

### **Commentary on Matthew 9: 18-26**

In comparison to the story of the Woman with the Flow of Blood in Mark and Luke, Matthew is very brief. Matthew's omission of details serves to highlight the person and authority of Jesus.

This type of female disorder would have made the woman ritually unclean and defiling to others (Leviticus 15: 19-33), which helps to explain her seeking to make contact with Jesus unobtrusively.

Throughout chapters 8-9, Matthew's dominant interest is Jesus' authority. The woman's expression of faith (if I *only touch*...) and the fact that the actual healing takes place "from the moment" when Jesus addresses her, rather than from the moment she touches him, underscores the fact that the woman's faith is the *instrument* of healing, not the *cause*. It is Jesus' authoritative pronouncement *about* her faith that saves, not the faith itself. Again Jesus cleanses the defiled one, rather than being himself defiled by the touch of the unclean.

In the telling of the Ruler's Daughter, Matthew again highlights the figure of Jesus by omitting details found in the other Gospels.

Luke and Mark reveal the father is a "ruler of the synagogue", presumably in Capernaum named Jairus. With no apparent record of such a miracle, Jairus believes that Jesus' mere touch will *raise the dead*. Jesus responds to Jarius' request by going with him.

Upon entering the house, Jesus finds "the flute players and the noisy crowd". Even the poorest families of the time hired at least two flute players and one female wailer for funerals. The "noisy crowd" was made up of friends mourning, not in the hushed whispers characteristic of our Western funerals, but in loud outbursts of grief and wailing augmented by cries of hired mourners. That a "crowd" is present, points to the influence of the synagogue ruler.

Verse 24 does not deny the reality of death but expresses Jesus' confidence in his power to awaken the ruler's daughter from death. Again, Matthew is remarkably brief: Jesus' mere touch raises her, news of which spreads rapidly.

Matthew's collection of healing miracles ends with Verse 34—juxtaposing two contrasting responses to Jesus' work as a healer.

The crowd is amazed over his power. The Pharisees, by contrast, ascribe his authority to Satan—a foretaste for Chapter 12: 22-32 where Jesus knows the Pharisees think he can cast out demons because their ruler is Beelzebul, who also gives Jesus his power to do so. Jesus admonishes the Pharisees saying, "Anyone who is not for me is really against me..." and tells them that saying evil things against the Holy Spirit cannot, and will not, be forgiven.