, she secretly touches the fringe of Jesus' garment. Both Jairus and the woman are suffering with an unbearable crisis. Obviously they don't approach the Lord with prayer grudgingly. Obviously they don't consider their prayer to be a burdensome chore. And obviously they are not distracted by mundane thoughts, but they are intensely consumed with an intent focus on their prayer, one verbal, and the other silent. So what is the difference between these two examples of prayer, and our prayer, when we are distracted and bothered that we have to pray?

The main difference is that the woman and Jairus both have their entire heart in their prayer. They also have an extremely strong faith in our Savior. When we approach our Savior, our faith is often weak, and we sometimes approach the Lord half-heartedly at best, or cold heartedly at worst. Jairus is motivated by love for his daughter. The woman is motivated by love of life. Our prayer life is hindered when our love is self-centered and our hearts do not burn with love

for the Lord and for others. Perhaps we do not have a child who is ill or dying. Perhaps we are not suffering from a grievous illness. We will all, if not already, experience crises in our lives. And even when things seem to be going well, we are still in a crisis mode because we suffer from grievous sins and passions. Our egos and our pride are the obstacles we face in our quest to love God and others more than we love ourselves. May the Lord grant that our hearts be filled with the burning fire of love, humility, and faith in the Lord. May we feel the closeness of the Lord when we approach Him in prayer, and may we trust and have faith that He will help us with every crisis that we may face in our lives. Amen.



Raising of Jairus' Daughter

Painting by Ilya Repin, 1871