**‘Little girl, Arise’**  17/12/23dkm

Read: Mark 5:21-43, John 11:30-44,

Text: Mark 5: 21-43

Psalms: 18:1-8, 23old, 67, 134a

When Jesus returned to Capernaum from the Decapolis he found a huge crowd waiting for him. Within that crowd was a man whose only daughter was seriously ill, ‘at the point of death’ (5:23). The man, called Jairus, had been anxiously waiting by the lake, scanning the waters for any sign of the boat carrying Jesus. Jairus believed that Jesus could heal his daughter but she was too sick to bring to Jesus. He came to Jesus, fell at his feet and pleaded for Jesus to come to his house to touch her and make her well. Jesus agreed to go with him.

What wonderful grace we see here on the part of Jesus - grace for the individual person. Seeing a great crowd lining the shore, Jesus might have been tempted to get up on a stage and start preaching and performing miracles. Men or women who can draw a huge crowd rarely have time for the individual. They are up on the stage trying to impress everyone. If individuals want to see them personally they have to make an appointment. Even some church leaders can be like this. But not Jesus! Jesus was not focussed on the crowd around him. He was not trying to be more popular than other teachers. He listened to Jairus and his cry for help, and set out for his house. On the way he felt the touch of the woman with a bleeding problem and dealt with her need.

You can take comfort in the knowledge that Jesus knows you, and is concerned for you as an individual. You are not just part of a crowd, or just a number in the eyes of Jesus. You are very special to him. ‘Yet I will not forget you’ says the Lord. ‘See I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me’ (Isa 49:16). You may sometimes think no one is listening to you, or that no one understands you. Jesus is always listening and he always understands you. He is always ready to help you in your time of need (Heb 4:16).

**1. No hope**

Jairus was the ruler of the synagogue. He was a man of some importance in the community. He was responsible for getting speakers and arranging the service. But he was not a critical legalist like the Pharisees. He did not demand that Jesus come straight away. He humbly begged Jesus to come. Jairus was both humble and patient because while he was taking Jesus to his house, Jesus stopped to help a sick woman. Critical minutes were lost as Jesus drew this woman out of the crowd to tell her that her faith had healed her (5:34). Jairus saw Jesus healing yet another precious soul, but it must have been difficult not to get impatient with him.

While they were stopped with this woman, Jairus got the news he was dreading. Someone came from his house to say his only daughter had just died. She was only twelve years old. His heart sank. Maybe he started to weep. There is no greater pain than that of seeing your own child die. Jairus lost all hope of his little girl being healed. There was no point troubling the Teacher any further (5:35). There was no reason for Jesus to come to his house now that his daughter was dead.

Medical doctors can do amazing surgery nowadays. They can cure people with potent drugs. But they all have to say at some time, ‘Sorry; I was not able to save your loved one’. ‘Sorry Jairus, I was on my way. I was doing my best but these things happen’. This is what Jairus expected Jesus to say. But it was not what he heard.

**2. No fear**

When Jesus heard the message, he said to Jairus, ‘Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well’ (5:36, Luke 8:50). Jesus would have seen his face drop and maybe tears begin to roll down the face of this grieving father. He told Jairus not to fear but to have faith. He told him his daughter would be made well.

Fear of death is the greatest fear of all. At a sixtieth birthday party my friend reflected on how his outlook on life had changed after he came close to death a few years ago. His story is not unique. The Bible solemnly tells us to number our days. People put on a brave face, or brush-off the fear of death with celebrations, but it makes no difference. The sting of death is real. It is unavoidable - apart from Jesus that is. Jesus gives us hope in the face of death. Only Jesus could say to the grieving man before him, ‘Do not fear' (5:36). Only Jesus could later say to the family, ‘Do not weep’.

On what basis could Jesus say to Jairus, ‘Do not fear’? Was it just platitudes or empty words? ‘Don’t worry, everything will be alright’. He told Jairus to believe, or to have faith. What was he to believe? What was he to have faith in? What good was faith when his daughter was dead?

Like Martha, Jairus would have believed in the resurrection of the dead at the last day - unless he was a Sadducee (John 11:24). But Jesus did not tell Jairus his daughter would rise again at the resurrection on the last day. He told him to, ‘Believe and she will be made well’ in the here and now (Luke 8:50). He wanted Jairus to believe that Jesus could still help him, even though his daughter was now dead. He wanted him to believe that with Jesus all things are possible. Never fear when Jesus is near. Do not fear, only believe. These words are not just for Jairus. They are for us also. The raising of this little girl is one of three such miracles in the gospels. Jesus raised the son of the widow at Nain and he raised Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, after he was in the grave four days (John 11:39).

**3. No weeping**

Jesus resumed his journey and arrived at the house. He found the family and friends all weeping. It seems that professional mourners had already arrived. They were playing their flutes and wailing loudly (5:38, Matthew 9:23). There was a terrible commotion at the house of Jairus. Jesus told the mourners to stop weeping because the child was ‘not dead, but sleeping’ (5:39). The mourners laughed and ridiculed Jesus when he said she was not dead but sleeping.

‘But they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead’ (5:40). Luke the doctor and gospel writer assures us that the girl was dead (Luke 8:53). He does not suggest that these people were mistaken about her being dead- nor does Jesus. Jesus was speaking from a divine perspective. ‘What to man is death is no more than sleep to Jesus’ writes Leon Morris. The girl’s body looked as if she was sleeping. It was just that her spirit had departed. Jesus could bring her spirit back. Throughout the NT, believers are not said to die but to sleep (Acts 7:60, 1Thess 4:13).

After telling the mourners not to weep, Jesus told them all to go outside. Only the girl’s parents and three disciples, Peter, James and John, were allowed to stay in the room where the dead girl lay dead. This is the first time these three disciples are singled out by Jesus. They will later see Jesus transfigured on the mountain. Despite their failures, they would later become leaders in the church. They were with Jesus to learn from him. John wrote a gospel, three letters and the book of Revelation. Peter’s hand was behind this gospel according to Mark, and he also wrote two letters included in the NT canon. James was martyred at the hands of King Herod (Acts 12:2).

Jesus took the dead girl by the hand saying in Aramaic, ‘*Talitha cumi*’, which when translated means, ‘Little girl, I say to you, arise’ (5:41). There was no mouth to mouth resuscitation- Jesus took the dead girl by the hand. Her spirit returned and she immediately got up and walked. Only Mark records what Jesus said in Aramaic; does this point to Peter being his source? Mark tells us that the girl was twelve years old; Luke also gives her age as twelve and also tells us she was the only daughter of the synagogue ruler (Luke 8:42). Jesus told the parents to get her something to eat, a sure sign that she was indeed alive - in case they thought they were seeing things or having a dream.

Jairus and his wife were astonished. ‘They were overcome with great amazement’ (5:42). The three disciples who were present would also have been amazed. They had seen Jesus heal a leper, and heal the woman who was sick with bleeding. They had seen Jesus stop the storm on the lake; but raising someone from the dead was something new and amazing. They found it hard to believe what they saw.

Jairus must have remembered what Jesus said to him when he got the sad news that his only daughter had died: 'Do not fear; only believe'. Jairus came to Jesus believing that if Jesus lay hands on his little girl he could heal her. But what hope was there after she had died. ‘Just believe’ Jesus told him. ‘Just believe and she will be made well’, or ‘she will be saved’. Surely he now believed. He believed the words of Jesus. He believed the power of Jesus. He believed in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Fear gave way to faith in the life of this man. Are you living in fear or by faith in Jesus Christ?

**4. No tell**

Do you believe that Jesus raised this little girl from the dead? You are not a sceptic I trust. Many today are just like the mourners who laughed at Jesus for saying the girl was not dead. But there was no funeral! Their services were required no longer. They could go home in their scepticism and ignorance about Jesus, the giver of life.

There are sceptics today. They say that the girl was not dead but in a coma, and that somehow Jesus managed to bring her out of this coma. That is not what we read in the Bible. Ignorance and scepticism about issues of life and death abound in our society. It is tragic. It is a cause for us to be praying every day that people’s hearts be opened to the truth of the gospel.

Jesus told the parents not to tell anyone what had happened (5:43). Outside were those who ridiculed Jesus. They laughed at this man who Jairus went to for help. They laughed at the man who Jairus believed could heal his daughter. They laughed at this man who Jairus believed could help, even when his little girl was dead. They laughed at this man Jairus believed in as the Son of God.

Unbelief excluded the mourners from seeing the miracle to which the parents were admitted. Beware of unbelief (Heb 3:12).

Why should the sceptics be told of the wonderful work that Jesus did in the house that day? ‘It seems’ writes J. C. Ryle, ‘it seems a rule in Christ’s dealings with men not to force evidence upon them, but rather to withhold from scorners and scoffers those proofs of his own mission which he affords to others. As it was when he was upon earth, so it is now’. Those who laughed at the Lord are allowed to continue to laugh in their ignorance and lack of faith. Do you believe that nothing is impossible for God? Do you believe that ‘all things are possible to him who believes’ (Mark 9:23)? Dear friend, do not fear, only believe, and Jesus will save you.