

April 14, 2013
Resurrection Stories

A Daughter's Resurrection
Mark 5:21-24, 35-43

Opening words: Everyone knows the Easter story. However, not everyone knows of the Bible's other resurrection stories. Did you know, including Jesus, nine individuals in scripture were resurrected from the dead? Of those miraculous resurrections, three are found in the Old Testament. Three individuals were resurrected by Jesus. Both Peter and Paul raised a person from the dead. In addition, an untold number of saints were resurrected at Jesus' crucifixion. (Matthew 27:52-53) Many believe Paul was resurrected after he was stoned (Acts 14:19-20). Each one of these stories is important. In the future, I want to look at each one of them.

In the next three weeks we are going to look at the three individuals Jesus resurrected. Jesus resurrected a daughter, son and a brother. Those relationships are very important. May God give you ears to hear this morning's Gospel lesson, Mark 5:21-24, 35-43. Let me call this message *A Daughter's Resurrection*.

Mark 5:21-24, 35-43 ²¹ When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." ²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?"

³⁶ Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." ⁴⁰ But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, "*Talitha kum!*" (which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). ⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

A young man was to be sentenced to the penitentiary. The judge had known him from childhood, for he was well acquainted with his father--a famous legal scholar and the author of an exhaustive study entitled, "The Law of Trusts." "Do you remember your father?" asked the magistrate. "I remember him well, your honor," came the reply. Then trying to probe the offender's conscience, the judge said, "As you are about to be sentenced and as you think of your wonderful dad, what do you remember most clearly about him?" There was a pause. Then the judge received an answer he had not expected. "I remember when I went to him for advice. He looked up at me from the book he was writing and said, 'Run along, boy; I'm busy!' When I went to him for companionship, he turned me away, saying 'Run along, son; this book must be finished!' Your honor, you remember him as a great lawyer. I remember him as a lost friend." Does anyone here not get the point?

When I was in the third grade there was a girl in my class by the name of Betty. I don't remember her because she was the smartest student or the cutest girl. I remember Betty because of her story. She was the only child in my third grade class who came from a broken home. In other words, her parents were divorced. It pains me to say it, but we treated her differently. Her parents were divorced! The good news is we would not treat Betty differently today. The bad news is Betty would just be another face in the class photo. Today, many children come from broken homes. Did you know the divorce rate in America rose 700% during the twentieth century? (Today, the divorce rate in America is declining because couples just aren't marrying.) Did you know 25% of American children are being raised by a single parent? (NBC) Did you know 33% of children are being raised in America by fatherless homes? (Washington Times)

That last fact is shocking because children need their fathers. We have a surplus of sperm donors and a shortage of true fathers. Don't tell me being a father isn't important. Just look at the numbers:

61% of youth suicides come from fatherless homes. (U.S. Department of Justice)

85% of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes (U.S. Department of Justice)

71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes (U.S. Department of Justice)

70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from fatherless homes (U.S. Department of Justice)

Only 13 percent of juvenile delinquents come from families in which the biological mother and father are married to each other (Wisconsin Dept. of Health and Social Services, April 1994)

The likelihood that a young male will engage in criminal activity doubles if he is raised without a father and triples if he lives in a neighborhood with a high concentration of single-parent families. (CUNY, Baruch College, 1993)

So what do all these facts and figures have to do with the Gospel lesson for today? The answer is everything. What is the story about? It is a story about a loving father. Let us look at the story together.

We are in the fifth chapter of Mark. There was a man by the name of Jairus. He took his role as father seriously. As a matter of fact, he has been the model of being a Christian father for generations to come. In the story, he does three things to prepare his daughter for life. I like to think those three things prepared her for eternity. It is those three things I want to look at today. It is important that you apply these three things to your relationships with the young people in your life.

Let me lay out for you now and develop them in the next few minutes. First, he wasn't afraid to **express his love**. That sounds simple but not everyone does it. Do your children know you love them? Second, he wasn't afraid to **search out Jesus**. It is not enough to express your opinions about God or the church. The question is, do you have a relationship with Jesus? Do the young in your life see you practicing the spiritual disciplines? Third and finally, he wasn't afraid to **bring Jesus home**. Are you a spiritual hypocrite? Is the faith altering the way that you live your life? So if you are ready to begin, say, "**Amen!**"

Express your Love

In the story for today, the text tells us Jesus traveled to the other side of the lake and was greeted by a great crowd. Everyone wanted something from Jesus, but one man stood out. His name was Jairus. He was a respected man in that community because he is identified as one of the synagogue rulers. What does that mean? It does not mean he was part of the clergy. It was a position held by lay people to care for the administration of the synagogue. It is safe to say he was one of the spiritual leaders of that congregation. He took the Hebrew faith seriously. However, on that day he knew the orthodox faith had some shortcomings. He knew Jesus could do something for his family that the Hebrew faith could not do. Without Jesus, his daughter would die. With Jesus, there was hope. So he went to the shore to meet Jesus. He went to the shore to beg Jesus for his daughter's life. Listen to what I am about to say. He loves his daughter so much he throws himself on the ground to beg Jesus. It is hard to be a respect someone who is begging on the ground. It is a matter of priority. Respect was not important to him that day. The only thing that mattered to him was his daughter. How can you question his love for his daughter? Can anyone here question your love for your children? Do your children know you love them? It is not just a question for the Christian world. It is a question for the whole world. Everyone needs to express their love. Every child needs to know they are loved.

I am not just talking about expressing your love for the young children in your life. I am talking about all the children in your life. It is easy to express your love to a preschooler. It is not so easy to express your love to high schooler. It is not so easy to express your love to your adult children. I believe it is harder for men than it is for

women. Expressing your love is not always easy but it is always important. Regardless of your child's age, they need your love. They want your respect.

When I was in the Cleveland area there was a funeral home in our community. The owner was a woman in her eighties. She had inherited the business from her husband and built a new facility as a memorial to him. The couple only had one daughter, Marilyn. She was a woman in her fifties. The only thing I ever saw her do was play the organ at the services. I remember her as a lonely soul. I would talk to her to brighten her up. I once asked Marilyn, "Do you want to take over the business someday?" She responded by saying, "No! Do you know why I only play the organ? It is the only thing my mother trusts me to do. My mother treats me like a child. She thinks I am twelve years old. When my mother dies I am going to turn this place of death into a restaurant, where people come to laugh and enjoy life." The mother and daughter had been working together for years but their relationship had been dead for decades.

First, Jairus wasn't afraid to express his love. Do your children know you love them? Do you children know you respect them? Do the people in your life know you love your children? The answer to those two questions can't be, "I hope so." The answer to those two questions can't be, "I think." Your answer must be, "YES!" Do yourself a favor today. Tell your children you love them. Tell your children you respect them. If you can do that for me say, "**Amen!**"

Search for Jesus.

Go back to the beach with me. Jairus is laying on the ground begging. The focal point of his attention is Jesus. The Master is his only hope. Without him, his daughter is going to die. You know how the story ends. The little girl did die and Jesus resurrected her. She must have heard the story of her resurrection for the rest of her life. Time and time again, she was told how her father sought out Jesus, begged with Jesus and brought Jesus to her. She knew her father believed in Jesus. Do the young people in your life know you believe in Jesus?

One of the great traditions in the Christian faith is baptism. Were you baptized as an adult? Were you baptized as an infant? Were you baptized a by immersion? Were you sprinkled? Were you poured? Maybe this is the best question: Were you baptized? Within our tradition we practice infant baptism. Three things happen at infant baptism. First, we deal with the original sin of the baby, the sin the child inherited from Adam and Eve. Second, the church promises to do all we can to help this child grow spiritual. We don't always get that opportunity. Third, the parents are promising to God they will live before the child a life that becomes the Christian faith. The baby gets all the attention. The parents get all the responsibility. In infant baptism we recognize the important role parents play in the development of the child. Parents are models for living. If you want your child to behave and believe in a certain way then you will have to behave and believe in that way. If you want your child to be kind person then you have to be a kind person. If you what your child to vote then you have to vote.

If you want your child to drink their milk then you have to drink your milk. Listen to this next line. If you want your child to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, then you have to know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. If the parents don't take those baptismal vows seriously, then we are simply wasting our time. Let me ask you this series of questions.

When was the last time your children saw you meditating?

When was the last time your children saw you praying?

When was the last time your children saw you fasting?

When was the last time your children saw you reading the Bible?

When was the last time your children saw you helping someone in need?

Second, Jairus wasn't afraid to search for Jesus. Are you searching for Jesus or are you just coming to church? If that makes you think, say, **"Amen!"**

Bring Jesus home.

History tells us Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin died in 1953. I have heard several stories about his death. This is one. They say he suffered a stroke while attending a Communist party executive committee meeting. One moment he leaped to his feet, the next moment he was on the floor unconscious. No one moved to help him and only one man spoke, Laverenti Beria. He began to dance around Stalin and shouted, "We're free at last! Free at last!" But as Stalin's daughter forced her way into the room and fell on her knees by her father, the dictator stirred and opened one eye. Beria at once dropped down beside Stalin, seized his hand, and covered it with kisses. Laverenti Beria was exposed as a hypocrite. Do you know any spiritual hypocrites in your life? Do you know of anyone whose actions and beliefs don't match?

Third and finally, Jairus wasn't afraid to bring Jesus home. The young woman would not have ever have been resurrected if her father hadn't brought Jesus home. Is Jesus part of your family or just someone you visit? How is the faith altering the why you live your life? If that makes you think, say, **"Amen!"**

I want to end this message with a confession. I am never comfortable preaching on family values. The reason is, the topic is too close to my heart. I am always searching for perfection. I do not want to hurt the people closest to me. However, this is the truth. I don't consider myself a great husband, but Kathryn and I are preparing to celebrate our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary next month. I don't consider myself a great father, but I have helped raised two wonderful daughters. As I wrestled with these words for this message I discovered something about myself. I worried too much about being the perfect father and failed to see the value of just being a father. I am no different from you. I simply did the best I could do every day. Maybe that is good enough? I haven't done everything wrong and I have done a few things right. You haven't done everything right. You have done a whole lot right!

This story is not just about father and daughters. It is for any of us who have the privilege of working with people from younger generations. They apply to mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, aunts and uncles or neighbors and friends. If you want to influence their lives then be like Jairus. If you want to influence their eternity then be like Jairus!

- 1. Express your love**
- 2. Search for Jesus**
- 3. Bring Jesus home**

Billy Graham once said, *"The family should be a closely knit group. The home should be a self-contained shelter of security; a kind of school where life's basic lessons are taught; and a kind of church where God is honored; a place where wholesome recreation and simple pleasures are enjoyed."* And all of God's people said, **"Amen!"**