

**June 27, 2021
Christ the Servant, Reston
Pentecost 5
Mark 5:21-43**

We need to understand the difference between resuscitation and resurrection because so often what we ask for from God is resuscitation while what God is giving is resurrection. Let's look:

In today's gospel, Jairus, one of the leaders of the synagogue, fell at Jesus' feet begging him to come heal his daughter who was at the point of death. It appears as if Jesus had turned to go to Jairus' household to heal the daughter when he was interrupted by an adult woman who also needed healing. She had simply touched his garment and immediately Jesus knew there was someone with a need. So he took time, listened to her story, then dismissed her with the words, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace, and be freed from your suffering."

Jesus got interrupted in his original call to go heal Jairus' daughter. I can relate to that. I might come in to the church fully intending to make phone contacts with our members only to find that the kitchen floor has water all over it from last night's hard rain. And now buckets and waste baskets must be brought out and the property committee notified. When I do sit down at my desk and turn on my laptop I may find an e-mail marked "urgent." It needs a response. And then there is that unexpected visitor who has just dropped by. Calling on members is a priority, but other priorities pop up.

Pastors are not the only ones who face prioritization problems. Don't we all?! On a daily basis! Every day we face the need to figure out which are the most important things in our lives and which are less important. Keeping your new car dent-free is important until you hear that your son has been involved in a car accident. Then the car becomes the least important thing there is and your son's well-being becomes most important. Sometimes we don't find out what is truly a high priority until an emergency comes along.

We need to pray for the gift of perspective. Perspective. What's most important? What's less important? Help us, God, to recognize the things that need changing and the ones we can, indeed, change.

In this case, from Jesus' perspective, it was important to pause on his journey to Jairus' house to heal this hemophiliac woman. But when he got to the house the daughter was dead. Now we might expect Jairus to lose his patience. We might think that Jairus would say, "If you had gotten here on time, my daughter would still be alive!"

Jairus was also under great pressure from others in the household who thought it was too late to do any good. "Why bother?" they said. Mark does not tell us if Jairus was among those of the household who laughed at Jesus when he claimed to be able to heal the girl. I like to think Jairus exhibited the virtue of patience in his faith that Jesus could, indeed, do something.

Jesus kicked all the people who had lost faith out of the house, took Jairus to his daughter's bedside, took her by the hand, and said to her, "Little girl, get up!" Immediately she got up and began to walk about. If it weren't for Jairus faith, his calling on Jesus even after all had seemed to be lost, his daughter would have remained dead.

You will remember that, when Jesus commanded the lame man to take up his pallet and walk, it wasn't the man's faith which prompted the healing, but the faith of those who brought him. I like to think it was Jairus' patient faith that prompted the healing of this little girl. But even if it wasn't – even if Jairus was one of those who laughed and refused to believe – this miracle of Jesus simply proves that the mighty acts of God are in no way dependent on our faith or lack of it. If God's good grace were dependent on our faith there would be none because our faith is fallible. But God's grace is infallible, indestructible, and dependent on nothing.

Indeed, it is the mighty acts of God which *inspire* the faith. But it is the resurrections which are the mighty acts – not the resuscitations. Think about it. Jairus' daughter was about 12 when Jesus resuscitated her. Life expectancies at that time were about 35 years. So, she was resuscitated for about 23 years – until she died again and the *real* mighty act of God occurred – the transition between the Kingdom Militant here on this earth where all is temporary to the Kingdom Triumphant where the oneness with God is eternal. The *real* miracle wasn't the resuscitation – it was the resurrection.

Much is made of Lazarus coming forth from the cave after having been dead, called from death to life by Jesus Christ. It was one of our Lord's paramount miracles. But it was resuscitation. Even Lazarus eventually went back to the tomb. For Lazarus, the real miracle was resurrection, not resuscitation.

Even the healing of blind Bartimaeus, or the paralytic, or the ten lepers – all of our Lord’s miracle healings were mere band aids when compared to the greatest miracle of all time for all people in all places – the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And his resurrection was a foretaste of the resurrection which is so for all the faithful for all eternity.

We pray asking for resuscitation when we should be praying thanking for resurrection. Our prayers are often, “Heal my pain, God! Make the disease go away! *Do* something for this terrible grief I bear. Make things go better for me!” We don’t often pray prayers which say, “Thank you most kind and gracious heavenly father for the forgiveness of sins, for the deliverance from sin, death, and evil. Thank you for the eternal life which is mine through your son, Jesus Christ.”

Go ahead and ask God for resuscitation. I do. But remember to always thank God for resurrection.