

Jesus power over death

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Date: 30 March 2025

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[0 : 00] Today's reading is taken from Mark chapter 5 verse 21 to 43 which can be found on page 1013 of the church's Bibles.

So page 1013.

Come and lay your hands on her so that she may be well again and live. And he went with him. And a great cloud followed him and thronged about him.

And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for 12 years and who had suffered much under many physicians and had spent all that she had and was known better but rather grew worse.

She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.

[1 : 23] And immediately the flow of blood dried up and she fell on her body and she was healed of her disease. And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, Who touched my garments?

And his disciples said to him, You see the crowd pressing around you and yet you said, Who touched me? And he looked around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth.

And he said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your disease. While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, Your daughter is dead.

Why trouble the teacher any further? But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not fear, only believe.

And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John, the brother of James. They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue. And Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.

[2 : 47] And when he entered, he said to them, Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead, but sleeping. And they laughed at him.

But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. Taking her by the hand, he said to her, Talitha Kumi, which means, Little girl, I say to you, arise.

And immediately, the girl got up and began walking, for she was 12 years of age. And they were immediately overcome with amazement.

And he strictly charged them that no one should know this and told them to give her something to eat. Thank you very much for reading, Joyce.

And do keep that passage open. We're going to focus on the verses 35 to 43, really. The healing of the raising of Jairus' daughter.

[3 : 55] That's where we're going to be, although we've read the whole thing. We come to the final one of four demonstrations of Jesus' power. And together, they display him as the infinitely great saviour.

He can make everything right. He can save us and bring us and fulfil all of our dreams. His power to save us from all the causes of death, destruction in this world.

Spiritual or natural. He's the infinitely great saviour. These things are written so that we might know that Jesus is an infinitely great saviour.

Both in who he is. He's the almighty son of God. And in what he can do. He can bring a kingdom of peace forever.

But finally, he steps into the ring with the greatest of all of our enemies. Death. There's a poem by one of the poets.

[5 : 08] A guy called Tennyson. I mean, I'm not really into poetry. I've started reading a bit of poetry recently. Anna, my wife, thinks I've started a midlife crisis.

And that's why. But at least I'm not buying motorbikes. From the ridiculous to the slightly more sublime.

This Tennyson poem is called Tears, Idle Tears. And he talks about the empty sadness of losing loved ones that we can never see again.

He says this. Tears, idle tears. I know not what they mean. Tears from the depth of some divine despair. Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes.

Death in looking on the happy autumn fields and thinking of the days that are no more. Many of us will carry pain.

[6 : 05] Deep scars that death has brought already in our lives. The death of a loved one. The death even of a child.

Death is brutal and it is final. And it seems to us that it is a reality that cannot be changed and that we just have to accept.

Can anyone really do anything about death? Well, they didn't think so. Look down with me at verse 35. While Jesus was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, Your daughter is dead.

Why trouble the teacher any further? This girl had died. She was lifeless. The moment of no return had come.

Why trouble the teacher any further? They said. Look again. Look at verse 40. They laughed at him. They laughed at him. When he said, She's not dead but sleeping.

[7 : 10] They did not think that he could do anything about death. And frankly, most of the time, in our natural state, neither do we. Isn't that true?

Just before we look at this, some of us will have this question too. If Jesus really can deal with death, why do our loved ones still die, though we pray?

Well, we're going to look at that question because this text answers that question too. Three things that we're going to pause on. Number one, the bout of the ages.

Jesus v. Jesus v. Death. That's what this is. Some of you will have heard of the boxing match. The fight of the century.

It was known as. Joe Frazier versus Muhammad Ali. Two undefeated world champions. Muhammad Ali had, I think, been barred from boxing for his protest against the Vietnam War and refusal to fight.

[8 : 19] But anyway, this bout took place after that. And it was the most anticipated bout in the century, apparently. After 15 rounds of close boxing, this, I mean, I'm speaking about this as if I know.

I mean, I just looked it up this week. But Frazier took it on points. I didn't know that. I thought Muhammad Ali won all his fights. Anyway, there we go. The bout of the century.

Well, here in our passage, we have, I think, the greatest matchup of all time. We've seen the warm-up acts. Jesus versus the storm.

Jesus versus Satan. Jesus versus disease. But now, death itself. And if Frazier and Ali was the bout of the century, then how should we describe the Son of God versus death itself?

The bout of the ages. But it is not just Jesus versus death. Because it is Jesus versus death at its absolute worst.

[9 : 36] Do you see that? The worst thing death can do is take away our loved ones. Oh, there is one thing worse it can do. It's to take away a child. Verse, where are we?

Verse 42. She was 12 years of age. We have friends. Anna and I have friends who, two years ago, went through probably the deepest grief anyone can go through, which was to watch as their six-year-old fell ill and died.

Many of us have lost children at early stages and felt the grief of that. It is the worst thing that death can do.

But we must see here that Jesus doesn't confront death at its best, but at its worst and most brutal and painful.

Now, look down at what happens. Verse 38. Verse 38. They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.

[10 : 59] And when he had entered, he said to them, why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping. They laughed at him, but he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was.

Taking her by the hands, he said to her, Talithi Kumi, which means, little girl, I say to you, arise.

And immediately, the girl got up and began walking, for she was 12 years of age, and they were immediately overcome with amazement.

Do you see the effortless power of this? It's not 15 rounds of close boxing, is it? Where Jesus wins on points. There is no contest.

Just get up. Perhaps the most incredible words are in verse 39. Do you see that? Just imagine what that would have sounded like to this house.

[12 : 09] Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping. We should marvel at the confidence that Jesus had as he walked into that house.

Isn't that extraordinary? There was no doubt in his mind that he could do it. No doubt. And it's just as if he's going to wake up a lazy teenager, except easier than that.

The child is not dead but sleeping. For him, it's just as easy as waking up someone from sleep. In fact, Jesus here is behaving with the confidence of none other than the owner of the universe.

And we've seen that throughout this section. It's like watching the owner. Do you remember him asleep on the cushion in the storm? with the confidence of the owner.

Be still. Permission to Satan to go out into the pigs as Satan begged him. Oh, she's asleep, he says.

[13 : 23] I'll just go and wake her up from death. The confidence of the owner. And they were overcome with amazement, weren't they, in verse 42.

Overcome with amazement. I don't know what you imagine that scene would have been like. There they are. There's seven people in the room, three disciples, the two parents, Jesus and the girl. I like to think maybe, well, I don't know.

But Peter and John and James just sort of slumping down by the wall, just overcome with amazement as they watch the owner at work.

We see again here, not just his power, but his gentle compassion. As we've seen with the woman and as we've seen with the demon-possessed man.

He only takes five people in, but notice he takes the parents. He doesn't take most of his disciples. He takes the parents in so that they could see their precious daughter being given back to them.

[14 : 33] And he takes the daughter by the hand. He doesn't have to. With Lazarus, he just shouts, come out.

He can raise her with a word. He takes her by the hand. This is not the action, therefore, of a disinterested force, but of a father with a child or a kind friend.

Give me your hands. Let me raise you up. That's what Jesus is like. It's a beautiful picture of God the Son with all his power.

How does he use it? To lift up. To raise up. And this is what he can do for you if you would come to him. death has met its match in Jesus.

Jesus allows death to do its worst with Jairus' daughter, which it does. And then, as it were, death drops the mic.

[15 : 37] What are you going to do now? Jesus says, you done your worst? My turn. And he shows his effortless supremacy to bring life again.

What does this mean? I just want to pause now on what this does not mean and what it does mean. We'll come to what it does mean. What this does not mean.

It does not mean resurrections now. This is really important. Some Christian churches and movements have taken miracles like this and taught from them that this means Jesus will raise people from the dead today.

In some ways, an understandable mistake, but with tragic, to tragic effect, to tragic effect. It is to miss the point in a very, very serious way and actually, exactly, to miss the point in exactly the way that Jesus himself feared his generation would miss the point.

More than that, it is to underestimate the point. Resurrections now. It is to drain it of any real lasting significance. Jairus' daughter would have died again.

[17 : 04] Why do I say this? You should be asking, show us that from the text, Phil. You can't just say that. Well, let me try. There is something strange about this miracle.

Do you see it as we read? Why all the privacy? Why so private? Three things. Three private things. Firstly, he doesn't allow the crowd to come with him to the house.

Verse 37, there's a massive crowd. He said, no, you've got to stay there. The whole crowd has to stay there. And not even his disciples, only three of them get to come with him.

Verse 37, Peter, James, and John. Second, he doesn't allow the household to come in either, the people weeping around the place.

He puts them outside. So in the room, you've got five witnesses, three disciples and the parents. Thirdly, and most bizarrely, verse 43, just look with me at this, he strictly charged them that no one should know this.

[18 : 11] No one should know this. What do you make of that? And told them to give her something to eat. Why? Why all the privacy?

The answer is that his concern is precisely that people would get the wrong impression about the timings of his kingdom. Just imagine for a second if they'd rushed out.

Jesus has raised her from the dead and this is exactly what happens. Hordes of people in his day coming and asking for relatives back. Naturally.

But that is not what he had come to do. Just come back with me to Mark chapter 1, verse 15. One of the two key summary verses of the whole gospel, you've got chapter 1, verse 1, chapter 1, verse 15.

Jesus comes proclaiming the gospel of God. The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand or literally near. Repent and believe the gospel.

[19 : 18] He did not, as a key word there, at hand. So Jesus did not come to proclaim that the kingdom of God is here in all its finality and fullness but that the kingdom of God is near at hand at the very gates we're in the last chapter of history before finally it comes in all its fullness.

As we've seen in the last few weeks, now is the time for proclaiming the message of the kingdom. That's why he says I've come to preach in chapter 1. As we saw in chapter 3, that's why he commissions his apostles to go and preach and that's why we saw in chapter 4 that the kingdom of God spreads today through the word of God as the word spreads.

Now is the time for the proclamation of the kingdom before that day when the kingdom comes in all its fullness. So come back to chapter 5.

Why does Jesus charge them strictly not to tell anyone what had really happened? precisely because he has not come to bring resurrections now.

Many other people on that day died in Israel. He only raised one. He ensures that it's witnessed.

[20 : 40] That's the point of the three apostles in there. His three key witnesses. He ensures that it is witnessed so that when the time is right, it can be proclaimed in the context of the whole gospel.

Namely, that he has come to die and to rise and to call his followers to die in this life and one day to rise in the next.

This does not mean resurrections now. What does it mean? It means something far greater, far more wonderful. It means that Jesus can take away death forever in his kingdom to come.

It means something far bigger and greater than resurrections now. I've put a quote there on your sheet from the Old Testament from Isaiah where God says this, speaking of a future day, he says, he that is God, the Lord, will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.

He will swallow up death forever. Here is the promise in the Old Testament that one day God, through his Messiah, would take away death forever in his kingdom.

[22 : 09] What is Jesus saying here as he raises Jairus' daughter from the dead? Here I am, he's saying, the one promised bringing the kingdom promised where death would be no more.

And so Jesus has brought the kingdom of God near, near enough for us to peek inside it, to see a glimpse of it. I don't know if you've been on Right Move recently.

I mean, I won't ask for a show of hands, but, you know, probably the stats would say that most of us probably have. As you look at these photos on Right Move, they bring the house near.

You can peek inside it. You can get a really good view of what it's going to be like, as long as you account for the fact that the photos always make it look bigger, etc. You can get a really good view of what it's going to be like.

The miracles of Jesus bring the coming kingdom of God near. They show you what the house is going to be like. You're not there yet, but it's enough to make you want to be there.

[23 : 22] Why is this written down for us? So that we can believe that the kingdom he will one day bring really will be a place where there is no more death because he can take it away.

I was going to read this. I'm not sure if I'm going to get through it, but it's a card that I was sent by our friends who lost their daughter a couple of years ago.

Let's see if I can read it. They're Christians. over her last month here on earth, after she was diagnosed with leukemia, we kept praying, Lord, please protect our little girl.

Please keep her safe. He did protect her, and he took her to a place where she'll be safe forever. Where she is, the world cannot corrupt her, the flesh cannot tempt her, the devil cannot reach her.

She is not dead, but sleeping. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

[24 : 37] Written about three months after she died. Well, those are the words of two people who understand the meaning of the raising of Jairus' daughter, that Jesus can take away death forever in his kingdom.

the truth is, we find it very hard to believe that death could ever be taken away. Don't we? We find it really hard.

Why? The reason is that we have spent so long in the dark that we can't imagine the daylight. We've spent so long underground spiritually that we can't imagine ever seeing the sky.

well, no one believed he could do it. The servant said, don't trouble the teacher any further. That's all they said, isn't it?

And that's all of us, isn't it? Once I'm in the grave, don't trouble Jesus any further. There's nothing you can do then. That's what we tend to believe naturally.

[25 : 45] There's something deep inside us that says, death will have the final word. It's too strong. But we must see here that the bout of the ages has been fought in history and won by Jesus Christ.

Death is on the canvas. Of course, if death was imposed by God as a judgment on sin, which it was, then it's perfectly reasonable, isn't it, that he can take it away when sin is dealt with.

It's not too hard for him. In fact, the harder thing is to take away sin. Well, how should we apply this to our lives?

I think the application of these verses is that we should take the limits, take our limits off Jesus. Death is not Lord, Jesus is Lord.

you know those white vans that you see with limited to 57 miles an hour on the back? It's great because they cause so much trouble in the city, don't they?

[26 : 56] But when you get on the motorway, you can sail past them and just give them a wave as you go. Well, Jairus at this point had a saviour that was limited to 57 miles an hour.

His faith only stretched so far, verse 27, she's at the point of death. You can stop her dying, Jesus, you can heal her, but once she's dead, that's too much. Well, that's all of us, isn't it?

A limited Jesus. Jesus says to Jairus, in effect, take your limits off me. Verse 36, do not fear, only believe.

And he says that to each one of us here today. Take your limits off me. Don't be afraid that death is Lord, and we'll have the final say.

Only believe that I am Lord over death, and can bring you to a kingdom where there is no more death. Do not fear, only believe. Don't be afraid that there is no hope, only believe that I've brought it.

[28 : 08] don't be afraid that the promises of God will come to nothing. Only believe that I'm bringing a kingdom where there's no more death. Don't be afraid that when this life is done and your eyes close for the last time, that trusting in Christ will all have been for nothing.

Only believe he will be there waiting. It will not be death, but sleep, and then he will raise you up in his kingdom to come.

Why? Because the bout of the ages has been fought. Death is on the canvas. Now you may be here today and you have never repented, that is, come back to God and surrendered to Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.

Well today could be just a day to do that. What's stopping you? This changes our perspective on life, doesn't it? There's the line of that hymn, which I love, the things of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.

I'll end with these words of Jesus a few words later. Take up your cross and follow me, for whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it in eternity.

[29 : 38] Let's pray. Well our Father, we thank you for such a great Saviour and such a great Lord. We thank you that we have a glorious hope of a kingdom to come where there will be no more death.

Lord Jesus, we love you, we praise you, we want to follow you without fear and only in faith that you will indeed do exactly as you have said you will and bring us into your eternal kingdom.

help us to live for you now, help us to take up our cross, to give our lives for you and we pray in your name.

Amen.