Mark 5:221-24a, 35-43 (It is our Gospel reading, the account of the healing of Jairus’ daughter)

He came to Jesus. He was a Synagogue ruler, one of the men who oversaw the local synagogue and its services. It was considered a very honored position. He came to Jesus. Probably he had heard Jesus’ preaching, had been witness to some miracle from Jesus and so he came. He lays out the problem, his daughter, his precious daughter is dying. Jesus, could you please come and lay your hands on her and heal her?

It was a heartfelt request from a father. Yet I wonder what it was that kept him from coming to Jesus in the first place? As his daughter got progressively ill why not go right away to Jesus? Why does he wait until it is clear that his daughter is going to die? Those are interesting questions to ask.

Now, to suggest answers is also interesting. Perhaps Jairus just didn’t grasp how serious the illness was until this very moment and then he went right to Jesus. Perhaps he didn’t go because of pressure from some of the other synagogue rulers. Pressure in the sense that we don’t know who this guy is, this guy has been teaching things we don’t like, or maybe just a “this guy doesn’t have the full sanction and blessing of the Sanhedrin, therefore you shouldn’t go” thing. The suspicious human idea that Jesus wasn’t what he appeared, that Jesus really couldn’t heal, that Jesus was good but just a slight of hand artist fooling the people! And maybe, just maybe, it was caused by a simple lack of faith. So it was desperation, not faith that drove him to Jesus.

Honestly, I kind of lean this way. That because Jesus was not favored by the top religious leadership there were lots of doubts in this father’s mind about Jesus. But that finally it is desperation that drives him to Jesus. Let me share with you why I say that. When Jairus arrives and lays forth his request to Jesus two things jump out at me. First, Jairus assumes that Jesus has to be there, that he has to be physically present, physically “lay hands” on his daughter in order for anything to happen. I am not sure that is faith. Faith is the Roman Centurion who says to Jesus, **“But say the word, and my servant will be healed.”** Or faith is the Canaanite woman who said to Jesus, **“Yes, Lord, yet their little dogs also eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”** In both instances, Jesus compliment, highlighted, the great faith of the individuals. Notice that here no such pronouncement of faith made here. That’s my second reason, Jesus does not compliment the faith of Jairus, he just goes with Jairus and later on, Jesus makes a statement to Jairus about faith. Now you have a better grasp of the situation of Jairus. A desperate man who turns to Jesus as a last resort, a really last resort!

I will encourage all of us in the same. Life hard? Lots of trials and difficulties happening? At your wits end? Maybe, just maybe it is time to turn to Jesus? To seek out the Lord and his wonder, to get a grasp of God’s Son and what he can and will provide for you! The Lord can and will help, but He will do so in His way and according to what He knows is absolutely best.

Please think about this. During the ministry of Jesus lots of other people died! Not everyone comes to the Lord and it is not God’s desire that everyone be spared the trauma of loss. But I will tell you that I believe every death, everything that goes on, trials, hardships struggles, and so forth, all happen because the Lord in his grace, in his love for you allows those hardships, caused by sin, to come upon you and others for your eternal good and salvation! That’s what happens when you turn to the Lord. You learn to trust in Him and His marvel no matter what the storm! Get to Jesus, but please, get to Him through the truth and not just some half- baked religious ideas.

I say that because this past week in my social media feeds there was the story of a young father who died leaving a pregnant wife and kids behind. A post had been made that people should pray for him but then he died. I was heartbroken not only at the death but also because of the post the man’s mother made. Mind you, I understand she was filled with grief, but in her post she made it clear that she thought God had done wrong in this death! Wrong because so many had prayed for the father and wrong because he was such a good man! I was somewhat relieved that she would later state that they would “accept” this will of God, but nevertheless her statements betrayed a lack of the truth of God. Nowhere does God promise only good and wonder for his children. Again, others died while Jairus’ daughter is going to be sparred. Nowhere does God promise that because you pray, that his will is going to be changed from what He knows is eternally best! And sadly, though God’s Word makes it clear that the bad and evil things of this world are a result of sin in our lives, nowhere does this woman seem to grasp that the real problem here is sin and the death it brings, thanks to Satan. Blame Satan, not God! Seek out the Lord in a place where God’s truth will reign and not the foolishness of “what I want” faith.

Now I want you to know that a number of interesting things happen in this history that are left out of our text. There is a crowd pressing around Jesus, a crowd clearly hindering his progress in getting to this young girl. I can just imagine the father’s frustration that Jesus is so slowed down. Maybe he even gets a bit pushy as he is trying to get Jesus moving. Either way, the crowd very much slows down Jesus.

Then a woman who has what is described as **“a discharge of blood for twelve years”** reaches out and touches the robe of Jesus. She absolutely believed that just touching the robe of Jesus would bring her healing. She is right! She is then and there healed! Jesus, sensing the flow of power from him (seriously contemplate that!) stops, and addresses the crowd as to who touched him? Who had touched his robe? It is clear that Jesus meant to find this person. His disciples, not grasping the fact that a miracle has been done, simply tell Jesus, “Hey, we are in a crowd, everyone is pressing against everyone, what do you mean who touched you?”

I want you to know that Jesus knew exactly who had touched him and why. I want you to grasp that Jesus wants this woman to come forward and proclaim the miracle not only for her sake, but for the sake of the crowd and yes, especially for the sake of Jairus. This woman has had this issue for as long as Jairus’ daughter was alive, both twelve years. All of this happens at the will of Jesus, it is the plan of God for the sake of souls and learning and that people, especially Jairus, would fathom the wonder of faith. Jairus is going to need it. Because all of this delays Jesus. Jesus speaks with the woman. She tells her story and the wonder of what has happened. Jesus makes of point of saying, **“Daughter, your faith has made you well.”** The lesson is laid for all to hear.

By the way, remember Jesus speaks as we humans tend to. This statement does not mean that some power of this woman resulted in the healing. **“Your faith”** really means that Jesus and his power healed her. Jesus was the cause and the power. Jesus is even the giver of this woman’s faith. Nor was it necessary that the woman have faith, or a proper faith, or a pure faith to be healed. Jesus is the power! All that happened was that this woman believed that if she could just touch Jesus’ robe she would be healed. Her faith caused her action to seek out Jesus and touch his robe, but it was the power of Jesus, the Godhood of Jesus that did the actual healing. Same with prayer. People say, “Prayer is powerful!” I say, “No it is not. Prayer is a privilege given us by God but it is God who is powerful!” Make sure you grasp the truth of things here. Jesus is the power and the cause of this woman’s faith.

Can you just grasp Jairus’ frustration here? And now Jairus sees people from his house approaching and I am sure his heart must have completely sunk. The message is simple. The girl is dead! Don’t bother Jesus any more, there is nothing he can do! Just imagine those words striking your heart at that moment. And yet Jesus turns to Jairus and says, **“Don’t be afraid. Only believe.”**

In truth, the Greek text has a word that really means *“pay no attention to what was said,”* but we tend to translate with its sense of don’t be afraid. I would rather have heard Jesus say, **“Jairus, pay no attention to what you just heard. Believe in me. Did you just see what I happened here, this healing and miracle? You put your confidence in me!”** That is the true impact of these words.

Those words stuck. Jairus and Jesus make it to the house. The crowd is left outside and yet inside there is also a crowd. Jesus had been delayed so long that the girl died and already the professional mourners have been assembled. That’s just the way they did things. Jairus was an important man and no doubt they had been put on special alert to be ready to mourn! They are there. Along with relatives and other important officials and friends, everyone waiting for what they knew was coming and now everyone assembled, or at least a good part of them, to do what was to be done at a death. I think it is even possible that this little girl has been washed and laid out in a now clean bed as would have been the custom. That’s the scene at the house. Everyone is there ready for a funeral and the rituals to be carried out. It seems they are just waiting for the father to be found so that things can proceed per normal. Only nothing normal is going to happen.

Grasp the impact of what takes place. Jesus enters the house and allows only a few of his disciples to be present. He goes in the house and informs everyone, **“Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping.”** Don’t miss the next words. **“The laughed at him.”** Yep, they ridicule Jesus. This group gathered knew the girl was dead. It is this that makes me think the little girl had already been washed, redressed and laid out on a bed for the funeral rites. If you have already taken and washed this girl down and changed her clothes, you know she is dead. They know this and they think Jesus ridiculous for his statement. Welcome to the world. The world still thinks Jesus and what he is about is ridiculous. Don’t you think that way! You believe!

I think at this point Jairus believes. I say that because Jairus allows Jesus to dismiss from his house all those who had been gathered for the funeral. That’s right, Jesus puts everyone out of the house and no doubt Jairus is right there saying to everybody, “Hey, listen to the man. He says leave, then leave!” That would be the actions of a man who now believes in Jesus. Well, at least he believes that Jesus believes he can do something about his daughter. But note he is putting his confidence in Jesus. Trusting Jesus. Relying on Jesus!

Now Jesus, mom and dad, Peter, James and John enter the room where the child is. There she is, laid out that everyone might say their last good-bye. But Jesus has different plans. He reaches down and takes the girl’s hand, not because he needs to touch her to do the miracle but because Jesus is getting ready to help her up! He simply says to her, **“Little girl, I say to you, arise!”** What boldness! Telling a dead girl to get up! Yet it is not boldness, it is Jesus, the Son of God. It is Jesus commanding, willing that life reenter this young girl and that she live. It is God showing mastery over death and life.

Note, there is no mumbo jumbo. There are no rituals and special words, no special incense or candles, no magical gestures to focus the power…get my point? This is the awesome power of God. Simple words. In truth the words don’t even have to be uttered, Jesus just has to will that this girl come back to life and it is so. Me, even to this day, I am exactly what we are told the others in the room are: **“completely and utterly amazed.”**

It is a fantastic display of power. It is God willing life as he sees fit. And everyone is amazed. Amazed because this girl was dead and now she lives. The only one not amazed is Jesus, who knowing the needs of the girl says, “Get her something to eat.”

Jesus also tells them not to say anything about this. Here is the only part of this whole history that I don’t fully comprehend. Don’t say anything? There was a whole house of people who had been waiting for a funeral because they knew the girl was dead and now the girl is alive? Nothing has to be said! These people are outside the home and once this little girl goes out and tells them they can leave now, nothing else need be said! It will be as clear as a bell that the one dead is now alive! I wrestle with these words of Jesus.

My only way to be settled in these words is to figure that Jesus was telling them not to speak of anything that happened in the room. So if someone asks, “Hey, she was dead and now she is alive…what did he do,” then say nothing. Shrug your shoulders. Don’t even tell them that all he did was tell her to get up! Say nothing! Add nothing. Let the miracle, the simple fact that this dead girl is now alive because of Jesus, stand on its own.

I suppose the other thing to consider is that Jesus, knowing the foolishness of people, doesn’t want everyone dragging their dead around so he can raise them. This miracle was done at the plan and purpose of Jesus for the sake of souls and the creating and affirming of faith. This miracle was done that people should grasp that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God who came to be the Savior of the world from sin and ultimately death, but first and foremost contemplate him as the deliverer from sin!

That’s Jesus. The one who has come to conquer sin. In conquering sin we grasp that Satan and death are also overcome. Yet, the final victory of Jesus won’t be completely seen until Jesus returns again. Then all will know the truth of Jesus. God’s Son, our Savior from sin!

Rejoice with this family. Marvel at Jesus. Don’t listen to what the world says. Only believe! Amen.