

## Matthew: 9:18–26

### From Catena Aurea:

18. While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

19. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples.

20. And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

21. For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

22. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. xxxi.) After His instructions He adds a miracle, which should mightily discomfit the Pharisees, because he who came to beg this miracle, was a ruler of the synagogue, and the mourning was great, for she was his only child, and of the age of twelve years, that is, when the flower of youth begins; While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came one of their chief men unto him.

AUGUSTINE. (De Cons. Ev. ii. 28.) This narrative is given both by Mark and Luke, but in a quite different order; namely, when after the casting out of the dæmons and their entrance into the swine, he had returned across the lake from the country of the Gerasenes. Now Mark does indeed tell us that this happened after He had recrossed the lake, but how long after he does not determine. Unless there had been some interval of time, that could not have taken place that Matthew relates concerning the feast in his house. After this, immediately follows that concerning the ruler of the synagogue's daughter. If the ruler came to Him while He was yet speaking that of the new patch, and the new wine, then no other act of speech of his intervened. And in Mark's account, the place where these things might come in, is evident. In like manner, Luke does not contradict Matthew; for what he adds, And behold a man, whose name was Jairus, (Luke 8:41.) is not to be taken as though it followed instantly what had been related before, but after that feast with the Publicans, as Matthew relates. While he spake these things unto them, behold, one of their chief men, namely, Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, came to him, and worshipped him,

saying, Lord, my daughter is even now dead. It should be observed, lest there should seem to be some discrepancy, that the other two Evangelists represent her as at the point of death, but yet not dead, but so as afterwards to say that there came afterwards some saying, She is dead, trouble not the Master, for Matthew for the sake of shortness represents the Lord as having been asked at first to do that which it is manifest He did do, namely, raise the dead. He looks not at the words of the father respecting his daughter, but rather his mind. For he had so far despaired of her life, that he made his request rather for her to be called to life again, thinking it impossible that she, whom he had left dying, should be found yet alive. The other two then have given Jairus' words; Matthew has put what he wished and thought. Indeed had either of them related that it was the father himself that said that Jesus should not be troubled for she was now dead, in that case the words that Matthew has given would not have corresponded with the thoughts of the ruler. But we do not read that he agreed with the messengers. Hence we learn a thing of the highest necessity, that we should look at nothing in any man's words, but his meaning to which his words ought to be subservient; and no man gives a false account when he repeats a man's meaning in words other than those actually used.

CHRYSOSTOM. Or; The ruler says, she is dead, exaggerating his calamity. As it is the manner of those that prefer a petition to magnify their distresses, and to represent them as something more than they really are, in order to gain the compassion of those to whom they make supplication; whence he adds, But come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. See his dullness. He begs two things of Christ, to come, and to lay His hand upon her. This was what Naaman the Syrian required of the Prophet. For they who are constituted thus hard of heart have need of sight and things sensible.

CHRYSOSTOM. Mark and Luke say that He took with Him three disciples only, namely, Peter, James, and John; He took not Matthew, to quicken his desires, and because he was yet not perfectly minded<sup>1</sup>; and for this reason He honours these three, that others may become like-minded. It was enough meanwhile for Matthew to see the things that were done respecting her that had the issue of blood, concerning whom it follows; And, behold, a woman who had suffered an issue of blood twelve years, came behind and touched the hem of his garment.

JEROME. This woman that had the flux came to the Lord not in the house, nor in the town, for she was excluded from them by the Law, but by the way as He walked; thus as He goes to heal one woman, another is cured.

CHRYSOSTOM. She came not to Christ with an open address through shame concerning this her disease, believing herself unclean; for in the Law this disease was esteemed highly unclean. For this reason she hides herself.

CHRYSOSTOM. Or because the woman was fearful, therefore He said, Be of good cheer. He calls her daughter, for her faith had made her such.

JEROME. He said not, Thy faith shall make thee whole, but, hath made thee whole; for in that thou hast believed, thou art already made whole.

CHRYSOSTOM. She had not yet a perfect mind respecting Christ, or she would not have supposed that she could be hid from Him; but Christ would not suffer her to go away unobserved, not that He sought fame, but for many reasons. First, He relieves the woman's fear, that she should not be pricked in her conscience as though she had stolen this boon; secondly, He corrects her error in supposing she could be hid from Him; thirdly, He displays her faith to all for their imitation; and fourthly, He did a miracle, in that He shewed He knew all things, no less than in drying the fountain of her blood. It follows, And the woman was made whole from that hour.

HILARY. Herein is to be observed the marvellous virtue of the Lord, that the power that dwelt in His body should give healing to things perishable, and the heavenly energy extended even through the hems of His garments; for God is not comprehensible that He should be shut in by a body. For His taking a body unto Him did not confine His power, but His power took upon it a frail body for our redemption. Figuratively, this ruler is to be understood as the Law, which prays the Lord that He would restore life to the dead multitude which it had brought up for Christ, preaching that His coming was to be looked for.

9:23–26

23. And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,

24. He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

25. But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

26. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

GLOSS. (non occ.) After the healing of the woman with the issue of blood, follows the raising of the dead; And when Jesus was come into the ruler's house.

CHRYSOSTOM. We may suppose that He proceeded slowly, and spake longer to the woman whom He had healed, that He might suffer the maid to die, and thus an evident miracle of restoring to life might be wrought. In the case of Lazarus also He waited till the third day. And when he saw the minstrels and the people making a noise; this was a proof of her death.

AMBROSE. (in Luc. 8. 52.) For by the ancient custom minstrels were engaged to make lamentation for the dead.

CHRYSOSTOM. But Christ put forth all the pipers, but took in the parents, that it might not be said that He had healed her by any other means; and before the restoring to life He excites their expectations by His words, And he said, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.

CHRYSOSTOM. By this saying, He soothes the minds of those that were present, and shews that it is easy to Him to raise the dead; the like He did in the case of Lazarus, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth. (John 11:11.) This was also a lesson to them not to be afraid of death; forasmuch as He Himself also should die, He made His disciples learn in the persons of others confidence and patient endurance of death. For when He was near, death was but as sleep. When He had said this, They mocked him. And He did not rebuke their mocking; that this mocking, and the pipes and all other things, might be a proof of her death. For oftentimes at His miracles when men would not believe, He convicted them by their own answers; as in the case of Lazarus, when He said, Where have ye laid him? so that they that answered, Come and see, and, He stinketh, for he hath now been dead four days, could no longer disbelieve that He had raised a dead man.

JEROME. They that had mocked the Reviver were not worthy to behold the mystery of the revival; and therefore it follows, And when the multitude was put forth, he entered, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

CHRYSOSTOM. He restored her to life not by bringing in another soul, but by recalling that which had departed, and as it were raising it from sleep, and through this sight preparing the way for belief of the resurrection. And He not only restores her to life, but commands food to be given her, as the other Evangelists relate, that that which was done might be seen to be no delusion. And the fame of him went abroad into all that country.

GLOSS. (non occ.) The fame, namely, of the greatness and novelty of the miracle, and its established truth; so that it could not be supposed to be a forgery.

HILARY. Mystically; The Lord enters the ruler's house, that is, the synagogue, throughout which there resounded in the songs of the Law a strain of wailing.

JEROME. To this day the damsel lays dead in the ruler's house; and they that seem to be teachers are but minstrels singing funeral dirges. The Jews also are not the crowd of believers, but of people making a noise. But when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, then all Israel shall be saved.

HILARY. But that the number of the elect might be known to be but few out of the whole body of believers, the multitude is put forth; the Lord indeed would that they should be saved, but they mocked at His sayings and actions, and so were not worthy to be made partakers of His resurrection.

JEROME. He took her by the hand, and the maid arose; because if the hands of the Jews which are defiled with blood be not first cleansed, their synagogue which is dead shall not revive.

HILARY. His fame went about into all that country; that is, the salvation of the elect, the gift and works of Christ are preached.

### **From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:**

#### **9:18–19 A Synagogue Ruler Comes to Jesus**

##### **The Narratives Interweave.**

Hilary: The prayers of the ruler, the faith of the woman, the gathering of the crowd in the house and the shouting of the two blind men, as well as the bringing of the deaf and dumb demoniac ... are all interrelated. The ruler here is understood to be the law. He prays to the Lord for the people. The law has nourished them on Christ in the expectation of his foretold coming, and he restores life to the dead girl. Now we do not read of any ruler who was a believer. Hence the person of this praying ruler may rightly be taken as a model of the law. The Lord promised to help him, and he made good on his promise. On Matthew 9.5.

### **Lay Your Hand on Her.**

Chrysostom: His action overpowered his speech. This caused the jaws of his critics to drop all the further. In this case, the one who came running was himself a ruler of his synagogue! And the crisis was appalling. For the child was his only daughter, only twelve years old, in the very flower of her life. It was especially for this reason that he raised her up and did so immediately.

Luke says that people came who said, "Do not bother the teacher any longer, because she has already died." Because of this we will say that Matthew's statement, "She has just now died," came from one who was making a guess based on the time that had elapsed since he had started on his journey. Another possibility is that the man was overstating the misfortune. For it is the habit among people who are in need to exaggerate their personal problems and to say a little more than what actually is the case. They do this to get a response more effectively from those with whom they are pleading their cause.

But note the ruler's insensitivity, how he abruptly requires of Christ two things, both his actual presence and the laying on of his hands. This, by the way, is a clue that he might have left her still breathing. Similarly you will recall Naaman the Syrian imploring the prophet: "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call in the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy." For those who are more or less dull of temper tend more to require sight and sensible signs. The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 31.1.

### **9:20 A Woman Suffering from a Hemorrhage**

#### **The Ruler's Daughter and the Hemorrhaging Woman.**

Jerome: The Gospel according to Luke says that the ruler's daughter was twelve years old. Note also that the woman concerned, who was from the Gentiles, began to get sick at a place believed to be in a Jewish district. Except by way of contrast between physical conditions, the girl's ailment is not indicated. As for the woman who had a hemorrhage, she approached the Lord not in her home or in the town (because according to the law she was excluded from towns) but while the Lord was walking by, so that in the course of going to one woman, another was cured. The apostles say in this regard, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles." Commentary on Matthew 1.9.20.

## **9:21 Touching Jesus' Garment**

### **She Touched the Fringe of His Garment.**

Chrysostom: Why did she not approach him openly? Was she ashamed on account of her continuing menstrual period? Did she consider herself unclean? If the menstruous woman had been declared ritually unclean, she surely would have had these reservations. For in terms of Mosaic law her flow of blood was regarded as uncleanness. For this reason she remained hidden. She concealed herself. In this respect she had not yet understood his ministry; otherwise she would not have thought it necessary to remain concealed. The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 31.1.

## **9:22 Daughter, Your Faith Has Made You Well**

### **Making the Woman Visible.**

Chrysostom: So what did Messiah do? He did not let her go unnoticed but led her into the center of attention and made her visible. He had many reasons for doing this.

Some might imagine that “he did this merely for love of glory—otherwise why would he not allow her to remain concealed?” But what are they proposing who might say this? That he should keep her silent, that he should ignore her need, and thereby pass up miracles too numerous to mention, all because he is in love with glory? What an unholy thought, inspired by the most unholy one of all.

What then is his intention in bringing her forward? First, Jesus puts an end to her fear. He does not want her to remain trapped in dread. He gives no cause for her conscience to be harmed, as if she had stolen the gift. Second, he corrects her assumption that she has no right to be seen. Third, he makes her faith an exhibit to all. He encourages the others to emulate her faith. Fourth, his subduing the fountains of her hemorrhage was another sign of his knowledge of all things. And finally, do you remember the ruler of the synagogue? He was at the point of despair, of utter ruin. Jesus is indirectly admonishing him by what he says to the woman. The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 31.2.

### **The Ironies Unfold.**

Hilary: As the woman is healed, the crowd of sinners is made whole. At first it seemed more appropriate to follow the law of cleanliness. But a more pristine wholeness is restored to publicans and sinners in the

appearance of the woman. Thus, upon meeting the Lord as he was passing by, she believed firmly that by touching his garment she would be healed of her flow of blood. Dressed in shabby clothes and defiled by the uncleanness of her interior affliction, in her faith she hastens to touch the tassel of his cloak. In the midst of the apostles she sought to touch the gift of the Holy Spirit as it was coming from Christ's body. She is suddenly healed.... The Lord praised her faith and constancy, because what had been prepared for Israel, the common people of the Gentiles were now claiming for themselves. On Matthew 9.6.

### **The Church of the Gentiles Touches the Lord.**

Augustine: The daughter of the synagogue ruler signifies the Jewish people, whereas the woman signifies the church of the Gentiles. The Lord Christ, born of the Jews in the flesh, was presented to those Jews in the flesh. But he sent others to the Gentiles; he did not go himself. His bodily and visible community ties were in Judea. Therefore the apostle says, "For I say that Christ has been a minister of the circumcision in order to show God's fidelity in confirming the promises made to our fathers." It was said to Abraham, "By your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves," "that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy." Therefore Christ was sent to the Jews. He went to restore life to the daughter of the synagogue ruler. The woman appears on the scene, and she is healed. She is healed first in faith, being practically ignored by the Savior, for he said, "Who touched me?" Here we have an ignoring attitude by God and faith in the mystery by her. It means something when someone who cannot ignore, ignores. And what does it mean? It points to the healed church of the Gentiles, the bodily presence of which is not seen by Christ, whose voice is heard in the psalm: "People whom I had not known served me. As soon as they heard of me they obeyed me." The world heard and it believed. The Jewish people saw and at first they crucified. But later they too came to him. Also the Jews will believe—but at the end of the world. Sermons 63b.

### **9:23–24 Not Dead but Sleeping**

#### **Death and Sleep.**

Peter Chrysologus: Christ reaches the house and sees the girl who appears to be dead. In order to move faithless hearts to faith, he says that the ruler's daughter is sleeping and is not dead. Ostensibly it is not easier to rise from death than to rise from sleep. So he says, "The girl is asleep, not dead." With God, indeed, death is sleep, for God can bring a dead person back to life sooner than a sleeping person can be



wakened from sleep by humans; and God can sooner restore life-giving warmth to limbs frozen in death than humans can infuse vigor in bodies immersed in sleep. Hear the words of the apostle: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye the dead shall rise." Because the blessed apostle was unable to refer to the speed of the resurrection in words, he opted for examples. How could he touch upon rapidity when divine power anticipates rapidity itself? And how does time enter the picture when something eternal is given outside of time? Even as time applies to temporality, so does eternity exclude time. Sermons 34.5.

## **9:25–26 The Ruler's Daughter Raised**

### **The Unruly Crowd Put Outside.**

Chromatius: In the flute players and bustling onlookers who laughed to scorn the Lord who said, "The girl is asleep, not dead," we see an example of the synagogue rulers and the onlookers of Jewish people who, when they heard that the hope of eternal life had been promised by the Son of God to the Gentiles, held up to ridicule and contempt this great grace of the Lord. Not unjustly did the Lord order them to be sent outside. He showed that incredulous and unbelieving people of this kind are to be excluded from the promise of eternal life or from God's kingdom by him who is the Author of life and the Lord of the heavenly kingdom. Tractate on Matthew 47.7.

### **The Girl Arose.**

Chromatius: In the synagogue ruler we perceive a figure of the prophets or apostles, especially Peter, by whom the calling of the Gentiles was first heard; that is, the girl represented all those holy people who pleased God, not through the works of the law but through the righteousness of faith....

Moreover, for us to understand that the entire mystery of our salvation is prefigured in this girl; after she was raised from the dead, as Luke reports, the Lord directs her to eat something. Evidently the order of our faith and salvation is here shown. For when each believer among us is freed in baptism from perpetual death and comes back to life upon acceptance of the gift of the Holy Spirit, it is necessary that the person also be directed to eat that heavenly bread about which the Lord says, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." Tractate on Matthew 47.6–7.