

[LENT - WEDNESDAYS - 2019]  
Jairus' Daughter

FIRST, ST. STEPHEN, B & E  
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Mark 5:21-43

*Dear friends in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen*

*Let us pray -- Prepare our hearts, Lord, to receive your word. Silence in us any voice but your own, that in hearing we may believe, and in believing we may obey your will revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Amen.*

The room was very dark... The cloth covering, over the hole in the wall that functioned as a window, had been pulled tight to shut out both the light...and the morbidly curious. On the bed in that room lay a sick little girl...sick to the point of dying.

Everything had been done to try and save her...but nothing had worked. It was no wonder that everyone had given up hoping...everyone, that is, except her parents.

Jairus, the ruler of the local synagogue, had agreed with his wife that he should seek out...that man named Jesus. That, in itself, was an incredible step to take for a man of his position – hard questions would certainly be asked by the higher ups! But the life of their daughter was infinitely more important than his reputation...

So when shouts began filtering up from the beach announcing the arrival of the miracle-worker, Jairus ran down to meet him. Pushing his way through the crowd that had already formed, he fell at Jesus' feet and cried, *My little daughter is dying...come lay your hands on her - deliver her from death and give her life!!!*

The room I stepped into was very dark. The curtains had been drawn on the window facing the nurse's station both to shut out the light and the morbidly curious.

On the bed lay a sick little girl...sick to the point of dying.

Everything had been done to try and save her...but nothing seemed to work. It was no wonder that everyone had given up hope --- everyone, that is, except the girl's mother.

Janet had vowed never to leave the side of her little Down's Syndrome daughter. *Her Lord wouldn't*, she reasoned, *so neither would she*. It had not been an easy decision, for it meant that much more strain on an already challenged marriage. Yet she loved this little girl, and so desperately wanted her to live.

The doctors and nurses understood and did all they could. Yet the time finally came when they told her that there was nothing left to do...but wait. Janet sadly smiled at the doctor...and corrected him without malice, saying, *You mean nothing left to do...but pray...*

And pray she did. She prayed unashamedly for a miracle from God, asking that Jesus deliver her daughter from death. *Deliver her from death*, she prayed, *and give her life!!*

The situation seemed hopeless to the friends and family of Jairus. And then, tragically, their fears were proven true. A group met him with the news that the young girl had died during his absence. There was nothing that could be done to save her now... Yet when Jairus glanced at Jesus, the Lord said those hard but heartening words, ***Do not fear...only believe!!***

The weeping and crying could be heard from a distance.

Loved ones inside the house had begun to recite the prayer for the dead. Others were trying to console the girl's mother. The sounds of grief filled the air. All had left the darkened room where the little girl's body lay motionless and alone.

The situation seemed hopeless to Janet's family...and to the doctors and nurses as well.

There was a long list of tests that all said the same thing: her daughter was only breaths away from death. There was nothing that could be done to save her now.

Janet cried, and she prayed, and she asked God for strength; for the decision she now faced was one of pure pain. The machines surrounding her daughter had to be addressed as they clicked and beeped and dripped and wheezed...

Her relatives in the waiting room were quiet, crying, or alone with their thoughts. The nurses busied themselves with the work, tears streaming down many cheeks. All had left the darkened room where the little girl's body lay quiet and alone.

Jairus and his wife were amazed when Jesus insisted on taking them back into their daughter's room. It didn't make any sense: she was dead, and that was the end.

Yet the Lord seemed...so confident...so sure...that they couldn't help but feel their spirits lift – at least a little. It seemed so strange when Jesus took her by the hand and spoke those words, ***Little girl...get up!***

Nothing happened at first...yet then she stirred...the girl blinked her eyes...and then she actually got up from the bed!!! It was almost beyond belief – their breaking hearts were suddenly now bursting with joy as they held their daughter close once more.

A miracle had happened – their daughter had been delivered from death!

We were all standing around the young girl's crib while the machines were slowly turned off. It was painful to see...yet, finally, Janet seemed somehow **cradled** in that *peace of God which passes all understanding*...

The noise in the room softened as one by one the machines were quieted... until the only sound left was the tiny, labored breathing of that little girl.

We stood silently, side by side, for there was nothing left to say. Death had come and we were all powerless to stop it...

But then...something happened. A change occurred...so subtle that it took a moment to register. Janet was the first to notice. ***It couldn't be...could it???***

Her daughter's breathing...was getting stronger, not weaker!! Those shallow little gasps grew deeper...and steady!! Her pulse rate grew stronger and steady as well.

***She's alive!!!*** Janet cried, tears running down her face. ***It's incredible!*** said one doctor. ***It's a miracle,*** said another... Soon peals of laughter replaced the sobbing as the news quickly spread. A miracle had occurred...this beautiful young girl had been delivered from death!

We celebrate the good news of life in Jesus Christ. He makes himself known as the God who delivers from sin and death all who are weary and heavy-laden.

We've heard two stories of deliverance tonight, two young girls who were delivered from death in miraculous ways. God's renewal of their lives was-and-is certainly not a common thing...nor was it permanent. For they both, once again, died...as will we all!

Yet, the good news is that just as Jesus Christ was present in those two rooms of deliverance, so also does he promise to be with each of us, whenever we find ourselves trapped in webs of sin and separation, confusion and consternation, death and despair.

We know that there are no guarantees against death in our journey through life – we know that not every threat to our lives will be miraculously removed. God does not promise that.

But...God ***does*** promise

- to hear our prayers,
- to be with us every step of the way through life, and
- to bring us safely home when we breathe our final breath.

Jesus is our strength and our redeemer. Bless his holy name.

Amen.