

Sermon outline and notes prepared by:

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## Mark 5:21-24, 35-43 “A Daughter Brought Back to Life”

Intro. This morning we will consider the story of a sick 12-year-old girl, and her desperate father. He knew that if something wasn't done soon, she would probably die. In fact, he said to Jesus in v.23, “My little daughter lies at the point of death.” Some of you parents have known what it is like to have a child that is seriously ill. Such is a time of trial indeed, and at such times we realize our own helplessness, and our need for God. In the case of Jairus<sup>1</sup>, this illness caused him to seek Jesus, & beg Him to save<sup>2</sup> her life.

I heard about an elderly lady who was in the hospital and one of her doctors came in and said, “Madam, we have done all that we can, and all you can do now is just trust the Lord.” She said, “My soul, has it come to that?” Well, one good thing that can come out of an illness is that it leads us to turn to God for help.

It was not easy for Jairus to come to Jesus publicly and ask for His help. The synagogue was ruled by a board of elders<sup>3</sup>, and he was one of those rulers. The things that Jesus had done and taught in the synagogues had aroused the anger of the scribes and Pharisees, some of whom were probably Jairus' friends. The religious leaders who were opposed to Jesus would certainly not approve. But Jairus was desperate. He would rather lose his friends and save his beloved daughter. Desperation makes men bold.

But this man was not only driven by desperation, but also drawn by trust. Since he was probably living in Capernaum, we may assume that he had heard about and even witnessed some of the miracles performed by Jesus. He was sure that, even though his little darling had been all but dead when he ran from his house, Jesus could save her life. From v.23 we see that the man believes in the healing power of the touch of Jesus.

But then, before Jesus could reach the little girl, the sad news arrived. The messengers bluntly announced that the little girl had died. The messengers were not very diplomatic about conveying the alarming news. Grief must have stabbed the heart of that father.

Some of you have known the deep grief of losing a child in death. You can feel for this man. Sickness & death can strike in any household, including those who are prominent in society. But it was at this man's lowest point that Jesus really began to minister to the father and others. Throughout this entire event, it was our Lord's words that made the difference. I will use the four statements of Jesus beginning in v.36 as the basis of my message today. I want to show you how you can have hope as you face difficult and even hopeless situations. First of all:

### I. KEEP ON BELIEVING IN CHRIST

After hearing the messengers of death, Jesus said in the last of v.36, “Do not be afraid; only believe.” You see, once the child had died, in their mind all hope was gone. In their mind even

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<sup>1</sup> It is pronounced Ja-i-rus, the voice being stressed on the letter `i.

<sup>2</sup> That's the literal meaning of the Greek word translated “heal.”

<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Acts 13:15 mentions “the rulers of the synagogue.” Their duties were to select the readers or teachers in the synagogue, to examine the discourses of the public speakers, and to see that all things were done with decency and in accordance with ancestral usage.

Jesus could not do anything about *death*. Death was viewed as final, & irreversible. In their mind there was not even the remotest possibility that Jesus would be able to restore a dead person. So they said in the last of v.35, “Why trouble the Teacher any further?” The speaker evidently was thinking more of being polite to Jesus than of the poor father’s stricken heart.

But Jesus was not swayed in the least by these messengers of gloom & despair. Rather, He began to minister to this father who had come to Him such faith. No doubt, based on appearances and human experience, Jairus himself had abandoned hope upon hearing of his daughter’s death. No doubt all of his being responded with convulsive sorrow when he heard that his beloved daughter was dead. But Jesus gave him hope. Jesus literally said, “Stop being afraid<sup>4</sup>, only keep on believing.” Now why did He say, “Keep on believing”? When he first came to Jesus, notice his expression of faith in the last of v.23, “Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” He clearly had faith in the healing power of Jesus while the child was yet alive. Furthermore, his faith was certainly helped when he saw what Christ did for the woman with the issue of blood. Now Christ is saying, “Don’t quit! Keep on believing!” He was to continue believing, even in the presence of death.

We see here an example of the fact that a person can have faith in Jesus, but through circumstances, our faith can be weakened. The darkness & greatness of our troubles may cause us to doubt that God will do anything for us. Have you been there? Well, at such times you need to hear Jesus say, “Be not afraid, keep on believing.” After all, with God, all things are possible (Mark 10:27).

Now if you give heed to this word of faith, you can experience the blessing of loosing your fear. That’s because faith is the only victorious antagonist of fear. Notice that Jesus said, “Do not be afraid; only believe.” Or it can be translated, “Stop being afraid.” If you truly believe, you will not be afraid.

There are times in our lives when real dangers and miseries stare us in the face. At such times it is normal to respond with fear. But when we have fear, it is quit evident that we are not exercising faith. So in such times we need to put our faith in Jesus, the Son of God. Then faith will drive out our fear.

A little child goes to bed, and after the lights are turned out & mom walks out, he becomes fearful of the dark. He cries out to momma. She comes back & says, “Don’t be afraid. I’m close by & mommy & daddy won’t let anything happen to you.” Well, the more the child believes in the love of his parents, & the power of his parents to prevent any harm, the more the child will loose his fear, & go to sleep in peace.

Now if we say to our children, “Don’t be afraid, I won’t let anything happen to you,” how much more is our Heavenly Father saying to us, “Don’t be afraid, I won’t let anything happen to you.” He loves us, & has the power to keep any lasting harm from coming into our lives.

As Jesus resumes His journey to the house of Jairus, the crowd must have wondered what He was going to do, now that the situation—as the people must have viewed it—was utterly hopeless. Was He simply going to console the mother, & the rest of the family? Well, when Jesus arrives on the scene He shows us next of all that:

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<sup>4</sup> We have here a present imperative in a prohibition which forbids the continuance of an action already going on. The ruler was fearing (Wuest).

## II. WE SHOULD HAVE HOPE IN CHRIST

Before I share about this word of hope, notice the background of despair & hopelessness that we see here. In v.38 we read, “Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly.” When Jesus and Jairus arrived at the house, he saw & heard a tumult (*thorubos*). There was a large crowd that was noisy, troubled, & in an uproar. Some cultures are very expressive in showing & verbalizing their grief, and that was all the more true in this case. You see, the news of the tragic death of this little girl brought many to the house. Since burial took place within 24 hours, they had to arrive on the scene quickly, mostly at the same time. No doubt the crowd was also large because the father was an important person in the community. Notice also that Christ saw “those who wept and wailed<sup>5</sup> loudly.” It is likely that professional Jewish mourners were among the people gathered there. Some people are really good at expressing sorrow with both body & voice; so good, in fact, that they were paid for their services! It was traditional for them to wail loudly, to weep, and to lead the family and friends in lamentation. Here then was weeping and wailing, moaning and groaning, at its loudest! There was howling without any attempt at restraint.

Now against that backdrop of weeping & despair, we see:

A. The Assurance of Hope – Jesus said in v.39, “Why make this commotion (*thorubeo*) and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.” What the mourners were doing was completely out of place now that Christ has arrived for two reasons: 1) Many of them were insincere. They were just paid professional mourners doing a job. 2) He was giving them hope for a resurrection! When Jesus said, “The child is not dead but sleeps”, that cannot have meant that the child had merely fallen into a coma. He was not denying that she was what men call “dead.” No doubt her body was cold & lifeless. However, in the triumphant consciousness of His own power, He was denying that in this case she was dead with the finality that accompanies that word. The child was not dead to stay dead. Just as natural sleep is followed by awakening, so this child is going to become awake, that is, is going to live again! So in the face of such mourning & sorrow, Jesus immediately gives a word of hope.

This truth gives great hope to all of us who have had Christian loved ones and friends depart in death. Because of Jesus, death is only sleep; for the body rests until the moment of resurrection (1 Thess. 4:13-18). The spirit does not sleep; for in death, the spirit of the believer leaves the body and goes to be with Christ (Phil. 1:20-23). We will see them again! And with such hope Paul said in 1 Thess. 4:13 that we can avoid the same kind of “sorrow as others who have no hope.” But with our hope in Jesus, we can have joyful anticipation that we will see our loved ones again. Believing parents will once more see believing children. Believing husbands will once more see believing wives. He who raised the daughter of Jairus is still alive. When He comes again & gathers His flock on the last day, not one lamb will be found missing. So even in the face of death, Jesus Christ gives us hope.

And so, we see on the one hand the assurance of hope. But on the other hand we see next of all:

B. The Unbelief of Man – In v.40 we read the response of the crowd to the words of Jesus, “And they ridiculed Him.” The reference (*katagelao*) is probably to repeated bursts of laughter

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<sup>5</sup> The word is an onomatopoeic word, that is, a word whose sound is logically related to its meaning. It is *alalazo* "to repeat frequently the cry *alala*," as soldiers used to do on entering battle (Wuest).

(imperfect tense) aimed at humiliating Jesus. Does not this very laughter also confirm the belief that the child had really died? Of course, we cannot very well blame these people for not knowing that life was about to triumph over death. However, what Jesus was saying about the child not being dead but sleeping was a word of revelation, deserving of solemn reflection, not scorn. Wasn't it possible that He who had healed the leper could raise the dead?

When Hudson Taylor, the famous missionary, first went to China, it was in a sailing vessel. Very close to the shore of cannibal islands the ship was becalmed and it was slowly drifting shoreward unable to go about, and the savages were eagerly anticipating a feast. The captain came to Mr. Taylor and sought him to pray for the help of God. "I will," said Taylor, provided you set your sails to catch the breeze." The captain declined to make himself a laughing stock by unfurling in a dead calm. Taylor said, "I will not undertake to pray for the vessel unless you will prepare the sails." Finally, after drifting closer to shore, it was done, so Hudson Taylor began to pray. While engaged in prayer, there was a knock at the door of his stateroom. "Who is there?" The captain's voice responded, "Are you still praying for the wind?" "Yes." "Well" said the Captain, "you'd better stop praying for we have more wind than we can manage." And sure enough, when but a hundred yards away the cannibals were cheated out of their human prey.<sup>6</sup>

The world may laugh at people of faith, but we should not be deterred by them. Let us keep on believing, and keep on hoping that death will be swallowed up in victory.

So if we keep on believing, & put our hope in Christ, then:

### III. WE CAN WITNESS THE POWER OF CHRIST

Here we see Jesus speak the word of resurrection power to this little girl. Now notice what happened. In the last of v.40 we read, "But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him<sup>7</sup>, and entered where the child was lying." What a contrast between the noise outside and the still death-chamber and its occupant. With what hushed, tense expectation they would enter the chamber! Think of the tearful mother's eyes watching Him. Then in v.41 we read, "Then He took the child by the hand...." I can imagine that Jesus took her hand with tender love & compassion.

Now notice in the last of v.41 what Jesus said to the little girl in Aramaic, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." So when He said "arise," at that very moment she started breathing, & blood began to pump through her body. A moment ago she was a corpse, pale and lifeless. Now she is filled with life, health, and vigor.

Furthermore, in v.42 we read, "Immediately the girl arose and walked...." She did not slowly regain her life & health. Immediately she was alive, and well enough to get up & walk. The imperfect tense pictures her continually walking about in the room. She is not just alive, but her full health & strength has been restored to her!

No wonder we also read that "they were overcome with great amazement." The astonishment of the overjoyed parents and of the three disciples as well knows no bounds. Let us think for a moment how wonderful was the change that took place in that house. From crying to rejoicing—from great mourning to great amazement—how great and marvelous must have been the transition! There must have been a happy family gathering that night!

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<sup>6</sup> Oriental and Inter-American Missionary Standard, in Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*: #1493 (Rockville, Maryland: Assurance Publishers, 1979);

<sup>7</sup> V.37 says, "He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James."

Remember how Jesus told the father to keep on believing? Well Augustine said, “Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.”

By this miracle we clearly see that there is power in the word of the Son of God. If you are dead in sin, may God help you to turn to Jesus in faith, & He will speak the Word, & you will have new life. If you are facing some great & foreboding problem in your life, turn to Jesus, who can give you hope when all seems hopeless, for He has the power to overcome that problem. Furthermore, the greatest problem we face is death. Here we see that Jesus is the Son of God, & He alone can bestow eternal life after death. He alone can raise up our lifeless bodies on that great Resurrection Day.

So if we trust in Christ & put our hope in Him, we can not only experience the power of Christ, but also:

#### IV. WE CAN EXPERIENCE THE LOVE OF CHRIST

I want you to believe that the same love Jesus expressed for this little girl is for you as well. Let’s see the love of Jesus in this story. First of all, we see His love & compassion:

A. Before the Miracle – Jesus expressed His love by taking the girl by the hand, as no doubt, her mother had done many times. As He does this He addresses her in her own native tongue using the very words by means of which her mother & father had probably often awakened her in the morning, namely, “*Talitha koum,*” wake up, little girl. Jesus had the same kind of love for that little girl as her own parents.

But we also see the love & compassion of Jesus:

B. After the Miracle – Mark reports in the last of v.43 that Jesus “said that something should be given her to eat.” Jesus realizes that the little girl, who because of her fatal illness had probably not been able to eat for some time, was in need of food & drink; and that the parents, in the ecstasy of their joy, might overlook this need. Therefore, He commanded the parents give their daughter something to eat. The evangelist adds this detail in order to reveal the marvelous thoughtfulness & care of Jesus, as the Great Physician. He thought upon a small bodily need. He gives the greatest; He will take care that we shall not lack the least. He is the One who taught us to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” If we trust in Him, we shall have the food we need. This is the same Savior who defended widows (Luke 18:1-8; 21:1-4), helping them in their needs (Luke 7:11-17), took little children into his arms and blessed them (Mark 10:16), wept over Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37-39), and showed kindness to the woman who was a public sinner (Luke 7:36-50).

What Christ has done for others, He will do for you. If He so cared for others, He cares for you. Put your trust in Him. He will provide for you needs.

Conclusion: What problem are you facing today? Do you have a sick one at home? Have you recently lost a love one? Do you have an unsaved family member that you can’t seem to reach? Well put your trust in Jesus, and don’t give up hope. He is the Son of God. He cares for you. He can do the impossible.

If you are not yet a Christian, do you realize that your sins will condemn you to the darkness & torment of eternal death? Do you fear death? Then trust in Jesus. He can forgive you, &

impart new life to your soul. Then you can have eternal life, and see your loved ones again who also believe in Jesus. Trust in Christ as your Savior today!

Sources: William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975); Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture*, Vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977 reprint); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [CD-ROM] (Ontario: Timnathserah Inc., 1996); J.C. Ryle (1816-1900), *Mark: Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993); Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Diligent: Mark* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1987); Kenneth S. Wuest's *Word Studies From the Greek New Testament*, Vol. 1, Mark (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950). Other sources listed in the footnotes. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982). McGee read (Mark), but not used.