

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. ²² Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet ²³ 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.” ²⁴ So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him.

³⁵ 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?”

³⁶ Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” ⁴⁰ 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. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha koum!*” (which means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). ⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat. (NIV84)

Theme: Don’t be Afraid, Just Believe!

1. Jesus Comes in Compassion
2. Jesus Comes with Power

It doesn’t take a keen observer to realize that death comes to all. We cannot escape death. No matter how hard you try—by working out, taking vitamins, eating right, spending all the money in the world on the world’s best doctors, and so on, you will not live forever. So death is the one subject that all people cannot avoid. Eventually they will come upon death—either their own death or the death of a loved one. So it is a topic that is on everyone’s mind, whether they admit it or not.

Everyone has their own opinion on death, and each person deals with it differently. How do you view death? Are you afraid of dying? What about when a loved one dies? Many times we cry and mourn at death. And we try to avoid death at all costs. But today Jesus says to us, “Don’t be afraid, just believe!” For he comes in compassion and he comes in power.

After Jesus calmed the storm, he went over to the east side of the Sea of Galilee. There he cast a legion of demons out of a man and sent them into a herd of pigs. When Jesus got back to the west side of the Sea of Galilee a large crowd was waiting for him. As Jesus was talking to this crowd a man named Jairus came up to him. He was the leader of the Synagogue—a local sanctuary where the Jews would worship when they were away from Jerusalem. He bowed down to Jesus. And informed Christ that his daughter was near death. **Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.** Jairus knew that Jesus had power to heal his daughter with just the touch of his hand.

But Jesus didn’t get there in time. Our text for today skips over some verses on Mark 5. It is the story of a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years. She reached out and touched Jesus’ cloak and she was healed. The whole episode would have only taken 5-10 minutes. But to Jairus, who was desperate for Jesus’ help, it must have seemed much longer. His little daughter was close to death, and Jesus stopped to talk to an old woman about crumbs and dogs! And in the meantime his daughter did die. Perhaps Jesus had taken too long. If only he would have hurried to see the girl, he could have saved her life. Instead, she’s dead. **Why bother the teacher any more?** The girl’s loved ones told Jairus.

But Jesus wanted to go see the girl anyway. So he went with Jairus, his companions, and Peter James and John to see the girl. And what Jesus saw when he entered the house seems like it came straight out of a melodrama. Mark describes the scene, **Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly.** Matthew tells us that the crowd was noisy and that there were flute players. Luke actually describes the people weeping and beating their chests out of sorrow. During Jesus’ day, it was actually common for families of dead people

to hire professional mourners. They would put on a good show so they could indicate to everyone just how sad the family is, just how much anguish they feel because their daughter died.

It was too over-the-top. And Jesus let them know about it. **Why all this commotion and wailing?** It was out of place. Why were they carrying on like they did? They were too distraught. They had fallen into despair and lost all hope of eternal life.

We are not much different. Like the girl we all get sick. Our health suffers. We get a disease or cancer. And soon we will all die. We see friends suffer. Family members get sick. They grow weaker and weaker. Until finally something gives out. Soon they are no longer able to carry out every-day tasks. Then those we have known and loved for years are gone. We will never enjoy their company again in this life.

And so we mourn. And that's ok. It is ok to mourn at the passing of a loved one. You know that you won't see that person again on this earth. You will no longer enjoy their company. You can mourn for yourself. But there is no reason for those who die and are in heaven—for they are enjoying the company of God. And it is proper to mourn for those who die as unbelievers. We are sad because we know how much they are suffering right now.

But like the loved ones of Jairus' daughter, we may go too far in our mourning for loved ones. At times we carry on and on. We weep and wail. We are overcome with sorrow and fall into despair. It seems as if we have lost hope. We don't know what to do. Now that this loved one is passed it seems as if your world is going to end. You don't know how you are going to get on with your life. And you fall into despair. We often try to console ourselves with the thought that the dead person lived a full life. That they enjoyed their time on this earth. And that somehow is supposed to give us comfort.

The world tries to console themselves with the thought that death is the final end. They convince themselves that there is no afterlife, that this earthly life is all there is. So they derive their comfort in that those who are dead feel nothing. That they are no longer suffering because this life is all there is. And they mourn, because if this earthly life is all there is and this life is done, then so is this person. He's dead so we will never see or speak to him again. They mourn because they hold on the hope that there is nothing after this life. But they hope in vain

That is why Jesus comes to us in his Word. And he gives us comfort. He said to Jairus when he heard about the death of his daughter.

Don't be afraid; just believe. Don't be afraid that your child is dead and you will never see her again. Just believe who I am and what I can do. He says the same to us. Don't be afraid that you are doing to die. Don't be afraid that everyone you know and love will pass away. Don't be afraid that you will never see them again. Just believe who I am and what I have done. Just believe that you will live in heaven forever, where you will see all your fellow believers forever.

Jesus calls on us to cast out all doubt that causes mourning, and to rely on him for eternal life. He told the mourners in the house to do the same. **Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.** These compassionate words fill our hearts with joy. For we know that when we die, or when any believer dies, they are merely sleeping. Right now the souls of all the dead saints are in heaven praising God for eternity. And Christ will come again to raise their bodies from the dead on the last day. And our perfect bodies will join our souls forever in heaven. Death is temporary. It is as if we are sleeping. For soon our bodies will be raised and we will be in heaven.

It's one thing to give these words of comfort, but it's another to back them up. And that is exactly what Jesus did.

When Jesus told the loud crowd at Jairus' house that the girl was not dead, but only sleeping, they laughed at him. They laughed because they didn't believe. They thought it was a ridiculous statement. It was clear to everyone that the girl was dead. Sometimes the world laughs at Jesus. They mock him. They mock him when they refuse to listen to him. They think it's ridiculous that someone claims he has power over death.

We too may join in the mocking. When someone makes fun of God we simply look the other way. We fail to correct them, we fail to point out the sin they just committed. And at times, we are not much better than the people who mock God. For we might as well be mocking him when we fail to believe his promises. God promises to watch over us and protect. But we often question if this is really the case. God promises that he has power over death, that we have nothing to fear for he removes the sting of death. But we often uncontrollably mourn at

the death of a loved one and despair when we face death. And when we do this we commit the same sin as those who laughed at Jesus.

But Jesus ignored them. He took Jairus and his wife, along with Peter, James, and John. And he entered the room where the child was. He took the girl by the hand. And said two simple words: **Talitha Koum**. Mark lets us know what these Aramaic words mean: Little Girl, I say to you, arise. And suddenly the child arose. She rose from the dead. She was dead—but now she was alive. Jesus truly has power over death.

With just his words Jesus was able to raise this young girl from the dead. With just his words he was able to do more than anyone or group of people can ever hope to accomplish. She was truly dead, make no mistake about it—This was one of Christ's more spectacular miracles. The disciples, Jairus, and his wife were amazed. Jesus truly is God. For he has his power.

Jesus has power over death. This was the first time that Jesus proved this. He raised Jairus' daughter who had been dead probably for a few hours. Later he raised a young man from the dead outside of Nain, who had been dead for about a day. Toward the end of his ministry he raised his friend, Lazarus, from the dead. And he had already been dead for four days and was beginning to decay. And over course Jesus proved he has power over death because he raised himself from the dead. Jesus willingly let himself be murdered on the cross so that he could take all our sins upon himself. And three days after he died he rose from the dead. Death couldn't hold him down. His lifeless body was no longer in the tomb. For had been brought to life. And he lives forever.

And not only does Jesus have power over death, but he also has power over the things that cause death. For if he is able to raise someone from the dead, then he certainly is able to control things that bring death. The cancer, the disease, the car accident—they are all controlled by God. Remember what happened when the girl was brought back to life. When the girl was raised from the dead she sat up and began to walk. Whatever had killed her no longer affected her. She didn't have to rest from the ordeal she went through. It's not like you feel when you are recovering from the wilderness. She didn't

have to rest up or was in pain like you are after a surgery of some sort. No, she was completely fine—Jesus had control over what killed her.

As Jesus told Jairus, he also says to us: **Don't be afraid, just believe!** Jesus has power over death. For he rose from the dead. That means he paid for our sins and gives us the gift of eternal life in heaven. For when he died he removed the guilt of all your sins. You don't have to worry about your sins condemning you and sending you to hell. In God's eyes you are no longer worthy of condemnation—for Christ paid for your sins. And Christ's resurrection means that you too will rise. Just as Christ' tomb is empty, so will yours be. For he will raise you up just as God raised up his sons so that you may live with him forever in heaven. Death is not permanent; it is as if we are sleeping. Death has no sting—for we will not suffer forever when we die. But we will live forever with Jesus.

Therefore as Christians we have nothing to be afraid of. Death no longer bothers us. We are not afraid to die. For we know that when we die, our lives will be better, for we will be with Jesus. We don't fall into despair when a family member dies. For all dead believers are enjoying heaven right now. And while we will not see them on this earth again and enjoy their company, we will be reunited in heaven.

Death is something no one can avoid—eventually everyone thinks about it. How sad it is for those who have no hope. They hope in vain that death is the end. But it will only be the beginning of eternal torment. But believers are not afraid of death. For it is the beginning of eternal life in heaven. We know that there the joys of heaven wait for us when we die. We don't excessively mourn for those who have died and have passed on to a better place. For they are better off than we who are left on the earth, and we will see them again. And when death rears it's ugly head, we simply think of the words of our resurrected Savior, **Don't be afraid, just believe.** Amen.