

# Stories of Jesus: The Giver of Life

## Introduction

**Key Message: Do not be afraid, only believe.**

**Tags:** *"I believe; help my unbelief!"*

Are you currently facing a situation that seems impossible to redeem? Have you ever experienced doubt regarding God's ability to overcome the impossible? Have you ever read a promise of God within His Word and said "Well, I know I should believe this, but right now it seems like this is totally impossible"?

Good. Me too. All the time in fact! **Faith is a struggle.** Our physical senses, our logic, the voices of the world around us - all of them seem to be at odds with the words and assurances of God. You know that feeling like your head and your heart are not in alignment. Your head pulls you this way but your heart pulls you in the other. Today, friends, it will be our aim to stare our impossible situations in the face and yet wholeheartedly learn to trust in our Lord Jesus.

Let us dive into yet another story of our wonderful Lord. Of course, by story, I am not meaning a story like Little Red Riding Hood or the 3 Little Pigs. I am talking about true accounts of our Lord. Jesus isn't a character in a novel, He literally walked this earth like you and I. **But I like to use the word stories,** because it reminds me of how when I was younger, I would hear these beautiful stories at Sunday school of this man called Jesus. Stories that captivated me and were deeply embedded into my memory. The image of Jesus Christ walking on water, or calming a storm, or raising Lazarus from the dead - these are extraordinarily vivid to children and should be just as vivid to us as adults. I often think to myself, for someone who is saved later in their life, they never got to experience that wonderful phase in life where you go to Sunday school every week. Lord, I thank you for all of the precious Sunday School teachers in this church. We stand here and preach to you as adults, but if you really think about it, what they are doing isn't any different - they are teaching and illuminating the word of God to those precious little kids. Giving them enduring memories of Jesus. Memories and lessons that may well be the means through which Jesus saves their souls and rescues them from all manner of calamity. So if you see a Sunday school teacher - bless them please because they are preachers of God's Word!

**Jesus was an absolutely masterful storyteller.** His use of parables to convey meaning is, to my mind, completely unmatched. I have never heard of a person living or dead who is able to take simple stories and bring about such deep revelation and provoke such reflection as Jesus Christ. Is that surprising though, this is God after all! He is the very author of creation.

The story that we will spotlight today is that of **Jesus and a man named Jairus**. Through it, trust that the Holy Spirit will take the faith that we have, even as small as a mustard seed and grant that we begin moving mountains. Amen.

**Foundational passage:**

[Luke 8:40-55 ESV](#)

## Narrative

Our story begins with **Jesus** sailing across the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is actually more like a lake. You could sail across to the other side in a matter of hours. Now Jesus had just cast literally thousands of demons out of a man from the Country of the Gergesenes, a place on the far side of the sea. The man from whom he had delivered the demons **went around rejoicing and praising God**. And yet, in contrast, this miraculous sign had been so astonishing to the people of that region that they were **seized with great fear regarding Jesus** and asked that he leave their region immediately.

Have you ever experienced that in your life? Where God blesses you in such a way or does such an extraordinary work that you begin to feel such awe that it actually turns to fear (reverence).

So imagine now as Jesus returns towards the other side of the sea - the people would probably have heard about what had happened and would've been in immense expectation as Jesus set foot on the shore.

### 1. **Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him.**

Picture the scene, hundreds, maybe thousands of people lining the shore waiting as this boat approached, with this majestic man on board. Most of them would already have heard of the miracles that He performs, and now they were seeking their own healing, deliverance, restoration, or perhaps just to hear more of his beautiful words. **They were waiting for him expectantly**. Whispering nervously to each other - wondering if this was the answer to their pain, their healing, their deliverance.

Isn't this a picture of us too - gathering together waiting to catch a glimpse of this Lord we serve?

### 2. **And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue.**

This man Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue in Capernaum, the city that was, for the most part, Jesus' ministry base. Let's add some context.

**What was a synagogue?**

A synagogue in the 1st century was:

- A local center of worship (reading the Torah, prayer)
- A community meeting place
- A place of teaching and debate

### What was a synagogue ruler?

A synagogue ruler was a respected elder or religious leader who was the administrator of the local synagogue. Not the teacher, but rather the person who organised the reader or teacher for the week.

Typical responsibilities included:

- Organizing the reading of Scripture
- Selecting people to read or teach
- Maintaining the building and order of services
- Overseeing the community life of the synagogue

A synagogue ruler would be:

- **Highly respected** - since they would be hand-picked to their positions. They would need to be well educated and knowledgeable regarding scripture, and would be trusted and well known by the community. Basically everyone in the town would know them.
- **Part of the upper ranks of society** - there was honour and esteem accorded to such leaders due to their influence in the community and their oversight of the synagogue. Since they'd organise the speakers, they'd host religious elites like the Pharisees and priests from time to time, so they'd be well connected to these groups and be aligned with their views.
- **Wealthy** - it is very likely that they would be well off, certainly better off than many of the ordinary folks due to their education, connections and influence.

### 3. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

Alright, all the fathers in the house, all the mothers in the house - this hits you hard. This man had a daughter - his **only** daughter, and **she was dying**. Imagine one of your children suffering some malady that would lead to their death. To what lengths would you go to rescue them? Surely this man would first have consulted every physician in that place. Surely he would first have reached out to every person he knew (Pharisees included) and sought help, sought prayer, sought any treatment available. By the time he reaches Jesus, he is already at an end. How do we know that? The Holy Spirit lets us know that he **fell** at Jesus' feet.

When you're desperate for someone's help, you may be so thoroughly broken that you'd even fall at their feet to beg them. This was the case here, but understand that inadvertently, **he was falling at the feet of God**. He couldn't have known that Jesus was God or even the Messiah, but he nevertheless prostrated himself before Him. How relatable is this action though? How many times have you fallen to your knees in surrender, desperate for God's help? I know I have.

I remember when my son was in hospital (ICU) after being born. He was born with a perforated lung, so he was struggling to breathe and had to be assisted. I remember vividly being absolutely broken before God. I can picture it so clearly, even the very place in the bathroom where I was crying, begging him to come through for us, knowing that there is no other route, there is no other option but Him. And spoiler alert - He did come through! My son was healed miraculously, without any surgery or medical intervention, in fact the pipe that was in the lung to help him breathe had actually come out of its place without the doctor realising - they only discovered this when he was breathing fine without it! Remarkable.

Now maybe for you, you fall to your knees when you have spent your last cent in your bank account. Maybe it is when you received a terminal diagnosis for you or a family member. Maybe it is when your child is walking a bad path. Maybe it is when you are desperate for a child, a spouse. Maybe there is a person close to you that isn't saved and you are pleading for their salvation. Maybe you feel hopeless about life entirely! All of these are situations where we fall at the feet of Jesus and **implore him** to come to our house. To come and rescue our impossible situation. We don't just read this verse, we **feel it! Having lived it many times ourselves.**

Jairus was a highly respected man. Imagine for the people nearby seeing him fall at Jesus' feet. Some would be stunned at this - who is this man Jesus that he warrants such? The Pharisees would have been appalled at this behaviour. And yet, when you are desperate for the Lord's help, **is there any action that is too low for you?** Is falling to your knees too difficult? Is begging the Lord too much to ask? Is repentance and fasting and prayer a bridge too far? Because if so, friends, your pride is still a stumbling block. Let me add, these are not actions that magically bring a result, but they are clear evidence of the posture of our hearts towards Jesus and his Lordship.

#### **4. Woman with the issue of blood (Luke 8:43-48)**

Now Jesus, of course, blessed Lord, agrees to go see the daughter. Whilst they walk towards Jairus' house, imagine his heart. he is like "please Jesus, let's walk a bit faster". And just like in our lives, where we too want to usher Jesus to our particular problem, **suddenly there is a detour.** Suddenly a woman with an issue of blood comes along and reaches out to touch Jesus and receive her healing. Jairus must be absolutely on edge - imagine he sees this miracle (and you'd imagine he is encouraged) but there is a part of him that is feeling like his situation is slipping away with each passing second.

How many times do we pray for situations to be alleviated or resolved and yet it drags on and on, and sometimes even the people around us experience blessings or breakthroughs. Sometimes even in that exact same area that we are praying for. We are like "God, come on! There is no way".

Here's the thing - God works things together into a beautiful tapestry. We think a detour or a delay is a "No", but actually it's that **God's road has been designed to meander so that He can accomplish all that He needs to in the way that He needs to.** Think of the story of

Joseph. His story is absolutely beautiful. And yet, when you consider each step of it in isolation (being sold into slavery by his brothers, being falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and thrown into jail, being forgotten for years), you see just how utterly painful each of those would have felt for him. How those situations would have rocked his trust in God.

The part concludes:

Luke 8:48 - And he said to her, "Daughter, **your faith has made you well**; go in peace."

Was this perhaps a clue for Jairus? Did he catch it? I hope he did. We'll touch on this in a bit.

**5. While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more."**

Ah, friends. This hits you hard. Because many of us know this story, we gloss over this part. **Imagine this exact moment - really feel it in your very soul!** You've enlisted the help of this man Jesus, your final hope. But then someone comes and tells you "Sorry, your daughter is **dead**". There is nothing more impossible to recover from than death. **Death is final**. There is no return. There is no way to bring life into a dead body. But friends, we know someone who has the very keys to the grave. **Jesus** rose to life to prove that death was defeated forever. **He** won the victory of victories.

And then worst of all, as if to really drive the knife deeper into Jairus' soul, the messenger says "Do not trouble the Teacher any more". Man... can you imagine Jairus' heart at that point. I am sure he was overwhelmed with grief. I am sure he would feel like fainting from it. You know that feeling you get when it feels like something has totally moved from the realm of the possible to the realm of the impossible. It is now out of your hands.

You know we call our God, the God of the impossible, right? Do you really understand what it means to say that something is "impossible"? Statistically speaking! It means that there is an exactly 0 percent chance of whatever happening. **Zero!** Getting a new job is not impossible. Getting a spouse is not impossible. Getting a promotion is not impossible. Getting money is not impossible. Now I don't say these things to minimize our struggles, our requests to God - quite the contrary, I mention these specifically to help you understand that for the **God who can go to the extent of making physical impossibilities possible**, whatever your situation is, He can do it. Believe you me He can do it. Being healed of an illness that is medically termed a death sentence - that is impossible. Being raised from the dead - that is impossible (physically but also spiritually - our unsaved family).

Whatever your situation is today. Whatever you have been told about the outcome. Whatever you have been told is dead. When you feel as if you should no longer trouble the Lord with your prayers - friends, **carry on. Carry on! Carry on!** Wait and see the end from the beginning.

**6. But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well."**

But Jesus! Jesus is deeply interested in establishing faith within us. We don't hear how Jairus responded to the messenger, **but Jesus' encouragement speaks volumes**. He almost certainly says this because Jairus was about to give up. I am sure that he said these words with such gentleness, with such comfort, with such love, and yet with such conviction that stemmed from His knowledge of God's sovereignty over even death, that He would've breathed life back into Jairus' deflated soul. When God speaks, His very words carry the power of creation within them. He created the earth through His Word, His Spirit. He speaks and every law of science bows to His Lordship. When this God, The God, tells you not to fear, and that all will be well... oh saints you can rest so assured that you could fall asleep like a baby on the spot.

Today, the Lord's message is still exactly the same. What is your concern today? What is the thing that kept you awake last night with worry? His words are this: **"Do not fear, only believe. All will be well."**

Here is another account of Jesus bringing life in a situation that seemed doomed.

#### **Luke 8:22-25 ESV**

One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. He said to them, **"Where is your faith?"** And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"

If Jesus asks even the disciples, his closest followers "Where is your faith", we are in good company when we doubt. Don't be so hard on yourself when you struggle. Don't disqualify yourself from God's grace. What is our job as Christians? **It is as simple as believing**. Believe in Jesus, friends. Believe His every Word.

**Do you ever consider your salvation and think about what an impossibility it truly is?** We don't have the legal right to claim salvation, yet we live our lives fully trusting that it is ours. Otherwise why else would you be here today? When we get to the throne of grace one day, we don't have anything to present to God as evidence that we are saved. Our good works? Our relatively moral life? Our love of others? How does that earn us even one ounce of credit compared to the most horrific of men on this earth? Our only, and I mean ONLY thing we can do is point to the one sitting next to God and say, He told me I'd be saved if I believed in Him. **And I believed.**

**And we believe even today. That's faith, friends. Extraordinary faith in fact!** When someone asks you where your faith is, tell them that your faith is in Jesus.

Let's resolve a misconception about faith. Faith isn't something we magically construct using our own mental fortitude. When people say "I need more faith", how do you actually do that, practically? We don't get answers to our prayers by having cultivated enough faith that God says "Ok, you passed the test, you get your answer". No, faith is actually about believing in God's ability to answer whatever prayer request you bring before Him. **It is about trust.** Look at Jairus' situation. He doesn't actually know what Jesus is going to do. But Jesus calls him to believe. What can He mean? He must mean that he should believe in Him. Trust in Him.

The God who is able to stir up such faith in you, the **faith to believe in Him for everlasting life**, that same God is able to stir up sufficient faith in you for any situation you face today. What that requires of you is to **trust Him**. You aren't guaranteeing any outcome by your faith, but you're placing your trust in the most trustworthy person in all existence.

**7. 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.**

This girl was dead. Otherwise they would not have laughed. **Jesus sees situations in the future tense.** He sees the end from the beginning. When He looks at the dead child, He can say that she is sleeping, because He already sees the end outcome. Doesn't this fill you with such hope, knowing that **even death is but mere sleeping** before the power of God. The worst outcome that can ever happen to a person is utter nothingness before the One who has the keys of Death and Hades.

Let us not be like those who heard Jesus' words and laughed. This is like when we read a promise of God in the Word and say "Ah, sure, that's wonderful, but it doesn't apply to me". Or "Ah, the days of such miracles are over now - that was then, this is now". We must never become apathetic or numb to the precious promises of God.

I am sure that there are many of you who, like me, have wept over situations we face. Where we have cried many tears in prayer to the Lord, begging for His help. Be comforted in the knowledge that our Lord sees us, and has compassion on us. And not only that, **He has seen the end.** He has seen the conclusion of the story, and let me tell you this - **the end is better than you can think or imagine.**

Listen to this other account, also in Luke, of Jesus bringing back to life the dead. I share these so you see how God breathes life into hopeless situations, all whilst being so utterly compassionate to us through it.

#### **Luke 7:11-17 ESV**

Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town

was with her. **And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.”** Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has arisen among us!” and “God has visited his people!”.

Once again, He tells the mother not to cry. That’s our Lord - the Giver of Life, the Wonderful Counselor, the Prince of Peace.

Now for the final verses, I switch to Mark’s account of this story, because I love how he emphasises how the situation changes “immediately”.

#### **8. Mark 5:41-42 ESV:**

**Taking her by the hand he said to her, “Talitha cumi,” which means, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.” And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement.**

Immediately things shifted when Jesus arrived on the scene. As soon as Jesus speaks, things change immediately. Immediately dead bodies rise. Immediately heaven and earth move in obedience to Him. You may have prayed about and grieved over something for twenty years. Thirty years. Let me tell you this - when Jesus arrives, **things happen immediately.**

Here’s one last scripture to ponder:

#### **Mark 9:14-27 ESV**

And when they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran up to him and greeted him. And he asked them, “What are you arguing about with them?” And someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. And whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able.” And he answered them, “**O faithless generation**, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me.” And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” And Jesus said to him, “**‘If you can’! All things are possible for one who believes.**” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “**I believe; help my unbelief!**” And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, “He is dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

The verb πιστεύω (pisteuō) = “I believe,” “I trust,” “I have faith.”

The word ἀπιστία (apistia) = unbelief, lack of trust, doubt, wavering faith, faithlessness. It often refers to deficiency or weakness of trust. So he had faith, but it was incomplete and mixed with fear. He is expressing a divided internal condition:

“Part of me trusts you.”

“Part of me still struggles with doubt and fear.”

The statement - “help my unbelief” is an imperative, a plea, essentially: **“help me!”**

Friends, God is God of the **living**, not the dead.

## Conclusion

So in conclusion, what do we take from all of this?

1. **God is with us, even in the darkest valley.** He says to us **“Do not fear**, only believe, and all will be made well”. He sees us and sees our desperation.
2. **God is the God of the living, not the dead.** Situations that seem absolutely dead or impossible are His speciality.
3. When we feel like we are losing faith or experiencing doubt, Jesus tells us to **trust him**.

I want to encourage you, my dear brothers and sisters. Don't let the enemy win before the battle has even taken place. Don't let the enemy's words cause your heart to flutter. Don't give him the time of day. Instead, if we are struggling with trusting God, afraid, worried, cry out with me:

**“Lord, I believe, help my unbelief!”**

This is our challenge, friends. Pick that situation that seems impossible. That prayer request that you've prayed into and almost lost hope in. That situation where there is no logical way it could ever work out. That situation that seems totally a lost cause. The Lord knows it. He says to you like He said to Jairus: **“Do not fear; only believe, and all will be well”**.

Now revive your hope in the Lord my friends. Revive your hope in the Great I AM. Revive your hope in the God of Heaven and Earth. Revive your hope in the Commander of the Armies of Heaven. Revive your hope in the Lord, mighty in battle and mighty to save. Revive your hope in your shepherd who leads us besides still waters, who blesses our weary souls with rest, who prepares a banquet for us in the midst of our enemies, who walks through the valley of death with us. Revive your hope in the one who has promised that He will work all things together for our good as we follow Him.

And friends, dare I say, even if, **even if our Lord should not rescue us** - let it be known to you, O Enemy, that we shall never bow before you or cast aside our faith in our Lord!

Jesus, Oh Precious Jesus. We bow our hearts and souls before you. Come strengthen our harassed and weary souls, and restore to us the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Remind your people of your outstanding goodness, Lord. Your love that was so deep that you gave your Son, even your Only Son, for us. Give us resurrection life today Lord.

In Jesus' name.