

Rev. Derek Fairman

13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time B

We hear in the Gospel about the Lord Jesus healing the daughter of Jairus. When the Gospel passage begins, she is ill. Then Jairus and the Lord Jesus hear the report that she has died. However, the Lord Jesus knows what is really happening. When he enters the house with the mourners, the Lord Jesus tells them that she is not dead but sleeping. So, what did the Lord Jesus mean and what happened to the girl?

In terms of her condition, the girl was ill, and the illness led to death. In the body, she was dead. So why did the Lord Jesus say that she was sleeping? He did not mean that she was physically sleeping; physically, she was dead. However, He pointed out to His disciples and the girl's parents that death is not the end. Rather, the bodies of the just will rise and the just will rise to eternal life. Since death is only a temporary state until the end of time, death is a kind of sleep.

The Lord also points to the life that we enjoy until the end of time. Death does not mean the end of the soul, but the souls of the just continue to live in the Lord. Even the souls of the wicked continue to live, but they exist apart from the Lord in agony. The girl was physically dead, but her death was only temporary. She was asleep in the sense that she would rise again, not from physical sleep but from death.

The raising of the daughter of Jairus is a way that the Lord Jesus showed His disciples the power that He has over death. He would demonstrate this power again in the raising of the son of the widow of Nain and in the raising of Lazarus. These would all point to the Lord's own Resurrection, when He broke the power of death forever. The Lord's Resurrection is the center of our faith.

What about us? We can be like the daughter of Jairus in the spiritual sense. Perhaps we are spiritually ill. Perhaps we have difficulty praying; perhaps our souls are burdened with a lot of stress and anxiety, or maybe our souls are very dry and thin and there is no joy. Perhaps our souls are filled with sinfulness, which leads us to commit the same sins over and over. Quite possibly we don't know how our souls are doing because we never pay attention to the condition of our souls.

Maybe we are spiritually asleep. It may look like our souls are very ill, or not cared for. It may look like our souls are filled with the death of sin. However, the Lord says to each of us

today, that we are not dead but sleeping. Where we might see no life in our souls, the Lord sees life that needs to awaken. The Lord knows that there is life in our souls.

Perhaps this could also describe our faith. Perhaps we are spiritually asleep. Maybe our faith is not altogether there, or we are kind of lazily drifting through our spiritual lives. Well, the Lord addresses our faith today, "I say to you, arise!" The Lord wants our faith to be alive, and for us to notice what is going on in our souls.

No doubt that there are friends who want to know how we are really doing, and they look after our emotional and physical needs. The Lord wants us to draw close to Him, so that He can show us, and speak with us about, how our souls are doing. Retreats are very helpful for this, when we take time to look at how our friendship with God is doing. Any time that we take for prayer can be helpful for this as well.

For the daughter of Jairus, when she did awaken from death, we would have to imagine that she had a new perspective on life. Yes, she was in the same room, but in a way, it was not the same room. She lived in a different world than the one she left at her death. She could see at that point with the eyes of faith. Her life was never the same.

For us, when the Lord awakens our faith, when He reignites the fire of the Holy Spirit within us and brings new life to our souls, He gives us a new life. We still live in the same environment and still have the same needs as before, but it will be a new world, when the eyes of our faith are opened. We will have new life and the Holy Spirit will be working in our hearts. For this new life to happen in our hearts, we have to be willing to spend time in prayer. If our hearts are open to prayer and to the love of the Holy Spirit, wonderful things can happen.

As we approach the altar, we remember that the little girl received her new life through the pleading of her father Jairus. There are those who are praying for us, and there are those heavenly companions, the saints who are praying for us too. Just as we have many protectors who want to see our faith alive and for us to live in this new life, there are those whose faith is asleep, those whom we know do not come to church. There are those <sup>whose</sup> ~~who~~ faith is like a flame that is slowly going out. We pray that the Lord may come to them, that their faith may be reignited, that the Lord may speak to them, and that their faith may return.