

The Sixth Sunday After Pentecost

July 8, 2012

Amazing Grace Lutheran Church – Pastor Chip Wilke

Mark 5:21-24, 35-43

When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” So Jesus went with him....While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher any more?” Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.” He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

In any class on how to study the Scriptures teachers will tell you it is of great value to read the Bible with imagination. What they mean is it helps to picture the events in your mind and put yourself in the text. It was not very difficult for me to do this as I studied this story before us. I have a twelve year old daughter of my own, Katie. I am not a synagogue ruler, but I am a pastor who is very involved with everything that goes on in this church. So once again it didn’t take a whole lot of imagination for me to put myself into this text today. My prayer is that each one of you also pictures these events in your mind and places yourself into this beautiful and amazing account. As we do this I want each of you to answer this question: **What if Jesus did this for my little girl?**

Jesus arrives back in Capernaum, the vicinity where Jesus had healed the centurion’s servant and the nobleman’s son. Due to Jesus’ reputation a large crowd gathers around Him. We are introduced to one man in particular. His name is Jairus and he is one of the synagogue rulers. This prominent and well known man would have taken care of the administrative duties at the synagogue. Jairus falls at Jesus’ feet and starts to plead earnestly with Him. He has a big problem. His little girl is sick, very sick, literally at the point of death. Luke tells us this is Jairus’ only child. Daddy’s little girl is sick and dying. It is not very difficult to picture the urgency and the heart wrenching emotion that go into these words: **“My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.”** “Jesus, please come with me, place your hands on my little girl, and save her” is Jairus’ request. What if this was your little girl? What would you expect Jesus to do if this was your request? We simply read: **“So Jesus went with him.”**

On the way they are delayed by crowds that press against them. Then a woman who suffered for 12 years with one touch of Jesus was healed. While that probably only took a few extra minutes it must have seemed like agonizing hours to Jairus who wanted Jesus at his

daughter's side now! Then some men arriving from the house of Jairus give the worst news a dad can hear: "***Your daughter is dead.***" Could there be any more stinging words than this? Your little girl is gone. "***Why bother the teacher any more?***" They tell Jairus to just leave Jesus alone because it is too late. What good is this teacher now they think? What good did it do Jairus to come to Jesus for help when now his daughter is dead?

What a test this had to be for the faith of Jairus? Did he do the right thing by coming to Jesus? Would he have been better served staying at his little girl's side for her last minutes on earth? Is Jesus really the answer to what he needed? Do we ever wonder the same thing? When we start to suffer do we give in to our fears? Are we tempted to give up on God? When bad things happen to us the world will ask us: why bother with church and God and Jesus anymore? What if this was my little girl? What if we had to hear the news no parent ever wants to receive: your daughter is dead? Would we question if Jesus was enough? Would we think about giving up on God? If so, we need to hear again what Jesus tells this synagogue ruler.

"Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe." Flat out disregarding what others said about bothering Jesus, Jesus lets Jairus know that his faith has not been misplaced. Jairus had come to exactly the right place by taking his greatest need to Jesus. "***Have no fear and put your trust in me,***" Jesus tells him. Jesus continues to go with him taking his inner circle of three disciples. When they get to his house Jesus sees a great commotion. Put yourself into this scene. You arrive at your house and people are crying aloud. Since you know so many people as the synagogue ruler there are people everywhere waiting for the burial that would usually take place the same day or the day after death. Matthew mentions flute players are already there playing and Luke speaks of others gathered around wailing and beating their breasts. Everywhere around you the harsh reality is screaming at you: "***Your little girl is dead!***" In fact when Jesus sees all this commotion and says "***the child is not dead but asleep,***" the people laugh at Him. They ridicule Jesus because all the facts were there and she was dead.

Now as you put yourself into this scene and think about what happens next ask yourself: what if this was my little girl? ***After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.*** Mouth left hanging open, jaw-dropping, eye-opening, heart throbbing joy doesn't even begin to describe how I would feel if this was me. If my little girl was dead and Jesus with His powerful Word gives the command and brings her back to me I too like these parents would immediately be exceedingly astonished. I too would be speechless as Jesus was the one who needed to tell them to give her something to eat. She needs to regain her strength and her parents need to take care of her once again. I too would want to listen now to anything Jesus tells me to do.

There are many wonderful lessons to be learned in this account of Jesus raising Jairus' daughter. Jesus is the one to turn to with all our problems, even our biggest of troubles. Jesus loves us enough to go with us and be with us in our every moment of need. Jesus is more than just a teacher. Jesus is, as Mark set out to prove with writing this Gospel, truly the Son of God. We have seen Jesus' power over the devil, His power over nature, and now in this most spectacular miracle up to this point we see Jesus' power over death. We learn that with Jesus by our side there is nothing to fear. All we need to do is believe. When it comes to my little girl, or

any of our children, no one loves them more than Jesus.

This is one Bible story where it is pretty awesome to put ourselves into these words and think about what it would mean if Jesus did this for my little girl. But the reality is dear friends we don't have to imagine this happening to us because this is exactly what Jesus has done for us. Jesus did this not just for our little children, but for our fathers and mothers, our brothers and sisters, our grandparents and grandchildren, our neighbors and friends. For God so loved the world He gave us His Son, His one and only Son, that all who believe will not perish but have eternal life. The Son of God has conquered death not just for Jairus' little girl, but for you and me and all the world by paying for the sins of all. On the cross Jesus died our death and on the third day was the greatest miracle of all as our Savior rose in triumph. Now Jesus has promised to raise us up again on the last day. Our death too will be but a sleep. ***“Don't be afraid; just believe.”***

What if Jesus did this for my little girl? Ask yourself this question this morning. Then recognize that Jesus did. He gives us eternal life. He fills us with joy and wipes away all our tears. After witnessing our Savior's love and compassion the questions now become: how can we not obey Jesus' orders to go into all the world and tell everyone exactly what He has done? How can we not want to love and thank and serve and obey Him day after day after day? Amen.