

Do Not Fear, Only Believe

Mark 5:35-43

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²¹ While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" ³⁶ But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." ³⁷ And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹ And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." ⁴⁰ And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." ⁴² And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. ⁴³ And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.."

Here in our passage, we see people come to Jairus, the father of a 12-year old and tell him that it is too late. His daughter is dead. They want him to mourn and grieve. Their family had already begun mourning.

And yet, you see Jesus is there. When Jesus is around, when Jesus is with you and you are in Christ, there is hope. It's not a hope that is naïve. The apostle Peter says that we have a living hope. We have a hope that is firmly rooted in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

That is why we say often say when a believer dies, we grieve but we do not grieve as those who have no hope. 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

Yes, some believe after death comes nothing. Others believe in a re-incarnation of sorts. But our hope is Christ alone. *"If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied"* 1 Corinthians 15:19

Before we expound our passage today, let me give you a brief introduction.

Last week, we saw Jairus. He is the leader of the local synagogue, the place where the Jews worshipped. Jairus' daughter had been ill. Close to death. Jairus came to Jesus and pleaded with him to come to his house to heal his daughter.

You see his specific request in Mark 5: 23 – *"My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live"*.

Jairus had faith in Jesus. He believed that Jesus would not just heal his daughter but would be restored to full health and live a normal life. The girl was twelve years old. It is that age of human development when a girl transitions into puberty and then into adolescence. This father had faith not just for healing but for his daughter to be whole. But Jairus is desperate because his daughter is so close to death. And Jesus hears his plea and decides to go to his home.

As Jesus follows Jairus to his house, the crowd follows him. And a woman touches his garment. She is healed and made well. Jesus affirms and commends her faith. And while Jesus was still speaking to the lady who had had been healed, a group comes and interrupts Jairus. The disciples are close by. The crowd is pressing on to him.

What do they tell Jairus?

Verse 35.

³⁵ While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

You wonder what these people believed about Jesus. They perhaps *heard* and *saw* Jesus heal sick people, drive out demons, maybe even heard about how Jesus had stilled the storm. However, once someone is dead, all hope is gone they thought. There is no bringing back someone from the dead.

When you think about king David in the Old Testament, you see a similar response. David committed adultery with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. Bathsheba has a son as a result of the illicit relationship. And God brings sickness on the baby boy. David repents, fasts and prays before God in hopes that the child would be healed. He fasts for six days. On the seventh day, the child dies. And as soon David knew the child was dead, what does David do? David stops fasting and praying but worships God. And his people are puzzled and ask what he was doing – "*You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive; but when the child died, you arose and ate food*" 2 Samuel 12:21. David tells them "*Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again?*" 2 Samuel 12:23.

It's not unreasonable or unkind to tell Jairus that his daughter was dead. It's also not reasonable to seek medical help when you or your loved one is ill. The woman with the issue of blood sought all the medical help he could afford. It does take faith, however, to ask to ask Jesus to heal, not just for healing' sake but to be made whole.

So, the delegation tells Jairus to stop bothering the Teacher or the Rabbi – Jesus. Imagine the reaction of the father when he heard the news of his daughter's death. His

heart is sunk and crestfallen. He is probably ready to leave Jesus and go back home. But Jesus heard the whole conversation. Some point out that Jesus ignored their conversation. *What does Jesus have to say?*

Verse 36

³⁶ But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.”

Notice, Jesus speaks directly to Jairus.

Jesus says to him “Do not fear”! Do not cave into hopelessness, despair or anxiety.

It is said that 20% of adults in the United States, experience fear or anxiety, which results in a disruption of daily life.

This man had already given into fear. And Jesus offers him a word of hope and encouragement. Do not fear.

Jesus also says, “Only believe!” Believe in whom? Believe in Jesus!

Why? Because when bad things happen, we naturally drift towards fear and unbelief.

Bad news may come. Fears may come and grow but Jesus wants Jairus’ growing fear to be replaced with growing faith. This is not a one-time exercise. It is present active – Keep putting away fear. Keep believing.

Do the words of Jesus Christ speak in your life?

That is why a daily discipline of giving yourself to Scripture is so crucial. His mercies are new every morning. When you give yourself to the Word of God you’ll see reminders like the following:

“For the righteous will never be moved; he will be remembered forever. ⁷ He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord” Psalm 112:6-7

“I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. ⁵ Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed.” Psalm 34:4-5

“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.” Psalm 56:3

“The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” Psalm 118:6

Jesus doesn’t offer promises and walk away. Jesus walks with Jairus to his home. Jesus walks with you through your life journey. Isn’t that wonderful! Hebrews 13:5

What does Jesus with Jairus?

Verses 37 through 40.

³⁷ And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹ And when he had entered, he said to them, “Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping.” ⁴⁰ And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child’s father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was.

Jesus takes his inner circle of disciples with him – Peter, James and John. Jesus is met with a band of mourners. The culture of the time would usually hire professional mourners. They would hire at least two flute players and one professional wailing woman. Imagine that! Being the leader of the synagogue, this man’s household was able to afford more than three mourners.

It was quite a commotion when Jesus arrived at the house of Jairus. Weeping and wailing. This kind of mourning is still done in many parts of the world. I have seen many such wailings outside of homes in India. And you know that there has been a death.

However, Jesus is not taking any of this. Jesus tells them that the child is sleeping not dead.

So what do they do? They laugh at him. They scoff at Jesus.

Because the girl is really dead. Not sleeping.

Our world is filled with mockers and those who laugh the Gospel.

They have no idea who the Lord Jesus Christ is and what he can do. What they ought to have done is mourn for their sin instead of laughing at Jesus. Their sin blocks them from seeing who Jesus is.

James reminds us in his epistle “*Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom*” James 4:9

Jesus takes control and tells the wailing crowd to “get out”. The word used is *ekballo* translated “drove out or cast out”. Same word when Jesus cast out demons. The mourners are not demons but are a hindrance to the work of God.

When Jesus comes in, *hope* comes in.

You see when Jesus comes in, *life* comes in.

Jesus has driven the mourners out and calls in the father and mother. Peter, James and John are watching.

And all that Jesus says is two tender words to the dead girl. Imagine that!

Verses 41 through 43.

⁴¹ Taking her by the hand he said to her, “Talitha cumi,” which means, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.” ⁴² And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. ⁴³ And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.”

One commentator says that word “Talitha” which is in Aramaic means *lamb* as in sheep. The word *lamb* was used endearingly for children. The parents knew what this word meant. In their ears they hear, “Little lamb, rise up”. A very sweet and tender word to a little girl. But this girl was dead. And yet Jesus speaks to a dead girl to rise up.

And the result? She woke up and walk around.
The reaction? Amazement!

Imagine what the parents would have told those who were waiting outside. Jesus called our daughter “Talitha” (a little lamb) and she rose from the dead. And they were *ecstatic*. It says they were very ecstatic! They were filled with sense of rapturous joy and bewilderment.

- It’s the same reaction when Jesus had healed the paralytic and everyone was ecstatic.
Luke 5:26

This is a foreshadowing of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This girl who was raised back to life surely died again. She was put in the grave probably by her parents.

Just as this girl died, Jesus was crucified, died and was buried. And Jesus rose again from the dead.

When the women went to the tomb of Jesus on the third day, they found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. Mark 16:8 tells us the women fled because they trembled and were *ecstatic*. Same reaction as the parents and the disciples when this girl was raised.

Paul writes in Romans 4:25 “*Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*” You and I were once unrighteous deserving of God’s righteous wrath. There was no way you would be justified, reconciled or made right with God. But when you repented and believed Jesus died for your sins, and was raised he made you righteous!

There is an amazement that comes with the resurrection of Jesus. Why?

Because Jesus will never die again. All who are in Christ even though they die, they will rise from the dead and will never die again.

“Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment”. John 5:28-29

Jesus said *“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live”* John 11:25.

Politics can't save you. Self-help gurus can't save you. Being conservative can't save you. There are some who call themselves conservative these days and are dabbling in witchcraft. Good deeds can't save you. Jesus saves you!

So the girl is raised from the dead. She walks around. And in verse 43, Jesus tells the parents to keep this matter private. Why? Because Jesus does not want unneeded attention. They would mob him and try to make him king. He is already King! Jesus is also working on his own timeline as he prepares for the cross. Then all will see him. Jesus also instructs the parents to give her food. Proof she was really alive and shows us that Jesus cares for her needs.

When Jesus touches your life, there is a certain wonder and amazement that fills you. May the Living Christ instill hope and drive away fear. Do not fear. Only believe.

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: Do Not Fear, Only Believe! Mark 5:35-43

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. What assurance does Jesus give to Jairus following his daughter's death?

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. What are you susceptible to when fears and anxiety come into your life? What is Jesus' remedy? Go around and share.

3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

4. For personal reflection: What will you change in light of the resurrection of Jesus and the hope he offers?