

35 While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" 36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe." 37 And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. 38 Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. 39 When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping." 40 And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying. 41 Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." 42 Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement. 43 But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat. (NKJV)

Remember that this is part 2 of our text.

Last week we saw Jairus approaching Christ in desperation and powerlessness. He was probably a rich man, a leader, a religious big shot, and he had a dying daughter. She was 12 years old.

While Jairus and Christ were walking toward Jairus's home, a woman interrupted the progress. She was poor, unclean, a nuisance to the religious community, and a nobody. She had been sick for 12 years. Jesus healed her and then sought her out to talk to her.

This is where our story begins today.

While Jesus was talking, some people came from Jairus's house to tell him that his daughter had died.

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

Look at what was said here and who it was who said it. These people were from Jairus's house. Maybe they were friends of the family. They obviously felt like they were in a position of **advising Jairus**, so they were probably not servants. My guess is that they were people who were not wild about having Jairus call on Christ to begin with. Maybe they would rather have Jairus's daughter die rather than beg Christ for help.

So when they say, "why trouble the Teacher any further", I really doubt that this was a sincere statement. Like all they cared about was Christ's ministry. That may have been the exact opposite of what they really thought. They may have

been saying, you have no more reason to humiliate yourself by calling on this teacher who is so hated by the religious community.

And look at their assumption. Christ may have had some success in healing sickness. But death, now that is beyond his reach. No one can cure death. Death is final. Christ cannot heal death, they were thinking.

But look what Christ does immediately.

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe."

Notice that it says "the word that was spoken". The word used for word is Logos. This is the definition from **Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament**. A *word, yet not in the grammatical sense, but language*. Logos is the conveying of an idea. So what Jesus heard was not a single word. He heard a message, an idea conveyed. We need to understand that when we are reading scripture. Often what scripture is talking about is not *a dictionary single word* but *an idea* when the word, word is used.

Now Jesus knows how desperate Jairus is. He knows the blow that Jairus has just taken. He knows that the delay, due to this woman who was healed, had to be hard on him.

So Christ ministers hope immediately.

He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only believe."

Notice again the contrast between fear and faith, between fear and belief. We saw it in the storm in the boat and we see it again.

The word in Greek is phobeo (fa beh' oh). This is the word we get phobia from. It is the same word as was used in the storm. It means to be struck with fear, seized with alarm.

Last time I spoke on this I said that the only smart fear is the fear of God. And that is true. But I wanted to add some things I have learned since then. In the New Testament the writer of the book of Hebrews fears for the Hebrew readers. Paul was said to be afraid for the Galatians. Paul feared the Devil had deceived the Corinthians. Paul feared that he would visit the Corinthians and find them ill prepared.

It appears that when we are concerned for the spiritual welfare of others, that concern can be accurately described as fear. And that fear is a faithful expression of the love we have for others. But, as I preached a few weeks ago, that fear is never something that causes us to distrust or to disbelieve the power and intentions that God has to take care of His children. Nor is it something that causes us to disobey God or to treat His word as if it isn't true. And the fear was always addressed toward their spiritual welfare. We do well when we fear for fellow believers when they begin to go down a wrong path.

So back to the text- Christ told Jairus to not be afraid. Only believe.

Last time I spoke on this, I dealt with it in an exhorting fashion. Because sometimes we stubbornly hold on to our misery when we won't obey. But there is another side to this exhortation that is wonderfully positive. We as Christians have nothing ultimately to be afraid of. Christ has overcome all of the insurmountable enemies of our souls. He has conquered death and sin for us. He is greater than anything that is against us. He has promised us a wonderful eternity. And if we are truly **in His hands**, we cannot fall **out of them**. So when Christ tells us "Do not be afraid, only believe", there should be a response in our souls of joy. The kind of thing that comes when we remember... Oh yeah. Christ, the lover of my soul, is taking care of me. He's got it all worked out. Oh yeah, He has made promises to me that He will never leave me nor forsake me. Oh yeah, the God who made heaven and earth is still in charge. This is positive thinking at its finest. This is the remedy to much of what ails us. Really how wonderful is that statement- Do not be afraid. Believe.

Now Christ was giving Jairus hope in a hopeless situation. He was inspiring belief when there appeared to be nothing that would overcome his present obstacle. In this case Christ was intending to do a miracle. He was going to bring back his daughter. So Christ was giving some divine guidance into **what Christ's plan was** for Jairus and his daughter.

Now we don't always know what God's will is on this planet for those who are faithful. We read this in Hebrews.

Hebrews 11:32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again.

This is where the prosperity preachers end their reading. They say that Christ will always do these things. Faith is believing that God will do **these things**. But the truth is faith is believing God will do these things when **God SAYS** He will do these things. Faith is believing that it is **LIKE GOD** to do these things. But we don't always know. God was revealing to Jairus that He was going to a miracle. And it was up to Jairus to respond to Christ's command and to stop fearing and to believe. And what a wonderful thing Jairus is going to experience.

But there are other earthly outcomes. The rest of the Hebrews text says this.

And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in

sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented-- 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in dens and caves of the earth.*

Were these people less faithful? Did they have less faith in God? Did they not drum up enough belief in God? No. Not at all. God just had a different plan for them. They suffered more. **Why?** We don't know. **But what for?** That we do know. The world was not worthy of having these human beings in their presence. What a wonderful assessment that is. The writer is saying they were basically too good for this earth. And they faced all this suffering. And it was for a better resurrection. That is another reason that we should not fear.

39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. (NKJV)

So what did the suffering and the victories lead to? What was the ultimate design for both those who tasted of God's **provisions of grace to remove suffering** and those who tasted of **His grace to persevere through suffering**? What is it all for? It was not for a kingdom that resides on earth. It was not for hope in our best life here and now. No. It is for **a city that is to come**. A better resurrection. It is for something in the future. It is for a future grace.

And the goal for those who were **saved from suffering** and those who were prepared **to endure suffering** is that they will all be perfected. We who are believers will all be perfected together.

So Christ said to Jairus, "**Do not be afraid; only believe.**". And that also applies to us as well. In our story Christ was preparing Jairus for the miracle Christ was about to perform. He actually said, based on the verb tense, don't be afraid but keep believing. You had belief when you came to see me. Don't give that up. Keep believing even in the face of this news, even in the face of death.

Our situation may be different. We may be like the first group or the second group in the Hebrews list. But either way, the answer **is the same and for the same reason**. We should not be afraid because ultimately God will deliver us.

Aren't we all like Jairus? Aren't we all tempted to lose faith when hard times come? Why does God delay? Why does He not do those things we know He can do? Why do our loved ones suffer? That is hard on all of us.

And the answer is always, "Do not be afraid. Only believe." Whatever we lose in this life is worth what we gain in the next. Christ will take care of us. We can trust His character. We can trust His wisdom. We can trust His knowledge. He knows us. He intends good for us. But it may take a long time for us to see the glorious outcome He has in mind for every one of His children.

Jairus was not going to have to wait long to see it. The people in the second part of the Hebrews passage had to wait a long time. Luke 8:50 adds a little bit to what Jesus said here. In Luke Christ added “And she will be made well”.

Wow. What a hard thing that would have been for Jairus to believe. And what a foolish thing it would have seemed to be to all onlookers. Believe that Christ will raise someone from the dead? That is preposterous.

And that idea still is preposterous to the world. It is mocked everywhere. And **as we walk to that final destination** where Christ will perform this miracle, we find we have a lot in common with Jairus in this situation.

How sweet it is that Christ comforted this man on the walk to his house. He could have made him wait to know what He intended. But Christ didn't. He told Jairus what His plans were for Him.

37 And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James.

Now they are getting close to Jairus's house and Christ limits the people going into this house. We don't know exactly why. We can easily see that Christ could not have taken the whole crowd into the house. But why just this few?

It is easy to guess why he took Peter, James and John. They were Christ's inner circle. Maybe Christ wanted to limit the witnesses to those who would be able to clearly see and hear everything that was done. We don't know. But only a few of those who were closest to Christ got to go in.

38 Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. 39 When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."

Now, we have to understand some things before this will make much sense to us. There are some things about Jewish funerals in that culture that are very different than ours.

First, the mourners expressed their grief by tearing their clothes. It would be offensive if you did not show your respects in such a way. There were even written down rules about how this was to be done. So there would be no misunderstanding.

Second professional mourners were hired to, essentially, create the right mood. While we tend to suffer in silence, these people want the grief broadcast and outward. So people who were very good at this sort of thing were hired to do the job. They could, conceivably, not even know the deceased. But they were going to mourn just the same.

Then third musicians were hired. Normally they were flute players who could make mournful sounds. MacArthur reports that “even the poor were required to have at least two flute players and one wailing woman.”

That is what Christ walked into.

So Christ essentially says, why all this racket? You only are supposed to do this when a person dies. This child isn't dead. She is sleeping.

Now, how would you think the crowd at Jairus's house is going to respond to all this? Christ is essentially accusing them of not knowing how to tell a dead person from a living person. What Christ did would have resulted in a sudden silence. It would have been a dramatic event.

So, why did Christ say that the child was asleep when He knew she was dead? First, it puts death in its proper perspective. People tended to view it as an end. Jesus redefined it as a period of rest between two periods of activity. So when He called it sleep, it was not sleep as most people thought of it. But it was, in essence, a sleep.

I Thessalonians 5:10 refers to death as sleep when the author says, "whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him". It is clearly speaking of death in that passage. Christ also referred to Lazarus as being asleep, but he clarified to the disciples, when **they thought** he meant Lazarus was literally sleeping, that Lazarus **was really dead**. So it was not uncommon for Jesus to refer to a person he was going to raise from the dead as being asleep.

Now there are those who would say that there is no period of rest at all. They say that scripture says "absent with the body, present with the Lord". And they may very well be correct. It certainly does say that. There are also other passages that would lead one to believe that.

There are others who would say that when we die we enter a period of rest, of sleep. And we await the resurrection in that state. They, too, can refer to a lot of passages to back their position.

I have looked at both sides and I am uncertain. That is probably a hanging offence by *die hards* on both sides of the argument. But I don't know. I have a list of passages that fill up the back page of one of my Bibles. Half of them support this idea of sleep. Half of them refute it. My stance right now is that we will experience death just like scripture says. The next thing we will know after leaving our bodies is the presence with the Lord. That is all I really need to know to realize that a faithful life will experience a rich reward.

Now the second reason for Christ calling the child "asleep" when she was clearly dead could have been to **create some doubt** about what really happened. He was already being crushed by the crowd for **healing** people. Can you imagine what will happen when they all know **he can bring people back from the dead?**

40 And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying.

The mourning crowd ridiculed Christ because they knew she was dead. And Christ said that she was sleeping. In other words, these people who were so loudly wailing in their pretentious grief now are in Christ's face laughing and mocking Him. The word ridicule means they were laughing in His face or were laughing Him to scorn. This crowd shows what they think of Christ. And they also show how little grief they really felt for this poor girl.

Those who spent time around Christ were beginning to learn that they do well to wait to see what Christ had in mind. But these strangers to Christ responded like any person would when told that something they clearly knew to be true was not true.

Now Christ forcibly had all these noise makers and mockers put outside. They had no right to see the precious thing that was about to happen. Had they responded differently, maybe they would have had a chance to witness this miracle. But they had chosen to mock instead of worship and it would be their loss.

So now we have the father and mother of the child, and Peter James and John, and Christ, and the dead girl, and they went into the room where the dead girl was lying.

41 Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise."

This is so touching. We see a picture of the tenderness of Christ's love toward His children here. He took the child by the hand. He took the dead cold lifeless hand of this corpse. And he spoke to her. And what did he say?

He spoke in Aramaic. This would have been the everyday language of the common Jews. Talitha means lamb or youth. He referred to her as "little lamb". Now this girl was 12 years old. She was at a marriageable age. She was considered an adult in their culture. But both her parents and Christ saw her differently. To them she was a little lamb.

When Christ says, "I say to you arise", the emphasis is on the I. The emphasis is on the one commanding. If the emphasis would have been on the word, **you**, this girl would have been in a world of hurt. She cannot bring herself back from the dead. No amount of her effort would have accomplished a thing. But the beauty of salvation is the **authority of the Savior**. It is **He** who makes it all happen. It is **He** who gets all the credit. And it is only **He** who brings a person from death to life.

42 Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement.

Now Luke tells us that **immediately her spirit returned**. The million dollar question is, where did it return from? But that will need to wait for another day. The child heard the command from wherever she was and she came back at Christ's enabling command.

And she got up and walked. There was no recuperation time. There was no time of healing. This miracle was complete. She is back in her body and her body is perfectly fine. Remember that she was previously sick to death. Now, she is not only not dead but she is perfectly fine. The power that Christ holds over both sickness and death is absolute.

And how do the disciples and the parents respond? They were overcome with great amazement. They were blown away. The word for amazement is to stand outside of one's self or to be besides oneself with bewilderment. "Wow" wouldn't even begin to express this emotion.

Can you just imagine being there?

Mom and Dad were just grieving seconds before. The worst thing in their lives together had just happened. They were devastated. And now, now they are speechless in their joy. They have been granted the greatest gift they had ever received.

43 But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat. (NKJV)

Verse 43 strikes me as being a bit odd.

Christ commanded them strictly to do two things. If you didn't know what came next, what would you expect that He would say?

You might think Christ would say:

Now you need to continue to follow me and let everyone know what I did for you?

We might think He would say that, but that isn't what He said. He commanded them:

Don't let anyone know what happened.

And feed her.

I don't know why but that strikes me as being funny. Here is a major earth shaking miracle. And what is it followed up with. The most daily mundane task that billions of good mothers have done year after year. Feed your kid.

Now it might be that the disease this child had really required food and soon.

Mom and dad shouldn't get so swept up in this amazing moment to miss the mundane needs of her child. How compassionate of Christ to concern himself with this child's nourishment.

And the other thing- don't tell anyone. The way he words it, it almost seems like He is saying, don't verify this with anyone. It goes beyond don't tell anyone. He is telling them to say so little about it that no one can figure it out. They are going to ask, was she really asleep or was she dead? I really can't say. What did Jesus do? I really can't say. How did she get up and walk? I really can't say.

Now it is interesting that Matthew tells us that the report of this went out into all the land.

This doesn't necessarily mean that these parents didn't do what Christ said. Remember there were a bunch of people there who knew what a dead person looked like. And they knew that Christ was the only variable in this picture different than anything they had seen in the past. So they probably gossiped this event all over. But they would always have a seed of doubt in the back of their minds as to whether Christ was really correct when He said the little girl was just asleep. And that would help Christ to remain alive long enough to complete His task.

In closing,

We have got to absorb here the tender compassions that Christ has for His children. We do not always see this outcome in our lives on this planet, just as the book of Hebrews shows us. But we can always trust the intentions that Christ has toward us if we are His. We too are his little lambs. We are loved. And we too will be addressed one day with powerful, yet loving, commands that **we too should arise**. Death has no power of Christ. It is not a limitation for Him. Christ has shown his disciples. He has power over the dangers. He has power over the demons. He has power over the diseases. And He has power over death. If Christ is for us, who can be against us?