

Jairus meets Jesus \* Luke 8:41-56

February 7, 2021 \* Langford Community Church \* Graham Gladstone

When I began my ministry here at Langford, I had no idea how many funerals I would do. I've talked with other pastors about it and in some cases, I've done more funerals in a year than they've done in their entire career! But it has been a real privilege and honour to be able to share with so many of you in such a trying and sensitive time as the loss of a loved one.

And if there is one thing that I've wanted to let people know in the midst of it, it's that there is hope. Hope for life beyond the grave. Hope for resurrection. And the passage that we're looking at today is one of the reasons for that hope.

We're going to revisit Jairus' story in Luke 8 today. We kind of left him hanging last week but that's because his story is interrupted by the story of the suffering woman. Jairus' story is like the bread of a sandwich with the woman in the middle so we're going to go back and see what happened with Jairus and his daughter. So Luke 8, starting in verse 41. Luke 8, verse 41.

Now Jesus has just returned from a missions trip and there's a crowd waiting for him. And in the midst of that crowd was a man named Jairus.

Jairus was the ruler of the local synagogue – essentially the pastor for the local area – and he was in a terrible place. His daughter – his twelve year old daughter – his ONLY daughter – was on death's door. It's really easy to get the sense that in ancient times children were not very important and parents were kind of aloof towards them – but I think it's really touching to see here just how deeply Jairus loves his daughter. Because he goes and throws all the dignity and authority that comes with being 'ruler of the synagogue' to the side and throws himself at Jesus' feet and begs Him to come to his house to heal his daughter. You get a sense of just how important Jairus' daughter is to him.

Jesus agrees to go and so Jesus and Jairus and a crowd of hangers on start making their way towards Jairus' house.

Now, it's along the way that we run into the suffering woman. She's been suffering for as long as the daughter's been living and she comes up and touches Jesus' cloak and instantly she is healed. And it's here that the action grinds to a halt, because Jesus stops and says 'who touched me?'

And I'm sure that Jairus' blood pressure hit the roof. Because his daughter is gravely ill.

Have you ever stood behind somebody in line at the checkout and they take forever to get through or the cashier is taking forever to get it done – like they stop and talk with the person about the product they've just scanned. That's fine, but when I'm on a tight schedule, I have to really discipline myself to breath and be patient and not say – can we get on with it?!

And I'll bet that's what Jairus is feeling. His daughter is very sick! Like, not 'she's got a few days' but 'she's got a few minutes' (we know that because of what happens next) but Jesus stops and has all the time in the world to help this woman who had been suffering for years.

And again, this shows us that Jesus' timing is not our own. Jairus wants Jesus' attention now, but in Jesus' timing, what's happening now will actually help Jairus later.

So the woman admits that she touched Jesus and Jesus declares 'Your FAITH has healed you; now go in peace' and those are important words for Jairus to hear. Because as Jesus is uttering those words, somebody from Jairus' house shows up at the scene. And this person, whoever it is, really needs to work on their bedside manner, because they come up beside Jairus and say (v. 49). "Your daughter is dead. Don't bother the teacher anymore."

And just like that, Jairus' heart breaks. His daughter is dead. His precious daughter is gone. And yet, verse 50, Jesus says to Jairus - "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed."

Now this is key. Here Jairus has this quantifiable, testable report from his house saying that his daughter is dead, and yet he's just witnessed Jesus healing a quantifiably, testably suffering woman without an ounce of effort. And Jesus is telling him "Don't be afraid; just believe and she will be healed."

Who's he going to listen to? The voice of the messenger? Or the voice of the Lord?

Verse 51 - When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother.

52 Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her.

People in the ancient near east were much more demonstrative in their mourning than we are; they're making a huge scene weeping and wailing for this girl and Jesus says to them - "Stop wailing," Jesus said. "She is not dead but asleep." 53 They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead.

Now, let's pause for a minute. THEY know she's dead; does Jesus really think she's asleep? No, of course not. 'Sleep' is just a euphemism for death, just like 'passing away.' Jesus knows that she is gone, but to Him, it's like she is only sleeping.

But again, Jairus has a choice. Who's he going to listen to? The voice of the crowd, that says "she's gone"? Or the voice of the Lord who says "she's only 'sleeping'"?

Jesus is standing there in Jairus' house, mother and father trusting that Jesus came use the same miraculous power He used to heal the woman for their daughter, Peter, James and John standing awkwardly in the background, and Jesus takes the girl by the hand and says 'my child, rise.'

And just like that, 55 Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up.

She was alive. She was dead and then Jesus said the word and she was alive. Jairus, I'm sure, threw his arms around her and broke down in tears, sorrow turning to joy, knowing that Jesus did what He had said He would do.

And I think that even though it was hard, Jairus had faith along the way. He chose to listen to Jesus, to trust Jesus, that death was not the end. And that was the right thing to do.

Because when it comes to death, Jesus has the final word. And that word is rise.

The people laughed at Him; they said 'look, we know a dead end when we see it; we know a hopeless case; just give up' but Jesus says 'no, just believe, for she will rise.' And that she did.

And Jesus, you know, says the same thing to us. 'Don't be afraid, only believe and you too shall rise again.'

All of us, unless Jesus comes back first, will face death. We will each take a final breath, just as Jairus' daughter did. But death does not have the final word when it comes to life. And when we know Jesus and believe in Him, we can be absolutely sure that we too shall rise, just as Jairus' daughter did. Just as Jesus Himself did. (1 Thessalonians 5:13-18).<sup>i</sup>

Think about John 3:16 – God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son so that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. We will all die but when we die believing in Jesus, He will raise us up to everlasting life.

And we know that because Jesus Himself rose from the dead. He came into the world, sent by the Father. He died as a ransom for sin to restore us to God and then He rose to life again to show that death no longer held sway over the people of God. Jesus has the final word when it comes to death and that word is 'rise.'

So how do we apply this?

Let's start here. Death can be a very scary thing. Life is good and we don't want it to end. And losing a loved one is an incredibly difficult thing. It's heartbreaking to lose a partner or child or friend. There's no doubt about it.

But when I go to meet with a family to plan a funeral, I want them to know that there is hope. Hope for eternal life. Hope for resurrection. The absolute certainty that if their loved one has fallen asleep in Jesus, they too shall rise, just as Jesus did.

And I want them to know that they are not alone. Jesus, who laid down His life for them, is with them and He weeps with them. But death could not keep Him down and God raised Him up to life again.

And so I think that we all need to hear Jesus saying – 'don't be afraid, only believe and you too shall rise.'

As you think about death, as you mourn a loved one – don't be afraid. When God is involved, death is not the end. 'Death' is no more than a sleep in God's eyes and we have nothing to fear when we are walking with Him.

So, just believe. Jesus laid down His life for you. Jesus rose again for you. Turn from sin and walk with Him, trusting with all your heart in His power and faithfulness...

And you too shall rise. Jesus will raise you up on the last day and say 'well done, good and faithful servant. Come dwell in the house of the Lord forever.' Our hope is not floating around on clouds with cream cheese like angels; our hope is eternal life in resurrected, glorified bodies that make these bodies look like junkers.

So... 'Don't be afraid, only believe and you too shall rise again.'

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<sup>i</sup> 13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.

14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.

15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.

(1Th 4:13-18 NIV).