Mark 5:42 Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished.

When I became a Pastor, one of the things that I did was study and contemplate the issue of death as it pertained to the world. I say, “as it pertained to the world” because I had a good handle on what God’s Word declared and said. I understood the gracious doorway that physical death is to the Christian. Did you hear what I said? Death is a gracious doorway. It is God’s way of allowing us to escape the difficulties and stresses of this sinful world of ours. We also understand that God is the giver of life and of death. So we do not in a moment of weak faith endeavor to take our own life. We will wait for the Lord. No matter what is going on or how hard…we will put our trust in Him and we will wait for the Lord.

Of course, you have to grasp that the world does not view death in this way. Over the course of my studying about death and how the world reacts to death I have read many interesting books. Sometimes they taught good things and sometimes they taught bad things. Let me share with you some of the bad things I have read and why I think they are bad, especially for the Christian.

One of the books I read pleaded with people to never, ever use euphemisms for death. That book pleaded with you to never tell a child or another person that the dead were “only asleep.” The book said that this was a lie and that it would never let the living come to grips with the reality of death.

I think you can see why I didn’t like this at all. Even in our history for today, Jesus told people the girl was “asleep.” They laughed at Him. Yet Jesus told the truth. For the Christian in this world, death is nothing more than a sleep because we have the promise of our Lord and Savior that we will be raised from the dead! The promise of our Savior is that we will be raised from the dead and live with Him forever. Now, if you don’t believe that, then don’t call yourself a Christian! It is one of the whole points of Jesus coming in the first place!

Another book I read strongly suggested that young children be kept away from funerals and the like because it will frighten them and cause them to be traumatized. What foolishness! One book claims you have to deal with the reality and the next says, “Keep it secret.” Actually, what frightens and traumatizes kids is how the adults react. Carry yourself with the dignity of the hopeful Christian, who trusts in God and His gracious goodness and there is no problem. Carry on like those of the world without hope or faith and there will be problems. And just so you know, my daughter has been around funerals and such all her life, yes, even funerals of people she loved and cherished. One of her first funerals, where she was aware, we were standing before the casket saying good-bye and her wondrous response was, “Dobie is with Jesus in heaven now!” If you know my daughter you know that level headedness and straight Christian thinking has never changed!

The other thing I read that I had no use for was all the admonition to “be careful what you say!” Almost every book I have read on death goes into great detail about why we should not say certain things. You know, things like, “I know how you feel.” And the books would go into detail explaining that no one could ever know how YOU feel. But that isn’t the point of the sentence. The point of the sentence “I know how you feel,” is to express empathy and sympathy, to let you know that my heart aches for you, that the emotional rollercoaster you are on, I have been on and so forth. This idea that since no one can understand YOU exactly they are not able to feel for you or ache for you or share with you is pure self-centeredness invented and pushed by the psychological world. No, don’t get upset by such things, just understand how people talk and what they mean and you will see the love, care and compassion behind the words. And don’t get me started on things like don’t say, “I will pray for you,” or “They are with Jesus!” Again, if you don’t believe in the promises of the Christian faith don’t call yourself a Christian!

Of course, you have to understand that the world has been kicking and fighting against what Jesus is all about even when Jesus was with us. No greater illustration of this exists than the history before us. Our theme: **JESUS CONFRONTS THE WORLD!**

Our text started this way. **“When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with him, ‘My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.’ So Jesus went with him.”**

Now do you notice the things that I notice in this little history? First, people are gathered around Jesus because of the fantastic and wonderful miracles he was doing. Jesus has cast out demons, healed all sorts of sicknesses including the Centurion’s servant, calmed the stormy waters, and even healed lepers! The crowds were gathered because what Jesus was doing and teaching was awesome! Into this crowd comes Jairus. Jairus, a synagogue ruler! A leader of the faith, a man of the cloth, supposedly a man of Scriptural knowledge. He came to seek the help of Jesus. Now, two of the gospels tell us that he came when his daughter was still alive seeking Jesus’ help but one of the gospels that record this history tell us that he came after his daughter died, seeking Jesus’ help. I believe it is a combination of things. He came while his daughter was still sick, seeking Jesus and when men from his house came saying she had died, Jairus still sought the help of Jesus. It is Luke who once the men from the house comes records Jesus as saying, **“Don’t be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.”**

I think this section important to consider. It appears that Jairus came hoping Jesus could heal his daughter, but it also appears that Jairus didn’t really grasp that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God! I say that because Jairus seems to think that Jesus must go and touch the girl in order to heal her and only after he is told she is dead and Jesus calls for him to have faith, does he then begin to think that Jesus could raise the dead! Jairus had lots to learn yet about Jesus, didn’t he?

Sometimes we are like Jairus. We have a sense of what Jesus is and can do, but in many cases it is limited by lack of faith or grasp of the real power of Jesus. Earlier I had mentioned that Jesus had healed the Centurion’s servant. That was a situation where Jesus praised the faith of the Centurion because he understood the power of Jesus. The Centurion believed and rightly so, that if Jesus just spoke the words his servant would be healed! That was faith! So, are we Jairus or the Centurion? Do we trust and believe the power of Jesus, a power greater and beyond us! A knowledge that is better and absolutely beyond us! Do we trust him or are we hung up on our wants and desires, on how we think things should be or turn out? I am talking to you about your faith. About the fact that I want you to absolutely, beyond any doubt, trust and know that no matter what is going on in your life Jesus is with you and He is working for your eternal good and salvation!! He loves you! He wants you to be in heaven with Him. He wants you to fully and truly trust him, not just in the big things (like heaven and eternal life) but even in the little things (like your struggles, stresses and worries!) That’s what faith is! To grasp that God absolutely in every way has got your back and that is all there is to it!

I will tell you something. I wish I could have been in on the conversation that Jesus must surely have had with Jairus as they walked to his house! Here is this father with aching heart, who had just been told his daughter had died, and I have no doubt that Jesus comforted him and gave him a hope like no one else could have! I say that because I know how I would have felt had that been my daughter! So Jesus must have shared with this man in his hour of grief, exactly the hope of life that He needed to know about and believe.

I think Jesus directed Jairus to the Scriptures he would have known. To the promises of God concerning the Messiah and his awesome signs, miracles and wonders. To the portion of Isaiah where the Messiah would die and come back to life, giving life to others in this moment. Oh, how I wish I could have been along for that walk and the words of wonder Jesus must have spoken to this grieving father.

Let’s go on. They get to the house and it appears the mourners are already there. That is important to know because it tells us that at least an hour or so has passed since the girl died. The mourners had been sent for, Jairus had been sent for and so the house is already bustling with the motions and commotions of the customs of the Jewish funeral. One of the first things to happen would have been the washing and preparation of the body for the funeral which would have been that very day. All of this tells us that everyone there knew, knew without doubt that the girl was dead! That’s why they had such a strong reaction to Jesus and his words. They laughed at him! He said she was only asleep, and they laughed at him.

With that we are told **“Jesus put them all out.”** They didn’t believe him, didn’t trust in him, so He threw them out! Think about this. Jairus and his wife let Jesus take control. Jairus and his wife have no grasp yet, other than the promise of Jesus that it was going to be alright, that Jesus could actually raise the dead, since Jesus hasn’t done this yet! But they trust Him. They let him chase away all the doubters and scoffers, those who had been called because the girl was dead. Again, do you sense the trust they had? Blind trust, trust just because it was Jesus, trust because Jesus encouraged them to trust him, trust because in a broken world the best thing to always do is put your faith and hope in God and his promises. That is what Jairus and his family do.

The miracle itself is so wonderfully simple and awesome. Jesus, along with the family and three of his disciples go into the room where the child was laying, again probably already bathed and dressed up for the funeral. He walks to the bed, takes her hand and tells her to “Get up!” Put yourself in that room. Can you feel the excitement, perhaps a bit of confusion as you wonder what Jesus is up to, yet you trust Jesus and so with anxious, hurting heart you are glued to Jesus and what he is doing and says. You hear him say, “Little girl, get up!” Oh the wonder you feel as you see the girl respond. I can imagine her opening her eyes, looking at Jesus, smiling, sitting up and with a gentle pull on the hand by Jesus, standing up! She is alive. She has been raised from the dead! The passage was right wasn’t it? **“At this they were completely astonished.”** I am completely astonished! How about you?

Please note the aftermath is so interesting. Jesus tells them to feed her and to speak to no one about this. He doesn’t tell everyone to ask her what she saw or what she experienced, there is no point to that because I don’t think she experienced anything except the hearing of the command of Jesus. As far as Jesus was concerned, life should just get back to normal. The girl was hungry, so she needed food. And it is true, they were not to tell anyone what happened. But do you think that’s what happened? In the next few hours and days, as neighbors and friends saw that little girl alive, you don’t think that was the conversation of the day going on! I don’t think they could have kept their mouths shut. Yet Jesus wants things kept on the quiet. Do not sensationalize this, but be simple and direct: “My girl was dead and Jesus raised her to life!” How? Because He is God’s Son and our Savior!

In truth, I can understand why Jesus wanted things to be kept quiet. He is still in the beginning year of his ministry. He already has people around him clamoring for their wants and needs, seeking his healing and power and yet not really considering what all of this was about. Jesus didn’t want the fame, he wanted the faith. He wanted people to believe in Him and what He came to do: to fulfill God’s promises of a Savior and the gift of eternal life through that Savior.

All of this still holds for each of us today. Do we have Jesus in our lives because someday we hope He will fulfill our needs and desires, our wants and ideas of how our life should be? Or do we have Jesus because He is God’s Son, the Savior of the world, who came to grant the gift of eternal life and salvation? Jesus is our Savior. Jesus has promised to be with us until the end of the age. Through thick or thin, hard times or good, Jesus tells us that He has our good, our eternal souls in His heart and mind. So when things are going well, then you humbly say, “Thank you Jesus, for your love and grace.” And when things are hard, when you feel you are at the end of your rope or that you just can’t take another step in this cruddy world, then and really then is the most important time to humbly say, “Thank you Jesus, for your love and grace!”

Because his love and grace is there and with you. His strength to continue is there for you. His wisdom to see the reality of sin and the total hope and awe of eternal life and salvation is there for you! It is why He came. Came so that like the people of this history, you could find the awe and wonder of Jesus and his awesome power on your behalf. So, trust in him. Don’t just see what the world does. Don’t think like the world thinks. Grasp the awe and power of Jesus then and now, for the life and salvation of all who believe. Confront the world. Put it and its laughter out. Believe in Jesus. Be astonished in Jesus. He is our Lord and Savior now and always. Amen.