

Jesus Defeats Death

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[0 : 0 0] And we're looking at Jesus' dealing with Jairus' daughter. Verse 35, while he was still speaking there, still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?

As we said a moment ago, we've seen Jesus deal with the demonic and displaying his great power over the powers of darkness. We saw Jesus heal the woman who had been hemorrhaging for the 12 years.

And we saw how Jesus doesn't want to have secret disciples, doesn't want people who have come to faith, who have come to believe in him, hiding away.

And that's why he brings this woman out into the open, so that she has to confess that she has come to Jesus for healing. And we find that it is, as Jesus gives the words to the woman in verse 34, And he said to her daughter, Your faith has made you well.

Go in peace and be healed of your disease. And it's at that moment that we find that the messengers come from Jairus' house with the awful news.

[1 : 1 9] And they address Jairus, and they say, Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further? These probably are the most awful words that any parent could hear.

Your daughter or your son is dead. And death is that awful enemy that has come into the world, and has brought so much pain and so much sorrow, so much heartache.

And everybody here has been affected one way or another by death. And life is never the same when loved ones are taken away.

There's always something goes with them. And there are obviously some deaths that are more acutely felt than others by the very nature of them, and possibly by the age and all these different factors.

And death is no respecter of persons. It doesn't matter a person's age or wealth, creed, sex, background. It doesn't matter whether a person is in the palace or in prison.

[2 : 2 7] It doesn't matter who a person is. Death is a great leveler. Because we're told in Scripture that it is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment.

And it's an appointment that we all have to keep. We don't know when it will come, but it will come. And it is, we're told again in the Bible, that death is the wages of sin.

God said to Adam and Eve, In the garden you eat of the fruit. The day you eat of the fruit you will surely die. And that moment brought death into the world.

And the sorrows that have fallen out from then have been so incredibly painful. So here is the news that Jairus absolutely dreaded.

And we find that, I think it's worth highlighting here, that we mustn't lose sight at the very beginning of Jairus' approach to Jesus. Because back in verse 22 it tells us, Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus, by name, and seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet and implored him, earnestly saying.

[3 : 39] Now, in Jesus' time in this world, many people approached him. Some people approached him with wrong motives. Some came trying to trip him up. Some, we use the expression smart alecks, people who were trying to show their own intelligence and that they were better than him.

Some people asked questions where they were really hoping that he would get arrested because of the questions. Some people came out of curiosity. Some people came out of real need.

So the thing is that Jesus will only really deal with people who come with a real need. And that's why he went, it tells us, when Jairus came and it tells us that he fell at Jesus' feet.

My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her so that she may be made well and live. And Jesus went with him. You know, when we come to Jesus sincerely and honestly, and Jesus always knows how we are, and that's one of the things we've always got to be with the Lord Jesus, is honest.

There's no point in trying to hoodwink him. We can't. We cannot. We can deceive ourselves. We can deceive other people. But we cannot deceive the Lord. And we have to tell the Lord just how we are.

[5 : 00] And even if tonight you're here, and you have all kinds of issues and struggles, even with the Christian faith, but you know you're here, tell the Lord that. And say to the Lord, Lord, there's loads of things I don't understand.

I'm trying to grapple with some of these issues. My mind's muddled up, and I'm mixed up, and there's things, Lord, it's just a wall to me. I don't understand, but I would like to. Tell the Lord these things, because the Lord will hear that, and the Lord will open your mind and give you that understanding so that you'll be able to see a way through and be able to understand.

But anyway, here's this man, Jairus, and he came in absolute sincerity, throwing himself at the feet of Jesus, and Jesus responded to the broken heart of Jairus. But when the messengers came to Jairus and said, look, don't trouble.

There's no point in troubling the teacher anymore. Your daughter is dead. You'll notice that Jesus ignored them. And Jesus said to Jairus, he said, do not fear, only believe.

And this is a critical moment for Jairus, because Jairus is at a crossroads, and he can do one of two things. He can look at Jesus, and anger could fill up his heart, and he could feel a great sense of being let down.

[6 : 22] And he would say to him, look, Jesus, I came to you in the greatest urgency of my life, and you started to come with me, but then you got sidetracked, and you got caught up with this woman who'd been ill for 12 years.

What was another day, another hour going to make in her life? And you allowed my daughter to die. Now, Jairus could have acted like that, and he could have walked away.

He could have become bitter and angry against Jesus. And sometimes, that can be the response of people when things happen. They turn their back upon God.

But in many other people, it's the very reverse, and that's what Jairus did. Jairus held closely to Jesus. He clung to Jesus. He went with Jesus.

And there are many people in the similar situation to Jairus, and that's exactly what they've done. They've done the right thing. Even although their hearts are broken, even though they don't understand, they've held out to Jesus, and they say to the Lord, Lord, I'm broken.

[7 : 29] Lord, I'm in darkness. Lord, I'm in pain. But there is no one else. There's nobody else I can turn to. There's no other hope that I have but you. And thankfully, that's exactly where Jairus was at this moment.

But Jesus says to Jairus, do not fear, only believe. There's a two-fold command there. Jairus, even in the face of death, do not fear.

Don't fear. Jesus alone is able to say that. Now, I know that what Jesus did here was not the norm. We read another of where he raised the widow woman's son in the village of Nain.

But Jesus is displaying something here. He is displaying his power over death. He's displaying the fact.

And this is like, as it were, almost a little foretaste of the resurrection. Because there's going to come a day when the Lord Jesus is going to display that power.

[8 : 37] He's going to come again. And every grave will open. All the cemeteries all over the world. All the graveyards all over the world at the command of Jesus are going to open up.

And the dead will rise. It's, I think, probably, it's a spectacle that is almost beyond beginning to understand. But that's what's going to happen.

And that's why Jesus says, do not fear. I'm in control. If you could see, that's what he says to us. And he's saying to everybody whose heart is hurting.

If you're here tonight as a believer and your heart is hurting, Jesus is saying as well to you, do not fear. I am in control. You don't know the end.

Yes, your heart is broken. Yes, you're weeping. You'll be weeping throughout this life. But let me tell you, it's not the end. I'm in control. I have power. I have the authority over death, over the grave, over hell, over all these awful enemies.

[9 : 49] I have that power. And Jesus is demonstrating that here to us. And that's why he says, do not fear, only believe.

It's amazing how often throughout scripture we have these words, do not fear or fear not. The Lord's beautiful flowers, as it were, to his people. Fear not. Don't be afraid. Right throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament we find these words, do not be afraid.

Only believe. Trust me. That's what the Lord is saying, trust me. And you know, we can never trust the Lord enough. And so, Jairus has nothing left that he can do but to trust the Lord Jesus.

Jesus. And then Jesus stops all the people because there's a crowd there and he says, look, and again, there's times Jesus displays his authority and he says to them, no, you're not coming with me.

Only Jairus is coming. But he took three of his disciples, he left the others, he took Peter, James, and John with him. These were the three disciples who were privileged beyond the other disciples.

[10 : 59] These are the three disciples that he took with him into this room to, well, he was going to raise Jairus' daughter. They were the same three disciples he took with him onto the Mount of Transfiguration where they saw the glory of Jesus in awesome splendor.

It was a scene they couldn't forget. Peter, in fact, in his letter, he writes about it. It was something he would never forget to his dying day. And these three disciples were the ones that Jesus set apart from the others in the Garden of Gethsemane.

He said to the others, you wait there, and he took Peter, James, and John with him. But there came a point where he even had to leave them behind as well. They saw him being sorrowful. They saw him being exceedingly sorrowful.

But then he went away on his own. People often ask, why these three? I don't know. We can speculate. And if we're going to speculate, I would say he took these three because Peter was the natural leader and Peter was going to be the leader of the early church.

And it was only right that he would take Peter into these situations. John, we're told, was the disciple whom Jesus loved. There was a spirituality, obviously, about John that Jesus had a closer, bond with John than with any of the other disciples.

[12 : 25] And James was going to be put to death very shortly. He was going to be the first of the disciples who was to experience martyrdom. And so, not long after Jesus' own death, we find that James was put to death.

So it's quite possible that it's for these reasons that he took and took these three particular disciples with him. anyway, they come to Jairus' house and as they arrive there, we can see that they saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.

Now, of course, there was a lot of normal, natural grief and there would be a lot of the people there would be broken-hearted. But we've got to remember at that time they had professional mourners.

Wherever there was death, these people gathered the professional mourners and they would wail and they would howl and it must have been a very distressing scene because it's bad enough personal grief without that alongside.

But the professional mourners' grief wasn't real because you can see how very quickly their weeping and wailing changed to mocking laughter. Because when Jesus said the child is not dead but sleeping, they laughed at him.

[13 : 43] They laughed in his face. This was the mocking laughter. So that shows that their weeping and wailing was only skin deep because you cannot be broken-hearted howling, breaking your heart and then all of a sudden turn it into mocking laughter.

That's impossible. So that's what these people were doing which shows that their grief, it wasn't the real grief that the family's grief was like.

But I think there's something very important to establish here. and that is that this girl was really dead because some people say, oh she hadn't actually died.

She was, maybe she had gone into a really bad faint or maybe she had lapsed into a really deep coma and she wasn't really dead. But the very scene here shows that she was dead because when Jesus suggested that she was sleeping, they all just mocked him and laughed and they said, she is dead.

So there wasn't one person around or about who for one moment would say anything other than this poor girl has died.

[14 : 56] And indeed, Luke's gospel, when Luke gives the account of this, he highlights, it's in Luke chapter 8 and verse 55, it tells us that when Jesus commanded her to rise, that her spirit returned.

So it shows that there had actually been, that death had occurred, there was a severance of soul and body. It's quite amazing. This was actual, real death.

Now I do not believe that this occasion that the girl's soul went to glory. I believe that on this occasion it was held as it were in limbo, but her soul had departed her body.

I do not think, and I believe she was a believer, and I'll say that in a moment why, but I believe that her soul, if her soul had gone to glory, can you imagine her being brought back?

It would be intolerable for her. The Lord wouldn't do that, take her soul back from glory, from that environment of joy and peace, an environment where there's no pain or sorrow or illness or curse or death, and bring her back from there, back into her body, and to face death again and all the difficulties of this life.

[16 : 21] I believe that her soul, yes, departed from her body, an actual death occurred, but as it were, her soul was held in a state of limbo, and her soul was brought back into her body.

That's what her spirit returned, that's what it tells us in Luke. And then Jesus does something really beautiful. See what it says? If we go back to verse 23, this is what Jairus says, My little daughter is at the point of death, come and lay your hands on her, so that she might be made well.

But Jesus here does something amazing, because what does Jesus do? He took her by the hand. And that action of Jesus is quite powerful, because what Jesus was doing there was at that very moment making himself unclean.

Because if you touched a dead body, you became ritually and sermonally unclean. He couldn't go back to the synagogue, he couldn't go to the temple, he couldn't engage with people anymore for a period of time.

He would have to go through all kinds of rituals of cleansing before he could do anything. But straight away, he takes this young girl by the hand. And by doing that, he's saying, I am prepared to identify myself completely with her in her need.

[17 : 54] And Jesus is here giving us a picture of what he did for us on the cross. Because that's what Jesus did. He went and he took all our uncleanness.

And he went far further than that. He took all our curse, all our sin, everything that is evil and wicked about us, everything, every sin that we have ever committed was placed upon Jesus.

Jesus identified himself absolutely and completely with us. Not one part of us did he not identify with. And on the cross he bore in himself everything that we deserved.

So we see here this wonderful identification that takes place. And then when Jesus said she's only asleep, remember it says the child is not dead but sleeping.

And that's why I say she was a believer. Because it's one of the beautiful terms in the Bible that is given to us for the death of the Christian. That they fall asleep. Sleeping.

[19 : 06] Not dead. Sleeping. Even when Stephen, we mentioned Stephen this morning, even when Stephen was being bashed to bits with stones, when they were stoning him to bits in the most cruel, barbaric, horrific execution way possible.

It says that when he died that he fell asleep. That's the expression, sleeping. And we find it quite often in the Bible, this is the definition of what happens for the Christian, that they fall asleep.

And it's, I think we've said it often enough before, but that's just what it is. When I've said it at the grave before, that in many ways, the grave is just like, in other ways it's not.

It's the most awful cold place. But this is where faith comes into it. We've got to see beyond. And as we commit the body into the ground, and put in the soil, and bring over the turf, it's simply like putting a duvet over a bed.

and the body is there till the resurrection morning, asleep. The soul is gone into the presence of the Lord. And the body in a mysterious way is united to Jesus Christ.

[20 : 27] That union hasn't broken. Don't ask me how, I can't explain. But it's true that there is still a union. As a shorter catechism puts it beautiful, the souls of believers at their death, made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory, and their bodies being still united to Christ to rest in the grave till the resurrection.

On the resurrection morning, Jesus will say, arise. It's not a wonderful thought. Of course, on the resurrection, not everybody is going to arise to glory.

We're told that some will rise to honor. And some to dishonor. Which again is an awful thought. But anyway, Jesus takes this girl by the hand.

And says to her, and again, it's beautiful, little girl, I say to you, arise or get up. What Jesus is doing here, this is one of the most tender scenes.

He's got this little girl by the hand. And he's using the same language that this girl's mother would have used many a morning in the way that many a parent will waken their children and get them up.

[21 : 46] Little girl, it's time to get up. Arise, get up. It's gentle. And he even uses her own language. It would be Aramaic that time. He uses her own language.

And it's here we just see the compassion and the gentleness and the tenderness and the passionless and the intimacy of Jesus as he deals with this little girl.

And this is what is wonderful as well. And immediately the girl got up and began walking. And again we see the incredible power and authority of Jesus.

It doesn't say she opened her eyes. You would expect from a situation like that that there would be a lingering slow process of gradually opening her eyes, trying to focus on what was happening, trying to figure out what had happened, and then sort of looking around and maybe then gradually trying to sit up.

No, it was instant. That's the amazing thing. And immediately the girl got up and began walking. And they were immediately overcome with amazement.

[22 : 59] And he strictly charged them, that no one should know this and here's what I love as well. And he told them to give her something to eat. See, Jesus was so practical.

Sometimes we focus unrightly on the spirituality of Jesus and Jesus dealing with our souls. But he was concerned about our bodies as well. Because probably in all the multitude of emotions that are going through Jairus and his wife at that moment, the last thing they're remembering is that here is this poor girl who has been desperately ill, probably hasn't eaten for days, and Jesus is saying, go and get her something to eat.

She's hungry. And this shows how Jesus, his control, his love, his graciousness, his compassion, and he hasn't changed.

He's the same today. And I don't know what your situation may be or how you are. Maybe you're interested, maybe you're not interested. You know, there's going to come a day. And there will come, you know, I often think about this.

We don't know what's ahead in life. And sometimes we listen and sometimes we're, I'm just saying this because I remember it myself. I sat in church for years.

[24 : 16] Many a sermon went over my head. Sometimes I listened and sometimes I took it in and other times I didn't. Sometimes I wasn't interested in the slightest.

But you know, there comes a time when things change. And all these things you hear, they become important. And that's why I want you to, this is the one thing I want you to remember, even if tonight you're not taking anything in, Jesus cares.

Jesus really cares. He cares for your body. He cares for your mind. He cares for your soul. Always remember that. And if you come to a place and a point, and you may say to yourself, oh Lord, I've kind of forgotten about you, I've abandoned you.

No, don't. He cares. Always, always, always make a point of going to Jesus. He'll never turn you away.

Let us pray. Lord, our God, we again give you thanks for your patience with us, for your goodness to us, for your love. We give thanks, oh Lord, for the lessons you teach us.

[25 : 26] And sometimes we have to confess, even from these lessons, how little sometimes we take on board ourselves. But we pray that we may seek to understand, that we may seek to appreciate more and more the wonder of your grace and your goodness.

Oh Lord, open our eyes and open our hearts to realize just how much you care for us. We're told in the word, cast your care upon him, because he cares for you.

Take us to our home safely, we pray, and do us good, and cleanse us from all our sin, in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude singing in Psalm 116, the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 116, and we're going to sing to the tune Free Church, Psalm 116, and we're going to sing verses 13 to the end, that's on page 396.

I'll of salvation take the cup, on God's name will I call. I'll pay my vows now to the Lord, before his people all. Dear in God's sight is his saint's death, thy servant Lord am I, thy servant sure, thine handmaid son, my bands thou didst untie, thank offerings I to thee will give, and on God's name will call.

I'll pay my vows now to the Lord, before his people all. Psalm 116, from verse 13, I'll offer salvation, take the cup, tune us Free Church.

[27 : 03] I hope salvation, take the cup, on God's name will I call.

I'll pay my vows now to the Lord, before his people all.

Deep in cross side is his saint's death, thy servant Lord am I, thy servant sure, thy man made song, like one slidest untie, and all praise I to thee will give, and on God's name will fall.

I'll pay my mouth down to the Lord, before his people all.

Within the course of God's midst of the midst of thee, O city of Jerusalem, grace to the Lord give thee.

[29 : 18] Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, rest and abide upon each one of you, now and forevermore. Amen.