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Houston Chinese Church
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Sermon Outline
Luke 8:40-56

INTRODUCTION

1. Image: Captain America faced a desperate situation in the film Avengers: Endgame.
2. Need: Many of us will face desperate situations in our lives.
3. Subject: What should we do we face desperate situations?
4. Text: Luke 8:40-56
5. Preview:
 - a. What do desperate situations reveal?
 - b. Why do we seek God's help in desperate situations?
 - c. What does God want us to do when we face a desperate situation?

BODY

- I. Desperate situations reveal our lack of power
 - A. Both Jairus and the bleeding woman faced desperate situations.
 1. Jairus's daughter was dying (8:41-42)
 2. The bleeding woman had an incurable illness (8:43).
 - B. Acknowledge that you lack the power to save yourself from a desperate situation
 1. It is easy to blame your situation on others.
 2. It is easy to blame your situation on yourself.
- II. We seek God's help because he has power to save us.
 - A. Both Jairus and the bleeding woman sought the help of Jesus
 1. Jairus sought the help of Jesus publicly (8:41)
 2. The bleeding woman sought the help of Jesus privately (8:44)
 - B. Acknowledge that God has the power to save you from your situation.
- III. Trust in God's word that he will powerfully intervene to save you from your desperate situation.
 - A. Trust in God's word precedes Jesus' intervention in the life of the bleeding woman and Jairus.
 1. Jesus reveals that the faith of the bleeding woman resulted in her healing (8:48)
 2. Jesus encourages Jairus to have faith after he receives the news of his daughter's death (8:49-50)
 - B. God's intervention to save you from your desperate situation may not look like what you expect.
 1. The bleeding woman expected to sneak away after she received healing, but Jesus required her to testify to her healing (8:45-47)

2. Jairus expected Jesus to save his daughter for a terminal illness, but Jesus raised his daughter from the dead (8:50-56)
- C. Trust in God's word that he will powerfully intervene.

CONCLUSION

1. Summary: Desperate situations reveal our lack of power. We seek God's help because he has power to save us. Trust in God's word that he will powerfully intervene to save you from your desperate situation.
2. Closing Image: The words: "On your Left" prompted Captain America to turn and see salvation from his desperate situation.

MANUSCRIPT

Captain America faced a desperate situation in the film Avengers: End Game.

The big bad: Thanos destroyed Avengers Headquarters. Iron man laid unconscious. Thor exhausted from his bout with Thanos failed to get up. The only thing standing between Thanos and the infinity gauntlet was Captain America. But Thanos had beaten Captain America down. He sliced Cap's vibranium shield in half and knocked him off his feet. When Captain America rises to his feet with what remains of his shield, he sees Thanos summon his army of alien invaders. One man to defend the galaxy from doom. Captain America faced a hopeless situation. A desperate situation.

Many of us will face desperate situations in our live. Sure. None of us will need to take a final stand to defend the earth against aliens. **But we do face situations where there seems to be no help in sight.** Some of us struggle with financial debt. You dread the monthly credit card bill sent to your email inbox. Although you make the minimum payment plus some, the five digit number describing your debt changes little. Some of us struggle with an illness. You go into the doctor's office because of some abdominal pain. The doctor decides to run some tests. The doctor decides to give you a call, he says: "Sorry... but the results show that you have stage IV pancreatic cancer. There's nothing we can do to treat it." Some of you may struggle with a sin issue. You struggle with perfectionism. You keep telling your spouse: "People at work are so incompetent. All I'm asking them to do this is little thing and they can't do it. When I assign others to do something, they never get the task complete." People's inability to do things the way you want frustrates you to no end. You know it's a struggle. You know it's unhealthy. But you don't know what to do. You find

yourself stuck. What kind of desperate situation do you find yourself in? Where do you feel stuck in life? What is something that makes you feel there's no help in sight?

I think we can acknowledge that if we're not in a desperate situation now, then we might find ourselves in a desperate situation in the future. We will find ourselves powerless to do anything. We lack the resources to solve a certain problem in our lives.

What should do we do? **What should we do when we face desperate situations?**

What action should we take when we find ourselves powerless? How might we respond when no help seems to be in sight? What should we do when we find ourselves pushed into a corner? **What should we do when we face desperate situations?**

To answer this question, we'll be turning our attention this morning to the gospel of Luke. As you know, our church has been going through a series titled: The Dead Shall Rise. Our church and others participating in this praying and fasting movement are spending time studying passages where God raises people from the dead. Last week, we looked at a passage where God raises a widow's son. This week, we'll look at a different resurrection passage in Luke. This passage is found in Luke, chapter 8. Matthew, Mark, Luke. Luke, chapter 8. We'll be specifically in **Luke, chapter 8, verse 40.**

This morning's passage occurs while Jesus ministers in the northern area of Israel. Jesus heals people from disease. He exercises authority over storms and demons. We'll see in this section God exercising power over death.

We'll walk through this passage using three questions. First, **what do desperate situations reveal?** What do we learn in hopeless situations? What do we discover when we find ourselves without options. Second, we'll ask ourselves: **why do we seek God's help in**

desperate situations? When we encounter a dire circumstance, why do we do turn to God? Why do we call upon God for help when things get tough? Lastly, we'll answer the question: **what does God want us to do when we face a desperate situation?** How should we respond when find ourselves in a pickle? What do action should we take when there seems no viable solution to our problem? Again, the three questions. First, what do desperate situations reveal? Second, why do we seek God's help in desperate situations? Third, what does God want us to do when we face a desperate situation?

Let's tackle that first question. What do desperate situations reveal? **Desperate situations reveal our lack of power.** They show us how powerless we are. One might even say that a hopeless situation humbles us. It brings us to our knees. We discover how limited we truly are. **Desperate situations reveal our lack of power.**

In the text, we see two people facing difficult situations. Both Jairus and the bleeding woman faced desperate situations. They faced some tough circumstances.

Let's first our attention to Jairus. **Jairus's daughter was dying.** Look at verse 41. *And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus's feet, he implored him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.*

I'm sure that Jairus tried everything to help his little girl. He served as a ruler of the synagogue. This means he had connections. He knew the best doctors of the community. But none of them could prevent what caused his daughter's deathly condition.

Luke notes the age of the girl. 12 years old. Luke may have done this for two reasons. First, her age connects to the story of the bleeding woman who struggled with her illness

for twelve years. Second, the age of 12 describes the girl's maturity. It marks the transition from being a girl to a woman. She had just turned a marriageable age. She has her whole in front of her. But she was dying. Jairus could do nothing to save his little girl. Although he oversaw a synagogue, he lacked the influence and power to save his girl from death. Jairus faced a desperate situation.

Not only did Jairus face a desperate situation, but so did the bleeding woman. **The bleeding woman had an incurable disease.** Look at verse 43. *And there was a woman who had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone.*

Commentaries describe her as having a uterine hemorrhage. She struggled with having a perpetual menstrual cycle. She spent money on doctors, but they couldn't treat her condition.

This bleeding not only weakened her physically because she lost so much blood regularly, but it also made her ritually unclean. She could not participate in temple worship. People avoided her too. If anyone touched her, then it would also make them ritually unclean. Imagine being alone for so long struggling with this illness. It must have been tough. She exhausted every option. Nothing. She found herself powerless. She found herself in a desperate situation.

Many of us are or will find ourselves in a desperate situation. When we do, we need to acknowledge our lack of power. **Acknowledge that you lack the power to save yourself from a desperate situation.** This is hard to do. When we find ourselves in a desperate situation, we might find ourselves tempted to do two things.

First, **we might be tempted to blame others**. I struggle with debt because my boss doesn't pay me enough. If only my boss recognized my contributions to this company and gave a raise, then I wouldn't be in this situation. I struggle with perfectionism because people slack off at work. If they only worked harder and spent less time scrolling their feeds, then we could get some work done. My husband and I fight often because he doesn't realize how much work I do around the house. If only he recognized how much time I spend taking care of the kids and cleaning the house, then he would finally appreciate me. Is it so wrong for me to want some kind of recognition? Do you find yourself blaming others for your situation? Do you find yourself pointing the finger?

Second, **we might be tempted to blame the situation on yourself**. I'm in debt because I'm just a spender. If only I could get my spending under control. It's my fault for having bad relationships with co-workers because I'm so demanding. I know that I need to let things go, but I just can't. It's my fault. I know I'm not thankful enough for my spouse. He does a lot for our family too. I just have this disposition toward criticism.

Now desperate situations we encounter can be caused by other people or ourselves. But sometimes, the cause of our situation cannot be attributed to anyone. It just turned out that way. Whatever the cause of our trouble, we must acknowledge we do not have the answers. The difficult situations should cause us to come to a point where we say: "I don't know what to do." We find ourselves humbled. It's only at this low point; do we turn to God.

But why? This brings us to the second question. Why do we seek God's help in desperate situations? Why do find ourselves asking for help?

We seek God's help because he has the power to save us. We may lack the resources, but God has the resources. We may lack the power, but God has the power. We may lack the wisdom to know what to do, but God has the wisdom to know what to do. Only God can rescue us from this desperate situation. Only God can deliver us. **We seek God's help because he has the power to save us.**

Both Jairus and the bleeding woman acknowledged that they couldn't escape their troublesome circumstances. But they both knew that Jesus could help. Both Jairus and the bleeding woman sought the help of Jesus.

Jairus sought the help of Jesus publicly. Jairus might have heard the crowd discussing among themselves how Jesus had raised the widow's son from the dead. Or he might have heard stories of Jesus healing a paralytic. This prompts him to go to Jesus. Note when Jairus requested Jesus's help. Jairus asked for help in front of a crowd. Look at verse 40. *Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him.* Look also at his posture in verse 4. *And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house.* Jairus didn't ask Jesus eye to eye or face to face. Jairus fell to his feet and faced the ground when he asked Jesus to come help his daughter.

While Jairus sought the help of Jesus publicly, **the bleeding woman sought the help of Jesus privately.** She went secretly. Look at verse 44. *She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment and immediately her discharge of blood ceased.*

Since a crowd surrounded Jesus, the woman had to make her way to him. Note where the woman touched Jesus. She touched the fringe of his garments. The fringe of his garments referred to the four tassels that hung from Jesus' robes. To touch one of these

tassels one had to be bent low. I suspect that might have crawled her way to Jesus to touch one of these tassels.

Another thing to note about this narrative. The crowd. Luke describes the crowd as pressing in on Jesus. Look at verse 42. *As Jesus went, the people pressed around him.* The word: press is used in one other place within the gospel of Luke. Jesus uses it to describe the thorns in the parable of the soils. Recall how the thorns represent the cares of this world. Riches. Pleasure. One might even say what people think. To believe in God's word, one would have to set aside the cares of this world. Both Jairus and the bleeding woman they had set aside what the world thought of them.

Jairus had to set aside his position of a synagogue ruler to ask for help from a young Rabbi with no formal training. He had to seek help from one whom religious leaders labeled as fanatical. The bleeding woman had to set aside her dignity and crawl to Jesus for help. She set aside her status as a ritually unclean to seek help.

Would we do the same? Would we set aside our status? Our position? Our persona to seek help from God? Would we be willing to admit that only God can help us?

Before we even seek God's help, we need to acknowledge his power. **Acknowledge that God has the power to save you from your desperate situation.** Only he can rescue you. Only he can deliver you. Until we begin thinking this way, will we seek God for his help.

God has the power to help you. He can do things you can't do. It reminds me of some pre-marital advice that I received from my former pastor. He said to Josephine and me: "There will be times where you will face a conflict, where there's nothing you can do. You talk past each other. Henry, you don't understand where Jo is coming from. Jo, you

won't understand where Henry is coming from. Nothing you do will make things better. At that time, there's only one thing you can do. Pray. Only God can help each of you reach a breakthrough in your marriage." After being married for 10 years, I've come to learn the wisdom of that advice. I can think of a few times when Jo and I have experienced tension in our marriage. She seems distant. I can't reach her. God brings my pastor's counsel to mind. I turn to God. I ask him for help because I don't know what to do. Each time I've turned to God for help, he showed up. He gave one of us understanding of the root issue. He gave us words to express to one another what is on our hearts.

Now I don't know what kind of desperate situation you find yourself in. A struggle with constant anxiety. Fear of where you may go to school. Loneliness. A broken relationship. A misunderstanding. A discontentment. Spiritual dryness. Whatever the situation might be, God has the power to help.

Let's turn to our last question. What does God want us to do when we face a desperate situation? What action should we take?

Trust in God's word that he'll powerfully intervene to save you from your desperate situation. Believe that God will step in to help. Have faith that God will not leave you alone. Place your hope in God. Know that God will intercede for you. **Trust in God's word that he'll powerfully intervene to save you from your desperate situation.**

Let's think about the importance of trust. **Trust in God's word precedes Jesus' intervention in the life of the bleeding woman and Jairus.** Belief precedes Jesus helping each of time.

Turn your attention first to the bleeding woman. **Jesus reveals that the faith of the bleeding woman resulted in her healing.** Look at verse 48. *And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well.”* She might have heard from people saying: “I touched Jesus’ robe and was made well.” Luke highlights this earlier in his gospel when he describes the crowds seeking to touch him so that they could be healed (Luke 6:19). But he didn’t want her to sneak away believing that the robe made well. Jesus focuses on her faith not the touching of his robe.

The woman not only received healing. But she also received salvation. Two elements within this verse indicate this. First, there is the phrase: made you well. It is one word in the Greek. It is the word saved. You could rephrase verse 48 and it could say: “Your faith has saved you.” There is a second element that indicates salvation. Look at what Jesus calls the woman. He doesn’t call her: Lady. Woman. He calls her daughter. This denotes a family relationship. Her faith not only results in her healing but also a relationship with God.

Let’s turn our attention now to Jairus. After Jesus heals the bleeding woman, Jairus receives some bad news. His daughter has died. Look at verse 49. *While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler’s house came and said, “Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher no more.”* Think about the implications of the message. Jesus is a teacher. He can teach us great moral truths. He can heal the sick. But he can do anything for someone who had died. Death puts up a wall that no one can tear down. Death creates a chasm that no one can cross. The messenger is essentially: “Give it up!”

But Jesus doesn’t give it up. **Jesus encourages Jairus to have faith.** Imagine Jairus. He breaks down. He falls to his knees. Jesus puts his hand on his shoulder. Jairus turns to

face Him. Jesus gently tells him: “Trust me.” Look at verse 50. *But Jesus on hearing this answered him, “Do not fear, only believe, and she will be well.”* Although Jairus’s daughter had died, Jesus can still intervene. He can still help.

Now let’s think about God’s intervention. **God’s intervention to save you from your desperate situation may not look like what you expect.** God steps into our lives in unexpected ways. He will do something surprising.

Let’s think about the bleeding woman. I suspect that **the bleeding woman expected to sneak away after she received healing.** She didn’t expect Jesus to detect the healing. **Nor did she expect to testify to her healing.** Look at verse 45. *And Jesus said, “Who was it that touched me?” When all denied it, Peter said, “Master the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!”*

Imagine the crowd and Jesus moving toward Jairus’s house. But then Jesus holds up his hand. Stop. Who touched me? Everyone denies touch him. Look at the text. *All denied it.* Was it you? No. Was it him? No. Was it her? No. All implies even the bleeding woman touched Jesus.

Note Peter’s description of the crowd. They are pressing in on you. Luke uses a different word here. The word press here describes the pressure one exerts to squeeze the contents of a grape. In other words, the crowds press in on Jesus with extreme pressure.

Now I’m not sure what this exactly feels like. But I do understand the pressing of a crowd. Why? I have been at Disney magic kingdom for a fireworks show. People press in close together to get a good glimpse of the show. It’s hard to know who is touching you.

Peter in some sense is saying: It's impossible for you to know who touched you because everyone is touching you.

But Jesus knows. In fact, Jesus repeats the fact that he's been touched. Look at Jesus's words in verse 46. *But Jesus said, "Someone has touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me."* He repeats the same word. Touch.

How does Jesus know that someone had touched him? How does he know that power had left him? Peter thinks that Jesus is a human teacher. He can't possibly know. Look at what Peter calls Jesus: Master. Peter still doesn't recognize the identity of Jesus. The reason Jesus knows that someone had touched him is that Jesus is God. He has the power of God and can bestow that power.

One might argue if Jesus is God, the shouldn't he know who touched him? Couldn't he snap his fingers and a ray of sunshine land on the bleeding woman. Sure. He could have done that. But I think the reason why Jesus makes these comments is for the bleeding woman to self-identify. He wants to woman to identify herself as benefiting from his power.

This behavior shouldn't surprise us. Parents do this all the time. When Hudson completes a puzzle at home, I ask him: who completed the puzzle? I know the answer. He doesn't say: "Silly dad, you know who put together this puzzle. Why do you ask such things?" instead, he responds: "I did it". He testifies to his actions.

In a similar way, Jesus encourages the woman through a roundabout way to identity herself. Look at verse 47. *And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all people why she had touched him and how she had been immediately healed.*

The woman trembles because she fears what Jesus will do. Yes. She received healing. But she was ritually impure. By touching his robe, she may have made him unclean. Will Jesus take away his healing? But we learn in the following verse that Jesus recognizes that her faith made her well.

But I suspect that the woman did not expect to have to testify in front the crowd that Jesus had healed her. God intervened to save her. But it resulted in her needing to testify to his salvation.

Let's turn our attention to Jairus. **Jarius expected Jesus to save his daughter from a terminal illness.** But Jesus did something unexpected. **He raised her from the dead.** Look at verse 51. *And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child arise." And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something be given her to eat. And her parents were amazed but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.*

Before Jairus went to Jesus, he probably had a plan in mind. I'll implore Jesus for help. Jesus will come immediately to my home. He'll lay a hand on my daughter. She'll be healed from her illness. But he never expected her to die.

Some people suspect that Jesus resuscitated her. In other words, she had not yet died. But in the ancient near east, people would recruit professional weepers only when they knew for certain that the girl had died. The fact that Jesus tells those in the home not

to weep means that the professional weepers had already been doing their job. But there's another detail that indicates that the girl had died. Jesus describes the girl as sleeping. Those present laugh at him. They laugh at him because he speaks foolishness. There's another detail. The text says that her spirit returned. A spirit can only return if it had departed. A spirit departs from the body only when it has died. The girl is dead.

Let's look at three pieces of evidence that Jesus had indeed raised this girl from the dead. First, her spirit returns to the body. Just as the body separated from its spirit is dead. The body reunited with its spirit signifies life. Second, Jesus tells her arise. A dead person cannot obey the command. But a live person can. She obeys by getting up at once. Lastly, they give her something to eat. Only a person alive can eat food.

Look at the response of her parents. They were amazed (8:56). Their expression of amazement means that they did not expect her to rise from the dead.

Did you notice the contrast between the two interventions? Jesus had the bleeding woman testify publicly about her healing. But Jesus kept the resurrection of the girl private. Why? If the word gets out that Jesus can resurrect the dead, then everyone might take Jesus to the local catacomb to resurrect their dead loved ones. Jesus didn't come to resurrect dead people so that they might die later. Jesus came to die and rise from the dead, so that people can expect to live later via resurrection. He wants people to focus on Jesus' resurrection rather than Jesus's ability to resurrect the dead.

If Jesus intervened in the life of the bleeding woman and Jarius in an unexpected way, then we need to trust in God's word that he will intervene in our lives though he may not intervene in the way we think.

Imagine you're praying to God for help with your finances. You expect God to help you with the lottery. Or maybe you're praying for a large bonus at the end of the year. You see God offer Sunday school class on finances, but you don't attend it. Maybe God is using the finance class to help you handle your debt. Imagine you're praying to God for help with your spiritual dryness. I want to experience some spiritual growth. Someone asks you to lead small group. But you decline. Someone asks you to study the Bible with them. You decline. You just want God to zap you with spiritual fervor. But maybe God intervenes to help you spiritually by providing you opportunities to serve and study the Bible with someone.

Now some of you here may be at church for the first time. You're wondering. Is it true that God will intervene to save me? Will he truly come through? Let me share with you why we as Christians can believe that God will help us. All of us are in a desperate situation. Our desire to live our lives our own way separated from God. We might think if we do enough good works, then God will allow us to have a relationship with him. But no amount of good work will enable you to have a relationship with Him. We were in a hopeless situation. Nothing we can do might make God love us more. But God intervened in our desperate situation. He did something to save us. He sent his son, Jesus Christ to experience separation from God through his death on the cross and rose from the dead to demonstrate we could have new life in Him. To be delivered from our desperate situation, God requires us to have faith. Belief. Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead to restore our relationship with God? If you would like to talk about this more, then please talk to me or one of the people who will stand up here after service to pray for you. We

would love to discuss this further. It is because Christians believe that God intervened to save us from our sins that we believe that God will also intervene to save us from our desperate situations.

To conclude, let's review. First. What do desperate situations reveal? **Desperate situations reveal our lack of power.** Second. Why do we seek God's help in desperate situations? **We seek God's help because he has power to save us.** What should we do when face a desperate situation? **Trust in God's word that he will powerfully intervene to save you from your desperate situation.**

Remember how in Avengers: Endgame, it seems like hope is lost when Captain America stands alone against the armies of Thanos. The voice of Sam Wilson crackles in his earpiece: "On your left". He turns and sees fallen heroes, the army of Wakanda, and sorcerers emerge. Captain America is not alone. Avengers Assemble.

The words: "On your left" prompted Captain America to turn and see salvation from his desperate situation. Maybe God is saying also to you: "On your left". As you look over your shoulder, you see not fallen heroes, the army of Wakanda, and sorcerers emerge. Instead, you see angels of God, the people of God, and God himself emerge to lend you aid. Trust in God's word.