

**June 27, 2021 The Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
From Here to Eternity?**

Mark 5:21-43

²¹When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. ²²Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet ²³and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." ²⁴So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." ²⁹Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" ³²He looked all around to see who had done it. ³³But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

³⁵While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" ³⁶But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." ³⁷He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. ³⁸When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." ⁴⁰And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" ⁴²And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. ⁴³He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God

Folklore lives in a sort of "what if" universe. In that world Lazarus, having been raised from the dead by Jesus, is still roaming the earth. He is hidden among us because not only can't he die a second time, he doesn't age either. It's possible he's still roaming the earth, or living up Mosier's Knob somewhere beyond Michaels Road. My father once looked at me and said, "I've forgotten more than you'll ever know." He only had sixty five years to do that; imagine what a two thousand year old Lazarus has

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forgotten. I'm not sure if Jairus' daughter shares the same fate. When Jesus brought her back from the dead was it to spend two thousand years as a twelve year old. That could be tough. In most cultures the mythology about life after death doesn't veer far from these ideas. Norse folklore predicts life for the fallen heroes will be pretty much the same old same old. "What do we do today?" "Well today we fight until lunch time then we party through the night." Do the Vikings ever get weary of feasting and fisticuffs in the great hall of Valhalla? What's more, who gets to clean up the eternal mess?

If Count Dracula shows up with an offer to take you to eternity what would you say? Who wants to sleep in a box of dirt all day and live on a liquid diet? Eternity in something close to our everyday life on earth is not really attractive. What it hides is what we should be honest about. We cannot conceive of eternity or what we might do forever more, but we can want a little more. I've often imagined having someone come back for a day without the pain and suffering that accompanied their passing. Just one more day, one time to tell them what has been happening since they left, and hearing their opinions on many subjects, events, people we have come to know. Is it a betrayal of Christ's offer of forever to say, "no, I would like a little more though."

The resurrections that precede Jesus are in answer to that sort of request. In the Gospel accounts someone has died recently and Jesus is able to revive them, but not just revive them. It wouldn't do Lazarus or the little girl much good to be revived if what caused their deaths wasn't also cured. The world is littered with hospitals founded by religious orders and denominations from before we understood much about the causes of illness. Mostly they took care of folk's daily needs and hoped nature or God's intervention would prove effective. Sometimes misguided interventions convinced

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people it was better to suffer at home than be suffered on by well-meaning clergy. Even today, when we know about germs and viruses and cholesterol and processed sugar and over/under active thyroids, I have often quoted the passage about the woman having endured much under many physicians.

Here are the terms; Jesus' father has a house with many mansions where he went to prepare a place for us. Despite all our much improved health care there will come a time when we won't have that little more here we all want. Some of us will be ready because medicine can tire a person out. What will be is beyond our ability to imagine since it involves for ever, but we are anticipated by one who commanded a little girl to breathe again as breath was given to her in the first place. She was given a little more because eternity does not fit on this earth. We learn to trust God here and now for there and then.

Closing Prayer: O God, light of the minds that know you, life of the souls that love you, strength of the thoughts that seek you: Help us so to know you that we may truly love you, so to love you that we may fully serve you, whose service is perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.