



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

In last week's Gospel lesson, we saw Jesus use two simple words, "Be still" to quiet a powerful storm on the Sea of Galilee. Remember how the disciples were then filled with great awe and said, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" And that my friends is a question that everyone of us must answer.

When Mark, our Gospel writer wrote about the life of Jesus, he told us of the claims of miracles and signs done by Jesus. His purpose for writing was to show us that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah of Israel. For Mark there is no doubt that Jesus is not only the Messiah but also the Lord of all things. As the Lord of all things, Jesus even quiets the wind and the waves. And in today's lesson we hear Mark's detailed accounts that Jesus is the Great Healer, and He can also raise people from the dead.

In all the cases where Jesus preforms miracles, we notice that the individuals involved are mostly helpless and hopeless. The men on the unruly seas feared for their lives, the woman with the history of 12 years of hemorrhages and Jairus's daughter as well, was totally out of options as she had died. All hopeless or so it seemed. But with Jesus present there was healing, deliverance and then salvation was offered. Mark makes it clear that the power of our Lord Jesus is ultimate. Yet, Jesus is also compassionate and

tender when the world crashes in on us. He understands our human needs and is sensitive to our suffering.

And so, when Jesus finally returned to the Capernaum side of the Sea, the Jewish side there were these two people waiting for Him. Similar in need for Jesus, they were two very different people. Jairus was rich and had social standing in the religious community. The woman with hemorrhages had no money as she had spent it over the years on medical treatments that did not work. With the bleeding, she was an outcast from society and treated not much differently than those with leprosy. Jairus is named in the story, the woman is not. He seems to have it all and she has nothing. Yet, they both demonstrate great faith. For the woman it did not take much to have faith in Jesus as He was truly her last hope. Jairus also had faith in Jesus even though his standing as a religious leader should have made him question the idea that Jesus really had special powers.

For all of these differences from the financially impoverished to the rich, from the religious leader to the socially outcast, we note that Jesus does not favor one over the other. At first reading we hear the story of Jairus even as it is broken up by the story of the woman in need. It seems that this woman with hemorrhages is plopped right into the middle of Jairus' request to help his daughter. Just image how impatient Jairus must have been as Jesus stopped to help this woman. After all his daughter was dying and needed help now. We recall a similar story of interruption, when Jesus did not arrive on time to the pleas of Mary and Martha, as their brother Lazarus died. A good reminder that healing comes in Jesus' time not ours.

But Jesus does care for both of the "daughters" as they are called in our scripture text. He heals the woman of her malady and then continues on with Jairus to bring his daughter back to life.

Jesus healed the unclean woman as she touched his cloak. He then asked who touched him, even though he already knew everything about this woman. He was not put off by her uncleanliness nor her fear to come forward. Jesus took time for her as she fell at his feet. Calling her daughter, Jesus said that her faith made her well.

And then on to the daughter of Jairus. With the crowds surrounding Jesus, he continues to head for the place where the 12-year-old girl is dead. The mourners are there outside the home, the crowd is wailing in grief and as they approach the father know his little girl has died. Jairus is overcome with grief

as the crowd tells him not to bother Jesus as it is too late. So, Jesus steps in and tells them that she is not dead only sleeping. The crowd laughs at Jesus as they think they know better. Surely, they know when a person is dead. So, the crowds are kept away as Jairus, his wife and the three favored disciples accompany Jesus to see the child. Jesus touched her and says, "Little girl, get up!" All were amazed that she was now alive and hungry.

Jesus did not let the mourners; the crowds determine his action with Jairus' daughter. He knew what he was going to do. Death was not going to be this young girl's fate. Death too often has its own agenda and timeline, but Jesus was there to make sure that she came alive. For those that know God, the reality is that there is an offer of eternal life, a free gift from Jesus himself. He showered more abundant life on this little girl even though she had died. So, thanks be to God for the free gift of life through Jesus.

The Gospel writer Mark, wants to tell these stories so we can come to understand Jesus is our Messiah, sent by God, He gave us the amazing gifts of forgiveness, healing, eternal and abundant life. Jesus died on the cross and rose again so we could have these true gifts from a God who takes time with each one of his children.

This week I read a story that made me think. (Also brought a tear to my eye.) Once upon a time there was a teacher who was working in a children's hospital. She received a call to visit a boy who was in the burn unit. His regular teacher had called her with a request. "We are studying nouns and adverbs in class. I'd be grateful if you could help him with his homework, so he does not fall too far behind his classmates." The hospital teacher went. It was her job. She wasn't prepared for what she found. The boy was in a clean room. Fully bandaged and in pain. She said softly: "I am the hospital teacher. Mrs. Barnes, your teacher at your regular school asked me to help you with your nouns and adverbs."

The next day a nurse asked the hospital teacher, "what did you do to that boy?" Before the teacher could offer her apologies for being uncomfortable and unprepared, the nurse continued; "We were worried about him. But ever since you saw him yesterday, his entire outlook has changed. For the first time since he came here, he is actually fighting. He is responding. He is got a new lease on life."

What happened! The boy eventually shared that he had given up. He felt hopeless and helpless. But when he thought about the teacher who had come

to see him, he realized, "The school would not waste its money, time and concern sending a teacher to work on nouns and adverbs with a dying boy, would they?"

We are all hopeless and helpless without our Savior Jesus Christ. Jairus, the bleeding woman and we are there together regarding our eternal destination. We cannot climb the good works ladder fast enough to save ourselves. We cannot, no matter how hard we try, reach eternal life on our own. Jesus already died for our sins and to give us eternal life. What we are now to do is to do what Jesus told Jairus. "Do not fear, only believe." What great advice.

Whatever bad situation you are in, do not doubt but rather believe. Nothing is hopeless when God is in control. God through Jesus Christ was in control that day as reported by Mark for Jairus' daughter and the woman. God is in control in our days of trouble as well. Mark gives us these stories so we too can come to believe that God has infinite power not just over the waves and the wind, but of all creation. Our God is a God of compassion and mercy who came to set us free to be his children.

Yesterday, at Rodney's sister-in-law's memorial that I officiated at, I read the beginning of John's Gospel chapter 14 which says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me." Jesus went ahead of us to prepare a place for us, yet we still ask the question, how can we know the way to eternal life? Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

And that folks is the answer to the question, I proposed at the beginning of this message. "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

AMEN