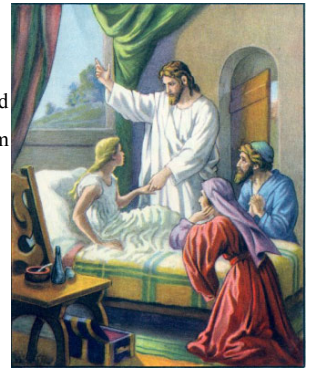


2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27
 Psalm 130
 2 Corinthians 8:7-15
 Mark 5:21-43

Ruler's Daughter is Raised
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DO NOT FEAR, ONLY BELIEVE

Our lesson last week was at the end of Mark 4, where Jesus rebuked the wind and the sea and there was a great calm. Mark 5 continues from that point. After they crossed the sea, Jesus met the man who dwelt among the tombs in the country of the Gerasenes, and he cast out demons from him (Mark 5:1-20).

Jesus and his disciples then got back into the boat, returned across the Sea of Galilee, and were met by a great crowd (5:21). Among these were Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, and a woman with chronic bleeding. Jesus healed the woman and raised to life the daughter of Jairus. In short, Jesus performed four miraculous signs in this short time interval. In our lesson this week we discuss the fourth sign, that is, the raising of Jairus' daughter. First, discuss the following points with regard to these great signs.

1. What were the four signs, and what did Jesus do in each?
2. Each sign shows how Jesus had power over something, or power to do something. Discuss the four signs from this point of view. What do the four signs, taken together, imply concerning Jesus Christ?
3. What does each of the signs mean to you personally? How does each sign affect your view of the future?

Mark 5:21-24a. *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 besought him, 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.*¹

- *He was beside the sea* (v.21). Jesus returned to the vicinity of Capernaum, where he was welcomed by a great crowd. If you have a map, locate Capernaum at the north end of the Sea of Galilee.
- *Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name ...* (v.22). Rulers of the synagogue were in charge of arranging the order in public worship and supervised the general operation of the synagogue. Rulers did not usually preside or preach on the Sabbath, but they assigned those who did. They were among the most respected men in the community.
- *He fell at his feet, and besought him* (v.22-23). Here we come to the point on which the outcome of the story depends. Jairus came to Jesus at the time of his greatest need. Any parent with a young daughter (who turns out to be twelve in this account) on the brink of death can imagine his anxiety – his panic and despair.

But the main issue was not the *need* of Jairus, or his anxiety or despair. It was, first of all, his *faith* – faith in the power of Jesus. Nicodemus had faith when he came to Jesus saying, "*Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him.*" (John 3:2).

Second, there is the issue of *surrender* – his willingness to give up everything – *count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus* (Phil 3:8).

Jairus evidently loved his daughter more than his own life, which is surprising. A son maybe, but not a daughter. Daughters were not generally as "valuable" in those times. She must have been a real favorite – the apple of her father's eye.

How do we know Jairus loved his daughter so deeply? Consider what this man had to risk giving up, to come publicly like this and fall at the feet of Jesus. Jairus was, for the moment at least, forsaking dignity, pride, prejudice, possibly even friends and associates:

¹ Bible quotations are from the RSV.

Dignity: Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, but Jairus came openly, in front of a large crowd, many of whom would have recognized him. He put aside his dignity and threw himself at the feet of Jesus. This was a remarkable thing for him to do. It shows Jairus had his priorities in the right order.

Pride and Prejudice: Jairus put pride aside. Instead of staying at home and having Jesus brought to him, he left his pride at home and brought himself to Jesus. And he forgot his prejudice. Instead of letting the natural predisposition of an orthodox Jew blind his eyes to the signs Jesus performed, he left prejudice at home, believed the signs, and came to Jesus for the sake of his daughter whom he loved.

Do pride and prejudice blind your eyes today? Consider what is lost, and what is gained, when a proud person surrenders his pride and prejudice and throws himself at the feet of Jesus!

Friends: Suppose a life-long friend advised Jairus, “Don’t go to that blasphemer! If you do, you won’t have any friends around here!” It would not have mattered to Jairus. The risk of losing his daughter outweighed the risk of losing friends and influence. How many today are willing to come and throw themselves at the feet of Jesus, knowing their friends might not understand, and see it as a sign of weakness?

- “*Come and lay your hands on her ...*” (v.23). Believing Jesus had power to heal, Jairus pleaded for his daughter’s life. He had counted the cost – nothing mattered as much. He was willing to put aside everything and throw himself at the feet of an itinerant rabbi for whom his peers had no respect. But he was right in doing so. Hearing this, Jesus went with him (v.24). Compare two similar occasions, (1) when Naaman the leper came to Elisha (2 Ki 5:1ff), and (2) when the Centurion sent for Jesus to cure his servant (Luke 7:2ff).

Mark 5:35-43. *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 ignoring 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*When they came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, he saw a tumult, and people weeping and wailing loudly.* ³⁹*And when he had entered, he said to them, “Why do you make a tumult and weep? 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 walked (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.*

- “*Do not fear, only believe*” (v.36). The rest of the story unfolds here. Jairus must have been crushed by the news from home until he looked in the eyes of Jesus and heard the words of assurance, “*Do not fear, only believe.*” Faith, and the grace of God, had brought Jairus out of his house and to the feet of Jesus, and faith, and the grace of God, would take him home to his daughter, who from that time on would have the most loving and caring father in all Israel, as well as a powerful witness to the saving power of Jesus.

When you become lost in any of the storms of life we discussed last week, give heed to these words of Jesus, “*Do not fear, only believe.*” Just as faith and the grace of God restored Jairus to his daughter, so faith and the grace of God will, in days to come, restore you to those you have loved.

Regarding this great sign – the healing of Jairus’ daughter – how did you answer the third question at the beginning of this discussion? Certainly one meaning for us is that trust in Jesus and belief in what the Bible says about him is of life-saving importance. And when the time comes to assert our faith and trust in the face of cynicism and unbelief, you and I must do so, even when it means giving up pride and reputation among friends. Paul explained how this works in 1 Cor 1:26-29: *For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, ... so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.*

So let us pray today for faith like that of Jairus, who threw himself at the feet of Jesus – faith that will take us home in the end – and hearts that have learned always in times of crisis – even death itself – to look to Jesus whose words are for all who come to him: “*Do not fear, only believe.*”