

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, June 27, 2021
“Everything Is Possible” (Mark 5:21-43)

Luke, in his gospel, tells the story of Angel Gabriel appearing to young Mary with the news that she has been chosen to be the mother of God’s Son. To help the perplexed Mary wrap her mind around this, Gabriel tells her that her barren cousin, Elizabeth, is expecting a child in her old age. Then he adds, *Nothing will be impossible with God*. Another way of saying this is: everything is possible with God. We see this truth in our gospel text for today as Jesus turns tragedy into triumph.

Tragedy, of course, has impacted each one of us, whether it be illness, death, or any of the thousands of things that bring us pain: the pain of a broken body, a broken heart, or a broken spirit. We all know what it is like to hurt. We’ve all experienced tragedy.

Today, we see a father who is experiencing tragedy. Death has appeared at the home of Jairus and has come for his twelve-year-old daughter. In the midst of this tragedy, Jairus turns to Jesus, only to discover that all things are possible with God.

Jairus, we are told, is a leader in the synagogue. This means that he is a man of prominence, position, power, and prestige. When Jairus speaks, people listen. When he walks into a room, everyone stands up. He is a man who has it all, but at this moment, none of it matters. His power, position, and prestige can do nothing to help his daughter, whom, he has discovered is his real treasure.

Jairus is not unlike many people today. We spend our entire lives amassing power and wealth. But when tragedy comes, those things mean absolutely nothing. Death doesn’t care if you are a millionaire. Sickness and sorrow don’t care about your position. Suffering doesn’t care about your popularity. Therefore, when tragedy comes, we’d better know where to go for help.

Jairus has known about Jesus for a while. Jesus, after all, is a controversial figure that the religious leaders – of which Jairus is one – want to do away with. But somehow, God opens the eyes of this Jewish official and he sees that Jesus is his only hope. So this man of power, prestige and position comes before Jesus, and he comes reverently, prayerfully, passionately. Mark says that he falls at Jesus’ feet. This big shot in the Jewish community humbles himself in the presence of Jesus and petitions Jesus’ help. He basically says, *My daughter is sick and I can’t do anything to help her, but I believe you can*. What a statement of faith!

Many of us haven’t learned this lesson yet. We trust only in ourselves and our own abilities. We think we can take care of our problems when they would be so much easier to bear if we would humble ourselves before Christ and acknowledge that only he has the power sufficient to help in our time of need. We need to come to that place of surrender: that place where we reach the end of our own abilities, that place we know we can’t help ourselves, but believe and trust that the Lord can.

When Jairus shares his story with Jesus, Jesus listens and agrees to go home with him. What good news this is for us. When we bring our needs to Jesus, he cares that we are hurting and takes action to do something about situation.

But as Jesus goes, he is thronged by the crowd and the woman with the issue of blood reaches out and touches Jesus' garment. When Jesus feels power go out from him, he stops to confront and comfort her. As he does, precious minutes pass by. This delay must grip Jairus' heart. He wants the master to hurry. The situation with his daughter is life and death, but this woman is able to be up and around. Surely her problem can wait. But Jairus doesn't interrupt. He merely waits until Jesus is free to continue on with him. This is the response of faith! Jairus has come to Jesus with a problem he cannot solve, and has placed that problem in the hands of Jesus. He trusts that Jesus will take care of it. This is another lesson many of us need to learn. God doesn't run on our schedule. When he doesn't move as quickly as we might like, we need to trust him anyway. If we give him our problem, we need to leave it with him.

While Jesus is still talking with the woman, one of Jairus' servants comes with the tragic word: *Your daughter is dead. There is no need to trouble the teacher any longer. Even he can't fix this problem. Your daughter is dead and that's the way it is.* This news, no doubt, takes his breath away and rocks Jairus to his foundation. It surely attacks his faith and brings him to the very edge of despair! It would any of us. Perhaps he considers the delay this woman has caused and is even a little bitter with the Lord. Perhaps his hope in Jesus has been misplaced.

I'm sure this is how Mary and Martha felt when Lazarus fell ill and, after receiving their message, Jesus stayed where he was for two more days. By the time Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been dead and buried for four days. The sisters thought all hope was gone. But what they didn't know is that what seemed to be a delay was merely setting the stage for a greater miracle. We can't see what God is doing behind the scenes. Sometimes it seems that he is taking his time when we want him to move more swiftly. But God has a plan for our situation. Even when God doesn't make sense, even when we can't see what he is doing, God is working to accomplish his purpose in our lives. We just need to keep trusting and he will accomplish things we never imagined. So what we might see as a delay is really God moving at just the right time.

Jesus overhears what is told to Jairus. He knows how devastating this news is for him. So Jesus says to him, *Do not be afraid, only believe!* What Jesus says to Jairus, he also says to us. *Don't believe what you hear. Don't believe what you know. Don't believe what you see. Just trust me!* This is the faith Jesus calls us to have. When everything else says our situation is hopeless, he calls us to look to God, who is greater than anything we can know or see. Jesus asks us to bring our need to him, to trust our need to him, and to leave our need with him. Everything about our situation may tell us it is not going to work out, but when we leave it in his hand and trust him with it, he will work it out in his time and in his way.

So Jesus and Jairus continue on to the leader's house. When they arrive, they find the mourners already there, wailing and crying. Jesus sees the mourners and asks: *Why are you making such a commotion? The child is not dead but asleep.* And they laugh at him.

At this point, Jesus puts them out of the house. All those who lack faith and do not believe him will be excluded from seeing his power. He enters the room where the dead girl is lying, takes her by the hand, and speaks to her gently, *Talitha cum*, which means *Get up, little girl*. Moved with compassion by the grief in this home, Jesus calls the little girl's spirit back into her body. She obeys his command and instantly receives life. She gets up and everyone is astonished.

As we read the gospels, we find Jesus doing some very amazing things: walking on water, calming a storm, feeding a multitude, healing a sickness; but nothing showcases his divinity more than his raising someone from the dead. My friends, if Jesus can do this, anything is possible with God. The impossible situations in our lives can be handled. Those incredible needs that are so great can be met because Jesus cares about us and our situations and is able to handle them – no matter what they are.

Jairus was experiencing a tragedy. He took his problem to Jesus and left it there. He soon discovered the awesome power of God and his life would never be the same – all because he believed Jesus. So, when sickness or death comes, believe Jesus. When the bottom falls out of life, trust Jesus. When the answers to your prayers are delayed, have faith in Jesus.

The promise of this text is that when we place our problems in the Lord's hands, they suddenly grow very small. No matter how great they may look in our eyes, they are nothing compared to his power. After all, for a God who can create a universe from nothing, who can part a sea, rain down manna from heaven, heal a sick body, raise a dead body, save a lost soul, nothing is impossible.

It might be that you are looking at a situation right now that you deem to be impossible. Your heart might be far away from God and your life may look hopeless. You might have a problem that you cannot handle, one that is bigger than you are and out of control. My friends, bring these things to Jesus. The supply for all our need can be found in him. He is not a magic genie, but he is a sovereign Lord. He can take an impossible situation and turn it into a miracle of his power and glory. So, go to him today. Fall at his feet, tell him what you need, and then trust him to provide, for everything is possible with God.