

JJ¹

Is there anything that tugs at your heartstrings more than the sight of a sick child? Our hearts ache to see children battered and bruised in a hospital bed because of an accident or abuse. Our throats and chests get tight, seeing a child ravaged by cancer and bald from the chemo. A parent goes to world's end to bring health and safety to their sick or injured child. Some of you have been right in the middle of that challenge yourselves. You know where Jairus was in his mind and heart so long ago.

You can be sure Jairus did whatever he could for his twelve year old daughter. An important man in their community would get whatever help was available. But there was nothing the doctors could do. His little girl was still dying. **THE DEFEAT OF DEATH** was beginning to weigh heavy on his heart and that of his wife's. You can imagine them beginning to prepare themselves for the reality that time was running out. Their daughter was going to die.

In that same area around Capernaum lived a woman whose life was also in shambles. She is all alone. She is a religious and social outcast. Why? Because her womb was broken. It had been broken for the last twelve years! Her constant menstrual bleeding meant not only that she was weakened and in

pain, but that she was also ceremonially unclean (Lev. 15:19-31). This meant she couldn't have contact with others or go into the synagogue for worship. She lived in seclusion. This law which was given as gift of relief by the Lord had become an impossible burden. On top of all that, Mark tells us: "She had suffered much under the care of many physicians and had spent all that she had. Yet instead of getting better, she grew worse." (Mk. 5:27). After all those years of pokes, prods and shame, she's left with nothing. She's been defeated by life and left for dead by the world around her.

Where do you find yourself in these two? Is the situation dire and desperate? Has it come at you from left field, crumbling your world? Or, is it the condition or situation that has ground on for years and years and years? Whether financial, medical, emotional or all three, you hear people say "Time heals all wounds," and yet your wounds remain the same, even grow worse. Days grind on and on, and God appears to be the enemy.

These two people, so very different, and yet at the same time so very similar. They're both desperate. They both go to Jesus. "When Jairus saw Jesus, he fell at his feet and repeatedly pleaded with him, 'My little daughter is near death. Please come and place your hands on her so that she may be healed and live.'"

¹ JJ is the acronym for *Jesus Juve*, which is Latin for "Jesus Help". It is a short prayer used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the beginning of their work.

This important man falls at Jesus' feet. He tells Jesus what's happened again and again. He knows Jesus can help, and yet he still has room to grow in his fledgling faith. Notice, he still tells Jesus what to do, "...place your hands on her so that she may be healed and live." Jesus doesn't need to go at all. And yet, as we'll see, Jesus goes with Jairus and will eventually give to him in just the way Jairus has instructed, but not because Jairus has commanded. Jesus will go and touch so that Jairus and four others would grow all the more in their faith and witness

THE DEFEAT OF DEATH.

They set off on their way through the massive crowd that's so excited to see Jesus do something for this important man in their community. Just picture Jairus and his men trying to drive through this horde of people. And in this clamoring crowd is this sick and frail woman weaving her way through. Notice that nobody comes with her. Nobody brings her. You read how often others brought their sick to Jesus. But she was abandoned. Remember, she is a religious and social outcast because of her bleeding. That's why she never came before. How else could she come to Jesus except in the crowd? There she could hide her face from all those who knew her. There she

could hide the trail of her condition. In the jostling of all the people, it was the perfect time to come.

"...she went up behind Jesus in the crowd and touched his robe. She said, 'If I just touch his robe, I will be healed.'" Is it because of superstition that she only touches Jesus' robe? Certainly not! It cannot be judged by Jesus' own words to her as he praises her faith. Maybe she also said to herself, "He will understand. He will know, and that will be enough."



Jairus is in a hurry. His little girl is dying. Driving, pushing, rushing. And everything grinds to a halt. Jesus stops, turns around and asks the crowd, "Who touched my robe?" The disciples show the absurdity of this question, if Jesus was asking for his own benefit. But that's not why he asks. He asks for the benefit of this poor

woman, *and* urgent Jairus. He's healed this scourge in her body, and now it's time to give healing for her soul.

Imagine her panic! She's healed, but now the woman who wanted to hide is being called to public view! Mark tells us she was "trembling with fear." And notice what happens. She now takes the same position which only moments before had been the position of Jairus. "She came

forward, fell down in front of him, and told him the whole truth."

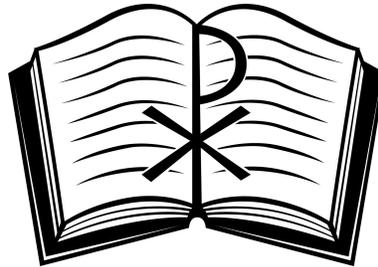
How long must that have taken? Twelve years worth of pain, suffering, shame, loneliness. Twelve years worth of the devil trying to push her soul into spiritual death. And yet Jesus lets her get it all out, just like Jairus. What a load it must have been off her mind and soul to let it all out!

Then the first word she hears fall from Jesus' lips, "Daughter..." This little word opens the floodgates of grace to her broken heart. With this little word Jesus lets her know that her situation with God is in perfect order. "You are a daughter of Israel and child of God." And then Jesus does that which seems strange to us. As he does in other instances, Jesus praises her faith, something that only he gives and works in her! Her faith in Jesus brought her to trust that Jesus could and would help her in his need. "Go in peace and be healed of your suffering."

It's easy to see Jesus' pause benefiting this woman, but how could this be a benefit for Jairus? His faith is now put to the test all the more. He must now learn humility. He must be chomping at the bit to go, but notice he says nothing. He's learning how to trust that Jesus knows what's best.

Then Jairus' world ends. "While Jesus was still speaking, people from the synagogue ruler's house arrived, saying, 'Your daughter is dead. Why bother the Teacher anymore?'" Now the devil presses in Jairus' own heart to doubt any care from God, attempting to rip every trace of faith from his heart and work spiritual death.

Where have you found yourself in Jairus' place? Where it seemed as though God was too slow to help. Where the **THE DEFEAT OF DEATH** came before help could come or take effect. Think of the times where you felt hope melting from your heart, being replaced by doubt to the point you let bitterness have you.



This news comes and you can just picture the massive crowd quickly fading away. Better to leave the father mourn alone. But who is still there, Jesus! And Jesus now tells Jairus what to do. "Don't be afraid. Only believe." These aren't just empty platitudes. They can't be, not when Jesus says it because he gives what he says. "Don't be afraid. Only believe."

Mark tells us that "Jesus did not allow anyone to follow him except Peter, James and John..." Have you ever noticed that Jesus' really big miracles are usually hidden from sight? Jesus had just performed a beautiful miracle for a woman who was a nobody that would

soon be forgotten by those present. But the big one, the one everyone really wants to see, Jesus only allows five people witness.

But that is how God operates. Just think how Jesus' crucifixion and death happens on the busiest road on the busiest day of the year for all the world to see. The resurrection itself, **THE DEFEAT OF DEATH**, is hidden from all. Why? All so that we would cling to Jesus' word: "Don't be afraid. Only believe."

And that is how Jairus went with Jesus. That is how he could even look in his wife's eyes when he entered his house. That's how he could ignore the laughter of the mourners when they heard Jesus say, "The child is not dead, but sleeping." That's how Jairus could walk into his little girl's room which so recently had been filled with life, but was now nothing more than a tomb. That's how Jairus, his wife, and those three disciples could meet **THE DEFEAT OF DEATH**. It couldn't be hidden. There she was, all twelve years of her, dead and gone.

Then Jesus does that which would make him unclean. He reaches out and takes hold of that little, lifeless hand! "*Talitha koum!*" "Little girl, I say to you, arise!" And there in that moment, immediately,

those five people witnessed **THE DEFEAT OF DEATH!**

Jesus' implied promise, "Don't be afraid. Only believe." is fulfilled. Jairus' daughter is raised to life. Death is just a sleep for the Christian. You see, friends, while you and I are always stuck in the present, God views all things from the end. When God made that first gospel promise of the Savior to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, it was as good as done because the words and promises of God cannot be broken—no, not even to you!

So "Don't be afraid. Only believe." You are not alone. Jesus and his love is always with you. Death is defeated and one day soon you shall see it and live it. *In the face of death, Jairus trusted the promise even when he could not know exactly what form the fulfillment of the promise would take. That's our trust, too, when disaster, even death, approaches. We take refuge in the promise of Jesus to go with us, even if it means a journey to the cemetery.*² So friends, "Don't be afraid. Only believe" in **THE DEFEAT OF DEATH**. Amen.

SDG²

² Deutschlander, *Planning Christian Worship: Year B, Non-Festival*, Pentecost 6.

³ SDG is an acronym for *Soli Deo Gloria*, which is Latin for "To God Alone Be The Glory". This is a statement of humility used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the end of their work to let themselves and others know that it isn't about getting glory for themselves, but about giving all glory to God.

Artwork by Ian M. Welch—Copyright 2013 Ian M. Welch. All Rights Reserved. paramentics.com

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture is taken from: The Holy Bible, Evangelical Heritage Version™ (EHV™) copyright © 2016 The Wartburg Project. All rights reserved. www.wartburgproject.org