

## **"FAITH THAT DEFIES DEFEAT, YOUR CHILD IS NOT DEAD."**

**Rev. Robert T. Woodyard**

**First Christian Reformed Church, Lynden**

**May 27, 2012, 10:30am**

**Texts for the Sermon: Mark 5:21-24, 35-43**

### **Introduction**

I read this week that down in the Silicon Valley the Porsche showrooms are empty. Penthouses and mansions are being snatched up for hundreds of thousands of dollars over list. Facebook billionaires and millionaires are on a huge spending spree. Life is good right now. But what about that day when their soul is required of them? What good will their money do them then?

Jairus was the ruler of the synagogue, a high ranking official, he was somebody important. But status and rank didn't insulate him from trouble. No one is beyond the reach of pain and sorrow.

He may have had all that money can buy, but money couldn't keep death from his door. Death visits every gated community and every trailer court, every mansion and every apartment. Sickness and death are the great levelers, the great equalizers. The grave awaits every person. The daughters of rich men and poor men will all die someday.

### **Your Daughter is Dead.**

So it is that Jairus receives about the harshest news any person could ever hear, "Your daughter is dead, don't trouble the Teacher anymore."

Remember last week I mentioned how Jesus is interruptible. The interruption was a great blessing to the woman, but Jesus' delay was disastrous for the father of the little girl. That interruption may have cost his daughter her life.

Jesus stopped to help a woman with a chronic condition that delayed His going to a girl with an acute condition. If Jesus was an ER doctor, He could be liable for medical malpractice. He didn't follow good triage protocols.

"What are you doing Jesus, don't you get the gravity of the situation here, why are you stopping, hurry up, there's no time to waste here."

Can you imagine the "if onlys" that start to flood Jairus' mind. If only that woman hadn't stopped Jesus. If only Jesus hadn't stopped to talk to her. If only Jairus had come sooner. If only ...

Clearly they all believed Jesus could heal the sick, they had seen that. But now that she's dead there's nothing that can be done. Jesus is powerful, but no one's that powerful.

There's nothing more final, nothing so ultimate as death. There's no reversal, no second chance. Most of us have felt that blow, that terrible feeling of complete closure and separation.

The power of death is incredible. Every single living thing on the earth dies. How many victories has death won? There have been an estimated 100 to 110 billion human deaths on earth

since Adam and Eve. Death is inevitable, inescapable. But there's a limit to death's power and reach.

**Jesus: "Do Not Fear, only Believe."**

No fear, only faith.

The news of the daughter's death didn't even faze Jesus, didn't even slow His step. God's sense of timing is completely different than ours. God's never in a hurry, never rushed. God knows exactly what He's doing and when and why; He will not let us impose our finite sense of timing on Him.

In the midst of the worst news a person could hear, Jesus simply says, "Do not fear, only believe." Can you hear those words ringing in your ears?

The doctor says cancer or lupus or dementia or stroke or there's nothing more that can be done and Jesus says, "Do not fear, only believe."

The financial consultant says the investment is lost and Jesus says, "Do not fear, only believe."

The unwed daughter announces she's pregnant and Jesus says, "Do not fear, only believe."

The military officer on the door step says he has bad news about your son in Iraq, and Jesus says, "Do not fear, only believe."

Everyone else is weeping and wailing. Everyone is distraught beyond imagining and Jesus is says, "Do not fear, only believe."

Where in your life are you focusing on the crisis and not on the Christ, on the situation and not on the Savior? Do you believe only in what's possible, or do you have faith for the impossible?

Where in our lives is our fear or our doubt hindering or limiting the power of Jesus in our lives? Where is anxiety or fear stifling our prayers and our hope? How often does our small faith quench the Spirit's power and gifts from flowing freely?

Where there's faith, even a mustard seed of faith, there is Jesus. Faith opens doors and windows for the Spirit's work. Only one thing is necessary. Keep believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's an old truism that if you are in a ship in a storm, keep your eye on the captain. If he's not worried, then you don't need to be worried. In your storm keep your eye on Jesus. If He doesn't look fearful or anxious, then there's no need for you to be. As long as Christ is on the throne, "do not fear, only believe."

**Jesus, "Little girl, I say to you arise" and immediately she got up.**

Jesus tells all the professional mourners and weepers and wailers and flute-players to leave. He sends all the scoffers and mockers out. To this day it's still true, those who scoff and scorn and mock and ridicule are often denied evidence or proof. They are left to their unbelief.

Jesus tells unbelief to leave the house and He invites faith to come into the house, Jairus, Mrs. Jairus, Peter, James and John. God proves Himself to those who have faith and trust.

For the first time in the Gospels we hear Jesus speak His native language of Aramaic. Jesus says, “Little girl, I say to you arise” and immediately she got up.

How could that little girl obey Jesus if she was dead? How could she do what He told her to do if she couldn’t hear Him? The power to obey wasn’t in the little girl, it was in the words of Jesus. The command, and the ability to obey the command were all in the same word.

Jesus called her spirit to come back into her body (Luke 8:55 “and her spirit returned...”), and her heart started beating and her blood started flowing and her lungs started breathing and strength returned to her muscles and her brain cells were all perfectly restored even after being without blood and oxygen for hours. No rehab, no physical therapy, just fully awake, walking.

Jesus was face to face with the most ruthless, relentless, inescapable enemy of all of mankind, and He took her hand and says, as one pastor put it, “Sweetheart, it’s time to get up” (Timothy Keller, *King’s Cross*, p. 68). And she did.

Who has the power to do this? Only Him who created life and breathed life in the beginning can recreate life and breathe life again.

Jairus came to Jesus asking for a healing. But instead he got a resurrection. We come asking for one thing, and so often God has much more in store and much more that He wants to give us. But in the process He also often demands much more faith from us. He tests us and tries us.

If you think God is being unfair or unreasonable or too slow or not listening and answering; if you think God is being unjust or is committing malpractice, remind yourself that you can’t see all the facts or know the end from the beginning, that there’s much unknown to us. Turn your ignorance of the situation from frustration or disappointment into faith and trust and patience.

Is there some area in your life right now where God is seriously delaying? Are you getting impatient, are you about ready to give up? Is Jesus saying to you, “I have everything perfectly under control, do not fear, only believe?”

Is there someone who’s spiritually dead in your family? Are you a Jairus, calling out to Jesus on their behalf? Are you sending message after message to Jesus? He’s still today just as merciful and just as powerful to come to your house in answer to your prayer.

What does the Holy Spirit say in Ephesians:

**Ephesians 2:1-2, 4-6** You were dead in the trespasses and sins [2] in which you once walked, following the course of this world, ... [4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—[6] and raised us up with him ... (ESV)

He can take our sons and daughters by the hand and call them to rise up and no longer live for themselves but live for Him who died and rose again for the forgiveness of their sins.

## **Overcome with amazement.**

Jesus and death are not locked in a deadly dual to the death. They are not equals. One is a strong man and the other is a much stronger man. One is a king and the other is the King of kings.

Jesus raided the tomb and robbed death of its power. Jesus entered the dark place and took the keys. He has the keys. One day he will lock up death in a final victory.

On the great and final day when Jesus returns to earth He will give the command and call the bodies of all believers from their graves. One day all our bodies will be awakened by the sound of the voice of Jesus.

Believing wives will see believing husbands, believing parents will see believing children. And all believers will be united with Christ at home in heaven and every tear will be forever wiped from every eye.

While I was at the graveside for Emma Gibson Thursday morning and reading I Thessalonians 4 about Jesus coming again and raising up those who believe in Him the thought occurred to me that on that day there will be some family gathered in some cemetery and what would it be like to actually be standing in a cemetery when Jesus returns.

I also said on Thursday that we grieve and weep because we are human. But we grieve and weep with hope because we are Christians. Only Christians can grieve and rejoice at the same time. Joy and victory are the most prominent distinguishing marks of the Christian in the midst of death. This is what sets Christians apart from all other faiths.

## **Application and conclusion.**

Since the end of Mark 4 we have been confronted with a fierce storm, an evil demonic spirit, a woman who endured a terrible sickness for 12 years and the death of a 12 year old daughter. We have been confronted with some of the worst that this earthly life throws at us. Each one of these represents all the adverse challenges that come our way.

The storm represents all the natural disasters that endanger life on this planet.

The demonic spirit represents all the evil and wickedness that afflicts the minds and spirits of men and spills out into all kinds of abominations, immorality, perversion and sin.

The woman's hemorrhage represents all the sickness, disease and weakness that afflict our bodies.

The death of Jairus' daughter reminds us of our last enemy, the most feared reality that awaits us all.

Being a follower of Jesus doesn't exempt us from the influences of evil or entitle us to a trouble-free life. But neither are the followers of Jesus at the mercy of whatever evil comes. We are not helpless, by Jesus' power and authority we are made victorious in tribulation and victorious over tribulation.

Our hope and our help are only to be found at the feet of Jesus. The disciples in the storm, the demon-possessed man, the dying woman, the desperate father, all fall at the feet of Jesus. That's exactly where our hope and help lies.

In our troubled, broken, sick and sinful world Jesus is exactly the Savior we need. No one else promises and delivers on His promises the way Jesus does.

**Revelation 2:10** Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. (ESV)

I spoke at Emma's funeral that those who fear the Lord never have to fear anything else. The more clearly we know Christ and know His authority and power the more peace fills our souls. No matter what we are experiencing or going through, our confidence in Christ's rule and reign and power, settles in our minds and hearts that He is completely in control. If our master isn't stressed and sweating then there is no need for us to stress and sweat.

Jesus lost His life so He could give His life to us. If we will take His hand, we will be partakers of His resurrection. This table is meant to visually and visibly remind us of His love and grace and of His faithfulness to all His promises.

Here is set before us the tangible display of Christ's power and authority over death and His power and authority to give life, eternal life, for all who believe.

Greater is He who is in us than he who is against us.  
If God is for us who or what can possibly be against us?  
If our Savior can raise the dead, what is there that He can't do?

Do not fear, only believe.