

Mark 5:21-43

Wouldn't it be great if, in times of trouble, we were given a word of assurance that everything will be okay? Like Jairus was given. "*Do not fear,*" said Jesus, "*only believe.*" And, of course, He was right. Everything for Jairus turned out okay. That's what I want, and you too. A word from Jesus that puts all our fears to rest. A word that give us hope even in a time of hopelessness.

Is there such a word for us? Are we allowed to read the story of Jairus and find comfort in it for ourselves? Or is it more like the news story that reports how someone over in Timbuktu won a huge lottery worth millions, but it does nothing for us? The latter is how most people see Jesus. He did some pretty great things...for others, but not for them.

Jesus does some pretty great things in our text for today. We see Him raising a little girl to life, and we see Him healing a woman of a horrific disease. But there are throngs of people around Jesus. Many are touching Him. Yet only this woman is healed. And all of them in the crowd have homes where they live, but Jesus goes only to the home of Jairus. What do these two have in common? And how are these two different from all the others in the crowd?

The woman and Jairus both have faith. She says to herself, "*If I touch even His garments, I will be made well.*" And Jairus believes that Jesus can heal his dying child. As St. James points out, those who lack faith should expect to receive nothing from the Lord. The woman believed, and believing, she received. So did Jairus. He believed, that is. He had faith that Jesus could prevent his child from dying.

But then the news comes that his daughter is dead. His sorrow would have been overwhelming. Tears would have immediately begun to flow. His heart would have sunk. And his faith? That, too, would have been crushed had not Jesus quickly intervened.

Before she died, Jairus had some hope, but now that hope is gone in an instant. Why trouble Jesus any further? He will go back home with grief; to a home where his little girl once lived, but no more.

Jesus wants no one to live without faith. He calls all to faith. He desires that all trust Him in all things. Jairus is wobbling. His grief is crushing him. The fear he had of losing his child has now taken over within him. He is about to follow his daughter into the darkness. She has died physically; he is dying spiritually. Jesus speaks to Jairus: "*Do not fear, only believe.*" His words pierce the darkness. They are a glimmer of light, but in total darkness, a glimmer is all that is needed.

And then Jesus does something...something incredible that Jairus takes as a sign of hope. He doesn't send Jairus off with just a word to cling to; He goes with him. Jesus walks with Jairus to his home, to where his little girl is lying within the grasp of death. Oh how comforting is this! Jesus goes with him to his house. Why would He go with him except to fulfill His word of promise? Jesus calls Jairus to faith with His words, "*Only believe,*" and now He bolsters Jairus and steadies his faith by walking with him to his house.

Friend, you and I are sometimes like the woman in our text, and sometimes we are like Jairus. The woman was bold in her faith. She approached Jesus. She touched Him. Out of everyone in

the crowd who was pressing in on Jesus and touching Him, she reached out, and with faith in His power to heal her, she touched His garment.

Sometimes we are that bold. But even when we are, we need more than just our boldness. We need Jesus' words of peace and comfort. To the woman who touched Him, Jesus said, "*Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease.*" Her faith cannot stand alone. Jesus' words must come to her, and they do.

And neither can we stand alone in our faith, no matter how bold we are. To us, also, Jesus gives His words, and in His words we live in the peace and healing of body and soul that He gives. Never, ever be that person who is so bold in faith that the words of Jesus we receive here become less and less important.

Better, in that case, to be like Jairus. He had faith, but not a bold faith. He did not ask Jesus to say the word and his daughter would be healed. He had need for Jesus to lay His hands on her. His faith was not the greatest in all Israel. But come to Jesus he did. That faith he had. And Jesus did go with him.

When the news comes to us, as it came to Jairus, of a tragedy, a horrible loss, a crisis that rocks our world and empties us, making us numb, at those times we need the same word that Jesus gave to Jairus, "*Do not fear, only believe.*"

Friend, Jesus gives that word to you. Search the Scriptures and you will find that word everywhere. This is who Jesus is for you. When you think of Jesus, you can think of Him as the one whose mouth is always speaking to you, "*Do not fear, only believe.*" Who is Jesus? He is the one whom I believe, therefore I have no fear.

This is why you can come to His house and confess your sins to Him, not being afraid of Him, but believing that He is merciful and forgives you, for He does. This is why you can approach His altar not in fear and trepidation, no matter how sinful you have been, but believing His words, "*This is My body...My blood...given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins.*"

And when a crisis enters into your life; when grief overwhelms you and panic is ready to set in, Jesus is not going anywhere but with you. The more afraid you are, the more He steadies you. The more overwhelming your sorrow and grief, the more tightly He holds you. This is when He reminds you of your baptism. He promised you there that He will never leave you nor forsake you. There in your baptism are His words to you, "*Lo, I am with you always.*" There in your baptism Jesus walks with you as He walked with Jairus. And this is your assurance and hope even in your darkest hour.

The water of your baptism is still on your head. See that for what it is. It's Jesus laying His hand on you. His hand, which is pierced by the nail, is always on you. Therefore you have no reason to fear, but He calls you to faith at all times that everything, yes, everything for you will turn out okay.

As Jairus rejoiced to have his daughter back; as the woman rejoiced to be free of her disease, so you can rejoice even now, for you have the same Jesus they have, and you have the same words given to you, "*Do not fear, only believe.*" Amen.