

6th Sunday after Pentecost
“Don’t be afraid! Only Believe!” Mark 5:35-36
June 30, 2024
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost is from our Gospel reading, Mark 5:35.

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.”

So far our text.

Two messages fell upon Jairus ears, the ruler of synagogue. The two messages were diametrically opposed to each other. The first message was completely devastating. Jairus’ beloved daughter who was gravely ill had succumbed to her sickness. The father had lost his little daughter.

What thoughts would have been racing through his mind? Denial? This can’t be. Grief. I’ll never hear her beautiful voice again and feel her loving embrace. Death stops us in our tracks. It upheaves the lives of those close to the person who dies. What plans and celebrations did Jairus look forward to spending with his daughter that were no more?

Jairus had come to Jesus in faith. He trusted Jesus that He could lay His almighty hands on his daughter and she would be healed. He was sure of that. And Jesus had agreed to come to his house. They were on the way. Jairus most certainly was looking forward to seeing his daughter well again and no longer suffering after Jesus healed her.

““Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.”

But Jairus was expecting to reach his home and find his daughter still alive. But, the crowds pressed upon Jesus. Their pace was undoubtedly slowed by the crowd. And then a woman who also trusted in Jesus sought him and believed if she could just touch Him, she would be healed.

She did touch Jesus and Jesus felt His power heal the woman. So He stopped. Another delay in reaching Jairus' home. "Who touched My clothes?" Jesus asked.

The disciples couldn't give Jesus an answer because there were so many people around Him. But the woman came forward on her own and explained to Jesus why she had touched Him.

"Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Jairus must have heard this witness of faith and understood the miracle that Jesus had performed. His anticipation for Jesus to do the same for his little daughter must have been increasing.

And then came that devastating message. "Your daughter is dead."

It was at that moment, that moment that Jesus saw was crushing the confidence of Jairus that He gave Jairus a message of hope. Don't be afraid. Only believe. Don't be afraid that your world has just been turned upside down. Don't be afraid of your own mortality. Don't be afraid that you will never see your daughter alive again. Only believe that I am still the Lord of Life.

We heard last week how the disciples feared for their lives when a strong wind was sinking their boat. "Why are you afraid?" Jesus asked them. Was Jesus not in the boat with them?

When we hear life threatening news from a doctor or a weatherman or a family member, we are tempted to fear the worst. We are tempted to lose faith.

But that is why Jesus in that moment, quickly spoke to Jairus a calming message of hope. Don't be afraid. And they continued to Jairus' home. Jesus doesn't tell him that his daughter will live. Jesus only commands him to believe and whatever the will of God is, it is always good.

And when they arrive at Jairus home, the message of death was loud and strong. The people wept and wailed loudly. And when Jesus told them that Jairus daughter was not dead but asleep, they ridiculed Jesus that He would be so brazen to speak of the little girl as if she was alive. How dare He! Who did He think He was?

But, she was. The little girl's soul never died. It was always alive with Jesus. And her mortal body was resting. It slept until Jesus dared to wake it up. And He did! Jesus took the mother and the father and Peter, James and John with Him to where the girl was lying.

Jesus took her by the hand and said, **“Little girl, I say to you, arise.”** And immediately she arose and walked. Give her something to eat. She's not a spirit. She is really alive!

Believer in Jesus, you are alive body but more importantly in spirit. You have been given a new spirit in your baptism and your spirit will never die. United with Jesus death and resurrection through your baptism, your soul lives and your sleeping body will be raised up on the last day. And it will be changed into a glorious body! Don't be afraid. Only believe!

So, Jesus continually reassures us through His Word and Sacraments to not be afraid. Believe that your sins are forgiven by My death on the cross and that death cannot harm you for I have risen from the dead and you will also. Take and eat, take and drink My body and blood and know that there is no condemnation for your sins. Believe that death is but a sleep for the body but the soul lives in heaven. Believe in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come!

None of us are exempt from hearing the first message that Jairus heard – your loved one has died. Your friend has died. And each of us, who only believe, will also face the moment when we will cease to live in this world. But in that very moment, a believer's mortal body but sleeps in the arms of Jesus and the believing soul wakes immediately in glory with all the saints in heaven.

So what did Stephen say in his last breath as they were stoning him?

“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Acts 7:59

What does Paul say in Philippians 1?

“21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.”

Paul tells us that death for the Christian is gain. Why? Because when a Christian departs, he or she is with Christ.

So also Jesus told the believing thief on the cross. **“Today you will be with Me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43)**

Jesus told the family not to tell others about what had happened. We see why when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. The unbelieving chief priests immediately plotted to kill Jesus and Lazarus. Jesus still had much work to do before His death that couldn't be disrupted so early by evil unbelievers.

But, that is not the case for us. Jesus wants all people to know that He is the Lord of Life, that He has conquered death. He wants each of us to tell others of the hope that we have in Him. He wants us to be ready to tell another person who is grieving, “Don't be afraid. Only believe in Jesus.” For Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Jesus says, **“He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.”**

Though the body will sleep, yet the soul will live! What great news for you today and every day to treasure and tell others!
Amen.

“And this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)