

Where is God in This Horror Show?

Mark 5:21-43

21 And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. 22 Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet 23 and implored him earnestly, saying, "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." 24 And he went with him.

And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. 25 And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, 26 and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. 27 She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. 28 For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well." 29 And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. 30 And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?" 31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" 32 And he looked around to see who had done it. 33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. 34 And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

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?" 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.

- Mark 5:21-43, ESV

As I read today's reading, two people's sayings came to mind:

1. A friend of mine, a Christian man, would always respond to the question, "How are you?" with "Better than I deserve." And I would always think, "That's so true!" and would often say, "Aren't we all?"
2. An atheistic woman was asked about God and she responded, "Where is God in this horror show?" I also sympathize with her words. Very often, life in this world is a horror show.

So, where is God? Why is life so often a horror show? And how can we say that we're all doing better than we deserve?

One of the things I love about the Bible is that it's a brutally realistic book. It doesn't cover up sin or minimize suffering. Some Christians act like it does. Some atheists and skeptics will attack the Bible for condoning rape and slavery and murder, but the Bible doesn't condone those actions; it just shows them

for what they are.

In today's passage, we see two heart-breaking "horror show" incidents: A woman who has had a discharge of blood for twelve years and a young girl who dies at twelve years old. Twelve years is an awfully long time to bleed but a terribly short time to live. Sadly, we live in a world where these things happen all the time. So, where is God?

First, the very fact that Jesus came into the world and healed the sick and raised the dead tells us what God thinks about these horrible realities. Remember that, according to the Bible, such suffering comes into the world as a result of sin. God hates sin and all of the consequences it has brought into His creation, which is why He sent His Son into the world- out of love for His people and hatred for sin and its curse.

Secondly, Jesus' victory over sin and death on the cross and in His resurrection secures victory and final deliverance for His people. Those who trust in Jesus and hold fast to Him in faith have assurance that the "horror show" is temporary but God's love and salvation for them are eternal. Jesus showed that He has the power to defeat all horrible enemies: sin, sickness, demons, blindness, paralysis, death. His promise is that each of these realities is only temporary.

Third, we can learn to trust God that the horror show is not without purpose. The world may seem to be spinning out of control, but it's not. God has all things in His hands and works all things for His purpose. That doesn't mean that He is in favor of everything that happens or that He delights in evil. But evil can have purpose and can be used for good, if God is in control of it all. Otherwise, it truly is senseless. This is hard, because at times, everything within us screams out "Senseless!" But we need not give in to despair. God is working, even when we can't see His hands.

Where is God in this horror show? He is hating the evil, which he sent His Son to defeat, even as He is working redemption for those who trust in Him. And so, in the midst of the horror - which our sinful rebellion against God has brought into the world - we are all doing better than we deserve.