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 Title: Jesus Christ, Lord over the Dead
 Text: Mark 5:21-24, 35-43 (Gospel Parallels – Matt. 9:18, 19, 23-26; Luke 8:41, 42, 49-56)
 Theme: Jesus Christ hears our cries and is working out everything for our good and His glory.

I continue to marvel that God often works in the absence of our willing. I am not trying to teach against the issue of one's will, but I would offer you hope in that even when you are not willing for God to work, God is working.

THE BIG PICTURE

Beginning of THE BUSY DAY (3:20-5:20)

- The characteristics of God's family (3:31-35)
 Teaching by Parables
- The clarifying of His kingdom (4:1-34)
 Teaching by Miracles (4:35-5:43)

"This is the first story in a sequence of four stories about healing."

- Jesus will "heal" the storm (4:35-41)
- Jesus will "heal" the demoniac (5:1-20)
- **Jesus will "heal" the daughter of Jairus (5:21-24, 35-43)**
- Jesus will "heal" the woman bleeding for 12 years (5:25-34)

Summary Statement: (6:1-6)

[The King's hometown rejects Him]

Its Eternal Value:

"[All the] stories are about fear and faith, and the power of Jesus to take people from one to the other. Both, singly and together, are worth spending time 'inside,' in the sense of meditating on them, imagining you are in the crowd watching it all happen, the centre of the drama. That's a wonderful way to turn scripture into prayer – and today, as in Jesus' day, to turn fear into faith." (N.T. Wright, *Mark for Everyone*, 59).

The Present Danger:

In our culture such miracles as these are unimaginable. Although we hear of their abuse and mockery through hirelings and charlatans, Jesus Christ is Lord of the dead.

"Those who are sick do not lay down the conditions of how they are to be cured. They only want to be made well." (Peter Chrysologus, "Sermon," 33:3 in Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament II – Mark, 69).

You and I might try and figure out why this cannot happen today, but if God chooses to act in this manner then I pray I have enough sense to accept it and believe it. There is not a person in our fellowship with a chronic condition who is not trusting God to heal them or would reject their healing if God did so in an unexplainable manner. Let us, by faith, believe God for the impossible.

The Problem:

Our problem is that we do not believe He is able to raise the dead and do the impossible. We are still to live by faith in a world that calls us to live by sight. The idea of trusting God for healing does not exclude using other means for healing. God can work through, in, and in the absence of medical technology.

The Storyline:

Jesus Christ is the promised King. Although He can work in the absence of our wills, He just as easily goes where He is received. The religious establishment as a whole rejected Him, but here we have the story of Jairus. He left the shores where the demoniac was delivered and now He is received by another needy soul.

Questions:

1. What did it take for the synagogue official to humble himself before Jesus Christ? What were the implications of this "humbling" to his position in society?
2. What emotions are invoked when you consider the context of his situation?
3. With all of the tragedy present, what reasons could be offered as to why Jesus honored his request? What reasons might you offer as to why those in the audience said, "Why trouble the Teacher anymore?"
4. What is Jesus asking Jairus to do in verse 36? Why is this often the hardest thing to do?
5. What is it about Peter, James, and John that allowed them into this situation?
6. What reasons might you offer as to why Mark includes the statement concerning "weeping and wailing?"
7. What emotions would come into play when those around the situation begin to laugh?
8. How is our Lord's compassion for the family seen in verse 40?
9. What does this miracle tell you in verse 42?
10. Why the call to silence in verse 43?
11. What tragedy are you confronted with?
12. How deep is your despair?
13. Has it crushed you to the point where your only hope is Jesus?
14. Are you willing to believe He is enough in your situation?
15. Will you repent of your unbelief? Jesus invites you to believe He is enough in this life and in the life to come.
16. Are you open to His healing touch? Are you willing to believe and see the impossible?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know Jesus is Lord over the dead.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose the life of Jesus rather than death in unbelief.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of trusting in the control and compassion of Jesus.

Introduction:

“There are all the elements of tragedy here. It is always tragic when a child is ill. The story tells us that the ruler’s daughter was twelve years of age (Luke 8:42). According to the Jewish custom a girl became a woman at twelve years and one day. This girl was just on the threshold of womanhood, and when death comes at such a time it is doubly tragic.” (William Barclay, *Mark*, 126).

It is of interest to note that the woman’s issue of blood was for twelve years (v. 25). Some refer to this story inside a story as a “Markan sandwich.” The woman’s issue was as long as the daughter’s life.

Neither the storm nor the demoniac affect us emotionally, but the dying and death of a twelve year old does. In many ways our lives are uneventful. Seldom are we completely shattered. We live without deep cries or desperate gestures until disaster strikes.

I cannot process the despair this man tasted, but his anguish and desperation drove him to Jesus. It compelled Him to come to the only one He knew who could help.

Outline:

The setting is noted (v. 21). “It seemed as if they had been all ‘waiting for Him,’ and He had been away all too long for their impatience. The tidings rapidly spread.” (Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus The Messiah*, 617).

I. The character of the tragedy (v. 23)

A twelve year old girl is on the verge of dying (v. 42). The statement “little daughter” is a term of endearment. Death is always difficult, but in the young is doubly difficult. Only the most arrogant and ignorant individual would reject Jesus in the midst of their heartache and misery. Jesus is a noted healer and is doing what others cannot. He is raising the dead, healing the diseased, and delivering the demonic. If everything you loved was being removed from you, and you knew there was a solution to the problem, what would you do? Luke 8:42 tells us that this is his only daughter. She is the apple of his eye, the object of his most ardent affection. I have been here when a young life has been taken and there is nothing palatable in the event. What this man did was the most natural thing to do; he went to Jesus to beg the life of his daughter. She is at the “point of death.” She is on her death bed and her passing is imminent.

Notice the nature of his request, “lay your hands on her.” Just touch her and she will be healed. There is power in the touch to heal.

II. The crushing in the tragedy (vv. 22, 23)

Tragedy reduces us to our essence. It shows us for what we are. Tragedy has the power to move a synagogue official to fall before Jesus and beg Him for the life of his daughter. The various scenarios painted by Mark with the crushing multitude before Jesus is a common event. It is difficult to grasp the electricity and power in the air when Jesus is present, but it was true and is true. Like the demoniac this man's need drove him to the feet of Jesus."

"To regulate the affairs of every synagogue, there was a council of grave men. Over these was a president, who was termed the ruler of the synagogue. Sometimes there was no more than one ruler in a synagogue." (John Wesley on Mark 5:22)

Some suggest the "ruler of the synagogue" is "one that presided in the synagogue-worship or, as some think, one of the judges of the consistory court, which was in every city, consisting of *twenty-three*."

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/henry/mhc5.Mark.vi.html>

"The ruler of the synagogue was one of the most important and most respected men in the community. But something happened to him when his daughter fell ill and he thought of Jesus." (William Barclay, *Mark*, 126).

"We can see easily enough the agonized household, the distraught father, hope slipping away like sand through a sieve, and then word arriving that the strange teacher has just come back from across the lake. **Jairus pockets his pride and forgets his fears - why worry about religious controversy or political danger when your daughter's dying?** - and rushes off to Jesus, throwing himself down at his feet (most undignified! **What will they whisper about him next Sabbath?**). He gasps out his request. And Jesus goes with him, the eager crowd of course in tow." ([emphasis added] N.T. Wright, *Mark for Everyone*, 59, 60).

Tragedy does many things to us. It changes us. It makes us do things we might otherwise not do. I would like to note three things tragedy does.

A. Tragedy crushes our prejudices

Tragedy makes us desperate and forces us to do and try things we might not otherwise have done or tried. Remember, the ruling class hates Jesus and wants Him dead. Now one of its own is bowed down at the feet of Jesus begging for the life of his daughter.

B. Tragedy crushes our pride

Tragedy has the power to humble us. "The very first step of the Christian life is to realize that we cannot be anything other than indebted to God." (William Barclay, *Mark*, 128). How many of us are desperate enough to come to Jesus stripped of all we

are? His despair caused him to throw everything that he once held important away. Like Paul, he “counted them but rubbish (dung) so that he may gain Christ” (Phil. 3:8). His needs were stronger than his pride.

The Bible is filled with those who had to turn their back on everything when they turned their faces toward God.

1. Elisha and Naaman (2 Kings 5:9-14 [READ])
2. Zaccheus (Luke 19:1-10)
3. Matthew
4. Peter

C. Tragedy crushes our popularity

Although we enter the realm of speculation, it is safe to say that he was the object of concern up and until he sought out Jesus. When Jairus came to Jesus, everything he was in his social standing was lost. Remember the context. Both the political leaderships and the religious leaders sought to destroy Jesus. Anyone aligning themselves with Him was equally considered an outcast and enemy of the political and religious machinery.

Verse 35 suggests that his “friends” were quick to turn him away from Jesus. Verse 40 also speaks of this underlying scorn and unbelief.

“Here was a man who forgot everything except that he wanted the help of Jesus; and because of that forgetfulness he would remember for ever that Jesus is [the] Savior.” (William Barclay, *Mark*, 128).

When you trust Jesus in your tragedy, people who were once comfortable with your “religion” will become distant.

III. The choice in the tragedy (vv. 35, 36)

While all of this is happening, word comes that his daughter is now dead. In all tragedy you will have to make a choice. You will either choose to believe God, that He is in control and that He really cares, or you will become bitter and abandon God and seek solutions that do not have Him as the object or the outcome.

There is a clear statement to believe. God works through faith and in the absence of faith. When we do not see God work in a way we deem proper, let us not assume it is because we lack faith. Our faith will never cause God to contradict His eternal purpose. The call to faith is not a burden to be carried but a blessing to be celebrated. Faith is not causal, but consequential. Faith exhibits because we are His and He is ours. Faith confirms and affirms His authority and our dependency. Our faith is His mark of ownership on our lives. He calls us to faith and Scripture notes faith. Yet faith is never

meant to produce guilt or bondage. Faith is to be a pleasure not a problem. Jesus is always calling us to believe, to have faith, to trust Him as the God who controls and cares. In every moment His invitation to us is constant and unchanging.

IV. The contrast in the tragedy (v. 35)

Those who trust Him believe that He is able to do what is asked of Him. In contrast to belief we have the ugly side of unbelief. "Jewish morning customs were vivid and detailed, and practically all of them were designed to stress the desolation and the final separation of death. The triumphant victorious hope of the Christian faith was totally absent." (William Barclay, *Mark*, 133, 134).

This is where the biggest difference exists between the believer and the unbeliever.

- A. Despair versus hope
- B. Distress versus serenity

Jesus, knowing His Father, was at complete peace with the tragedy. Those who knew neither the Father nor His Son were consumed by despair and distress.

V. The challenge in the tragedy (vv. 37-40)

The challenge is to believe God in the midst of life's tragedies. Will you believe He is in control of your storms? Will you believe He truly cares even when it would appear otherwise?

VI. The compassion in the tragedy (vv. 41-43)

- A. He touches her (v. 41a)

There is divine pathos in the words and touch of Jesus. It is difficult to believe, but God cares for us infinitely more than we can imagine even when we are going through consuming hurt.

If it was necessary for a procedure to take place in order to save my life even though the pain of the procedure was unimaginable, I would do it. I would not think the physician cruel or unkind. He would push himself past his own emotions in order to save my life. He would do this because he knows that the procedure is for my good.

Sometimes King Jesus performs on us "spiritual surgery" and the pain causes deep soul groans, but such procedures are for our good and His glory. This is what we are to believe in the midst of our pain.

B. He calls to her (v. 41b)

Mark's Gospel is in Greek, but the statement "Talitha kum" is Aramaic. Mark received his information from Peter and Peter retained the statement in its original form. Peter was there and "he could never forget Jesus' voice. In his mind and memory he could hear that 'Talitha Cumi' all his life. The love, the gentleness, the caress of it lingered with him forever, so much so that he was unable to think of it in Greek at all, because his memory could hear it only in the voice of Jesus and in the very words that Jesus spoke." (William Barclay, *Mark*, 136).

C. He feeds her (v. 43)

In this one act Jesus assures His audience that she is alive. This same idea is seen in other places.

1. Lazarus (John 12:2)
2. Jesus (John 21:9-14)
3. The delivered demonic (Mark 5:15)

What Jesus does is indisputable. There is nothing I desire more than for you to hear His voice calling your name and for you to feel His touch healing your body, casting away your fears, and surrounding you with His embrace. I do not know what this looks like in our context, but I know He still raises the dead. May our despair and faith cause us to groan after Him with a passion that cannot be denied.

SHEPHERDING THE PEOPLE: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

1. What tragedy are you confronted with?
2. Has it crushed you to the point where your only hope is Jesus?
3. Are you willing to believe He is enough in your situation? Let us beg God for a faith that believes He is in control and He cares.
4. Will you repent of your non-faith? Jesus invites you to believe He is enough in this life and in the life to come.