

The Life House

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Date: 28 August 2016

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[0 : 00] Well, it would be very helpful if you had your Bibles open to Luke chapter 8, beginning at verse 40, on page 866. And as you open your Bibles, I want you to imagine for a moment that you're Jairus.

Many of us are parents, and so it's not that hard, is it, to imagine you're Jairus in this story. And you come and you fall at the feet of Jesus, and you invite him to come home with you to the sick house, and by the time that you get there, it's too late. But Jesus decides to invite himself into your death house. And before another hour has passed, Jesus has raised your daughter back to life and transformed your home into the life house. That's the movement of this story. And this is a story, this is a story that reveals who Jesus is in a very powerful and hopeful way. And I would like to look at it together and see him, Jesus, in this story now. And if it helps you to know ahead of time what my headings are going to be, we're going to work under two headings. First of all, Jesus conquers the death house, and second, Jesus is the life house.

Jesus conquers the death house, and Jesus is the life house. Let's dive in. Jesus conquers the death house. Look with me starting at verse 40.

Now when Jesus returned, the crowds welcomed him. They were all waiting for him. And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. Falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about 12 years of age, and she was dying. You see the urgency in this story. It piles up one after the other. First of all, it's his only daughter. He loves her more than you could ever imagine. It's his only child, the love of his life. She's about 12 years old. She's a girl on the verge of womanhood in Jewish society. And finally, she is dying. This is a life-threatening illness that she has. And we've already seen these past four weeks on Luke Street, how Jesus never turns down an invitation to enter someone's home. But usually it's a dinner invitation. This is far more serious.

So he responds immediately, and in the end of verse 42 there, Jesus went, and the people pressed all around him. Jairus is trying to lead Jesus to his house, but this crowd is suffocating him. It's slowing him down. And the worst possible thing happens. You'll notice we didn't read verses 43 to 48, but these are great verses to have a look at in your own devotion time later. Because Jesus is delayed on his way to the sick house by an older woman who reaches out, and she touches the edge of Jesus' robe, and she's healed immediately. And Jesus has the audacity to take the time to stop and find out who she is and have a conversation with her. And that delay makes Jairus' worst fear come true. By the time they approach his house, a servant comes and he says, it's too late.

[3 : 19] It's too late. It's as if you call 911 because your child is dying, and the paramedics are on their way, and you look down the block, and you see they've stopped at the end of the road, and they've pulled over, and they're helping a little girl who's fallen off her bicycle, and she has a scrape on her knee. Now, I'm not saying that this older woman, her illness wasn't serious, but it wasn't life-threatening. She'd had it for 12 years. Couldn't Jesus wait just one more hour and go back and see her? No. And it's too late. Jairus' daughter is dead. The sick house has become the death house, and Jairus doesn't need a doctor anymore. He just needs a funeral director.

But then, Jesus speaks. You know, actually, before he speaks, it's interesting, because Jairus, it's clear in this passage that as long as his daughter lives, Jairus has enough faith to believe that Jesus has the power to heal her. But the moment she dies, he gives up hope. It's more than Jesus could possibly have the power to do. And then come Jesus' words in verse 50. Have a look at verse 50 with me.

But Jesus, on hearing this, on hearing your daughter is dead, do not trouble the teacher anymore, answered him, do not fear, only believe, and she will be well. Is this an equation? Is it a formula for salvation or healing? Is that what Jesus is giving us here? No, I don't think so. It's not a math

problem, but it is a relationship. It's not a math problem. It's a relationship. So when Jesus says, only believe, another way of translating it is, Jesus is saying, put your trust in me. Put your trust in me.

And so Jesus' response to our suffering and our grief, it's not formulaic. It's deeply relational. And it rests on a powerful and reliable promise. The promise that he gives Jairus. You, your daughter, will be well. Your daughter will be well. And when you're looking at chapter 8 on your own, a little later today or later in the week, look for other places where Jesus says this.

In chapter 7, it's translated with our story last week. Your faith has saved you. It's the same idea, the same root there. You will be well. And he says it to the woman who he heals on the way to Jairus' daughter. And he says it actually many times in Luke's gospel. It's a great one to look up. [6:01] You will be well. It's in that chant that we said, Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He came to seek and make the lost well, to heal us, to save us. You will be well.

And we'll return to this promise, but let's continue following the story. Because in verse 51, we read that Jesus enters the death house. And by entering a house with a dead body, Jesus risks becoming ritually contaminated and unclean. And that risk becomes a sure bet when he takes that little girl, that dead body. He holds her by the hand.

And last week, you remember, Simon the Pharisee got very uncomfortable when Jesus let a sinful woman touch his feet. Imagine how Simon would feel if he was here in this story. But for Jesus, death is not a contamination or something to run away from. No. It's our greatest enemy. And he has come to confront and to conquer it. And death has no power over Jesus. It can't contaminate him. It can't overpower him. In fact, we've already talked with the children about this.

Jesus can even refer to death as sleep. So in verse 52, He doesn't say this because he's a little insensitive or squeamish about, you know, like us, about talking about death. But he says it because our greatest enemy death is to Jesus like little more than sleep. The Son of God has that kind of power. You know, you and I, we can get our children out of bed on the first day of school simply by saying, Johnny, get up. You can do that, right?

We'll see. I'll ask you next week. And in verse 54, Jesus takes this girl by the hand and he simply says, my child, get up, arise. And she does. If you've read much of the New Testament, you might have noticed that there's other places where death is referred to as sleep. Just quickly, one example from 1 Thessalonians 4.14. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. That's the hope of the resurrection.

[8:37] Paul's talking about Christians who have died. He refers to them as just simply as falling asleep. It's in the story of Lazarus as well. Jesus refers to Lazarus as falling asleep. You see, when the stone was rolled away, sorry, when the stone was rolled in front of Jesus' tomb and sealed there, death believed that it had won the final victory. But it was not possible for death to hold Jesus in the grave. God raised him from the dead. And now all those who are in Christ know that the death house has been conquered by Jesus. And Jesus is the life house for all those who put their trust in him. Jesus is the life house for you and me who put our trust in him.

And so moving from Jesus who conquered the death house to Jesus who is the life house, we continue the story. And I want to be clear here for a moment because I don't want you to mistake what I've been saying as a sort of triumphalism. Jesus doesn't promise us freedom from all suffering and grief in this world.

And that can make this story a little bit troubling for us in our experiences, in our suffering, in our loss of loved ones. But it's the very same case for Jairus and his family, isn't it?

The thing is, though, that all through this suffering and grief with this family, in this story, Jesus never leaves or forsakes them. He dwells with them in their house.

He remains with them and he transforms their house. Just have a look. Did you notice the tender details in the story? The compassion and care that Jesus shows to Jairus and his wife and then to the little girl.

[10:35] Verse 51, he invites Jairus and his wife to be part of this miracle, to witness it. He doesn't leave them out of the room. Verse 54, he takes this girl by the hand, showing a tender act of loving compassion.

He calls her my child. And then in verse 55, Jesus directs that something should be brought for her to eat. A very practical act of loving care for her.

And so, brothers and sisters, when we think about our own suffering and grief, I think there's a temptation that this story challenges head on. A temptation that you and I face. When bad things happen to our family, it's tempting to respond by pulling back.

Pulling back into the privacy and the safety of our own immediate family. It's tempting to put up walls around our family. And to see our biological family as a closed, a self-sufficient, an autonomous unit.

[11 : 40] That's where we're going to receive our care from. Because that's who we can trust in times of suffering. And I don't know, it might be a defense mechanism. Or a way to limit the pain that we experience.

Or the perceived humiliation that we have about suffering. It doesn't really matter why we do it. But I think we're all tempted to respond to suffering and grief in this way. To put up these walls.

But you know, as important as family is, when we do this, three things happen. First of all, we place an unbearable weight of expectation on our family.

A burden that they can't possibly bear on their own. And second of all, we risk cutting out, not only Jesus' tender comfort and compassion in the midst of our hardship.

The same tender comfort and compassion that he showed to Jairus and his wife. But even more importantly, we cut out his gracious desire to display his power through our weakness.

[12 : 43] And to bring his good out of all of our evil circumstances. And finally, when we do this, we turn our back on our church family, on one another here.

And our church family is a gift of grace, which God gives us to provide love and care and support in these times of suffering and grief. And so this story challenges us to face our grief and suffering in a different way.

Because you saw that Jairus, he came and he fell at Jesus' feet. He put aside all social conventions, worrying about what other people thought.

And in the middle of a busy crowd, he came to Jesus. And then Jesus entered into the very heart of this family's suffering and grief. And he takes their great pain just like he takes our pain on the cross.

He transforms it into new life and new hope and peace in him. This story shows us who Jesus is and what he's done for us.

[13 : 50] It shows what he's done for us now as he takes us from the death house to the life house to be with him now. And it shows what he's done for us forever in giving us eternal life.

If we are in Christ, we no longer live in a death house. Jesus has given us the gift of eternal life which begins now. And he's given us the hope of the resurrection which continues forever.

So we are those who've been transformed through meeting the Lord Jesus Christ. And we walk with him day by day with these words ringing in our ears. Do not fear.

Put your trust in me. And all will be well. Amen.