

Sermon: 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Text: Mark 5:21-43: Jairus' daughter and a sick women

Theme: Jesus comes to us with His Word.

Goal: Jesus' words come to us at the right time.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: The two stories of this text are entwined. The urgent request of Jairus about his dying daughter was interrupted by the sick women who touched Jesus and was healed. The text doesn't tell us about Jairus' reaction while Jesus was standing on the road talking with the healed women. But if it had been me, I would have become very upset and would have hurried Jesus to come to my house. *“Let's go, Master! My little daughter is dying, and you are loosing time with this woman. My problem is more urgent, my problem is more important than any other!!!...”*

A colleague of mine, an experienced pastor, said to me at the beginning of my ministry: *“My ingrown toenail hurts more than the mourning of the others...”* This shows how selfish we are and how we have to learn from Jesus that He always comes at the right time to help us - and the others! - in our needs. His time is different from our time.

In His walk with Jairus, Jesus spoke only three words. These words help us to understand how Jesus handles us in our distresses. If we sometimes don't understand why Jesus delays answering our prayers, the most important lesson we have from this story is that Jesus is always by our side in His Word. We have to listen to His words and to His message, wait with patience and faith, and don't give up. As we confess in the Psalm 23: “I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”

I – A word of faith

Jairus was desperate when he came to Jesus. His 12-year-old only daughter was very sick and about to die. - There is no bigger grief than to lose a child. - Martin Luther lost a daughter when she was 13 years old. She died in his arms, after a long sickness. He wrote to his friend Justus Jonas: *“My dearest daughter Magdalena has been reborn into Christ's eternal kingdom. I and my wife should joyfully give thanks for such a felicitous departure and blessed end by which Magdalena escaped the power of the flesh, the world, the Turk and the devil; yet the force of our natural love is so great that we are unable to do this without crying and grieving in our hearts.”* (Wikipedia).

Jairus was experiencing this anguish when he looked for Jesus. Jairus had a prominent position as a ruler of the synagogue. And it was not usual that people of a higher position approach Jesus. But he did. Jesus promptly went with Jairus to his house to see the little one. But He was interrupted on His way by the sick women and He spent some time with her, confirming her faith and her healing. During that time, messengers came to Jairus and told them that the girl had died. “Don't bother the teacher any more”, they said; there is no hope... *“From the human perspective this was the end; from Christ's it was no barrier.”* (Series B p. 177). Then we have the first powerful word of Jesus in this story. The Gospel says: “Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler: 'Don't be afraid; just believe!'”

When the feeble faith of Jairus was at the point of collapse, Jesus was by his side and said these powerful words of encouragement and promise to him. His faith was raised up. It was not just a faith in something that could possibly happen, but it was faith in Jesus. *“Faith must be rooted in Christ Himself and in His promises, and not simply in some action He might do.”* (Series B p. 177). The faith is not in the miracle, as many think, but it is faith in Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God.

II – A word of hope

“When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a

commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly.” Then He said His second powerful and hopeful word: “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.”

The child was really dead. All knew it and they were mourning about the child. But for Jesus, death is like a sleep. The resurrection of the body gives another dimension to death. Death is not a full stop, because life goes on into eternity. It's like to go to sleep here and to wake up in heaven. Jesus said this about Lazarus as well: “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I'm going there to wake him up.” When the disciples replied, “if he sleeps, he will get better”, Jesus said very clearly: “Lazarus is dead.” And He went there to raise Lazarus from the death. (John 11 11-14). - Paul used the same language when he wrote to the Thessalonians ( 1 Thes 4:13): “Brothers, we don't want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of the men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him.” This means: Our beloved who have fallen asleep are with God and will come with Jesus on the last day for the resurrection of their bodies.

There is a little evening children's prayer that says:

*Now I lay me down to sleep,/ I pray the Lord my soul to keep,  
If I should die before I wake,/ I pray the Lord my soul to take.  
If I should live for other days,/ I pray the Lord to guide my ways.*

The word of hope that Jesus addressed to Jairus was accomplished that very day. It is not always so. We need to know God's right time and we need to trust and to hope in Him.

### III – A word of power

Jesus entered the room where the child was lying and allowed only the father, the mother and three of His disciples to enter with Him. And there we have the third powerful word of Jesus: “He took her by the hand and said to her: ' Little girl, I say to you, get up!' Immediately the girl stood up

and walked around.”

We would love to have such a miracle in our family as well! But it was reserved only for four families during Jesus' ministry: Jairus' family; Martha and Mary's family, who received Lazarus back from the death; the widow of Naim, who received her son back; and the disciples, Mary and the other women, who received the living Christ back on Easter Sunday. All the others have to wait till the great day of the general resurrection of the dead, - even us! We live in the same faith as Jairus did, we have the same hope, and we will experience the same power of the resurrected Jesus at the end of the ages.

Conclusion: *“Life comes from the Word.”* (S.B p. 178). Jesus Himself is the Living Word of God. John says in his first Letter (1 John 5:12): “God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.” Do you want to have this life? Listen to the Words of Jesus and believe in Him. Eternal life is ours, in spite of what unbelievers have to say or of what our reason tries to confuse us. Faith in Jesus, - and this is all. Jairus experienced what faith means and received his daughter back to life. This, and all the stories in the Bible, is written to teach us how God works with sinners, bringing them to faith and hope through the power of His living Word: Jesus Christ. Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle  
Cape Town, 01 July 2012

Quotation of Luther: “The beloved child, Magdalena, is sick. Her portrait, painted by Cranach, is seen still in the room where she was lying, a lovely child, with large eyes, clear and deep. Near the bed is now Luther, he prays: “I love her a lot, but good God, if your will is to take her, I will give her to you with great pleasure. Then, addressing her: My little Magdalena, my little girl, soon you will not be with me, will you be happy without your father? The tired child tenderly and softly answered: Yes, dear father, as God wants. Soon, we put her in the coffin. Luther looked Ah! Sweet Lenchen, he says, you will rise again and you will shine like a star, yes, like the sun! I am happy in the spirit, but my earthly form is very sad. You have learned, he wrote to [Justus Jonas](#): I believe the report has reached you that my dearest daughter Magdalena has been reborn into Christ's eternal kingdom. I and my wife should joyfully give thanks for such a felicitous departure and blessed end by which Magdalena escaped the power of the flesh, the world, the Turk and the devil; yet the force of our natural love is so great that we are unable to do this without crying and grieving in our hearts, or even without experiencing death ourselves. The features, the words and the movements of the living and dying daughter remain deeply engraved in our hearts. Even the death of Christ... is unable to take this all away as it should. You, therefore, give thanks to God in our stead. For indeed God did a great work of grace when he glorified our flesh in this way. Magdalena had (as you know) a mild and lovely disposition and was loved by all... God grant me and all my loved ones and all my friends such a death - or rather such a life.” (Table Talk, Wikipedia)