

## Mark 5:21-43

21 When Jesus had crossed again in the boat[a] to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him, and he was by the sea. 22 Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet 23 and pleaded with 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.” 24 So he went with him.

(Continuing with verse 35)

35 While he was still speaking, some people came from the synagogue leader’s house to say, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?” 36 But overhearing[b] what they said, Jesus said to the synagogue leader, “Do not be afraid; only believe.” 37 He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. 38 When they came to the synagogue leader’s house, he saw a commotion, people weeping

and wailing loudly. 39 When he had entered, he said to them, “Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.” 40 And 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. 41 Taking her by the hand, he said to her, “Talitha koum,” which means, “Little girl, get up!” 42 And immediately the girl stood up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. 43 He strictly ordered them that no one should know this and told them to give her something to eat.

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Scripture: Mark 5: 21-24, 35-43

Sermon Title: A Father's Heart

On this Father's Day, I wish to remind you that God is our Father as well as our Mother. The Church is a family. We are all children of God and we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. The Church is also metaphorically the Bride of Christ. We are one big family and everyone is invited to join us. No one is left out. All are included. God loves us all unconditionally and we are the family of God.

Father's Day is a time to remember that men have a special opportunity to care for young people, just as women also have that responsibility. You do not need to be a biological parent to care for children. We all have the responsibility and opportunity to care for young people and to raise them up to know God and to love the world around them.

If you think about it, during Jesus' earthly life we do not have record of him getting married or having children of his own, but we do see him being a father by caring for his disciples and by his care for those he encounters in his earthly ministry.

In our story today, we see Jesus having the heart of a father as he heals a young girl. Our story begins with a father named Jairus coming up to Jesus right after Jesus arrives on the shore after crossing the lake in a boat. The father begs Jesus to follow him and to heal his daughter who is at home and is seriously ill. This father is a leader in the synagogue, which shows that some of the Jewish leaders were able to believe in Jesus and trust his power to heal. Jesus follows Jairus.

At this point in the story Jesus is walking through the crowd and is touched by a woman who needs healing. Jesus heals the woman who had been hemorrhaging blood for 12 years and says to her. Daughter, your faith has made you well. Then as he continues to

follow Jairus, some people arrive and tell Jairus that his daughter is already dead and the Jesus need not come to the home. We can imagine how heartbroken Jairus is at this point, but Jesus is confident. He says to Jairus, "Do not fear, only believe." Then when they arrive at the home, Jesus only takes his most trusted disciples. Peter, James, and John with him into the home. There are people in the home grieving. Jesus tells them that the little girl is only sleeping and the people begin to laugh because they know the child has died. Jesus asks them to leave and like a good pastor, Jesus takes the mother and father with him into the bedroom to be with their daughter. He takes the 12 year old girl by the hand and says, Talitha Cum- which means "little girl, get up." Immediately the girl gets up and begins to walk around. Everyone is amazed and Jesus calmly tells them to get her some food to eat and that no one should know what happened.

Well I imagine just like the other miracles of Jesus, it was hard to keep this story quiet and word did continue to spread of Jesus' miraculous power.

I want to highlight beautiful truths that come from this story that hopefully may encourage all of us.

First, remember that this is really the story of two fathers. The father who is the synagogue leader and Jesus who is a father like figure as he cares for this young girl and restores her to health. Jesus is a father to all of us and to all the children in the world. Jesus is a father to the children in Gaza who are desperate for food. Jesus is the father of immigrant children who are in deep pain when they are separated from their families. Jesus is the father of children who need to be freed from human trafficking. Jesus is the father of children who are sick and seeking healing. Jesus is the father of the houseless and the drug addicted and the imprisoned. Jesus is father to us all and he has a heart of compassion.

If you are like me as you read this story, you are deeply drawn to Jesus because he heals this young girl. You are amazed by his power, which is also the power of the Holy Spirit, since Jesus is anointed by the Holy Spirit to do these miracles.

You may also be wondering why we do not always see miracles like this today and you may identify with the mourners who seem to be in disbelief that Jesus will be able to do anything. I know we all have experiences in our lives where we do not see the healing we desire and we wonder why.

As your pastor, I really do not have a satisfying answer for why suffering is allowed to happen in our world. Yes, there is sin and evil and free will, but why does God allow the suffering in the world to exist. We need to continue to cry out to God for help with the suffering that exists for children and for all ages. We need the freedom to lament and grieve when people suffer.

And we are encouraged in this story to join as fathers and mothers and sisters and brothers to care for the vulnerable. We can do our best to pray for healing for the sick and to be empowered by the Holy Spirit as we seek miracles to happen. We can partner with medical providers and work through natural forms of medicine like nutritional support, rest, and exercise to help heal our bodies and we can pray and watch God do amazing things.

Sometimes when a person is near death they are healed and continue to live on earth. Sometimes healing happens in heaven and Jesus takes the hand of a child or adult and brings them into their eternal home in heaven.

In either situation our hope is in the healing of Jesus who is both our Friend and our Father.

As many of you know I am a dad to two amazing young women. It is hard to believe that Cate is turning 18 in July and Chiara will be 13 in August. I am so proud of them and so grateful to raise them with my

wife Karen. It is a blessing to raise them in this church community with all of you helping to care for them and all the other children here as well.

Today, I want to give thanks for my dad who has modeled for me how to be a father and how to be a pastor, which in my case is another fatherly role. When I think of my dad and our relationship, I think about playing sports together. I also appreciate our conversations and his deep abiding friendship. He shows me what it means to be a man of faith, integrity and wisdom. When I was fourteen as some of you know, I had successful open heart surgery. Both my parents cared for me but my dad needed to care for me especially after I returned home from the hospital. It was hard for him to see me so weak. Thanks dad for being with me in the time when I am weak and in the times when I am strong and active. I will forever be grateful for your care for me in all the seasons of my life and it is a joy to join

you, mom, and my wife and kids as we continue to serve together here.

Happy Father's Day everyone. May this be a day to remember God is our Father, just as God is our Mother. May this day remind us all to care for children with parental love and to be the family of God for one another.

Let us pray...