**“Don’t be afraid, Just believe”….Jesus Goes With You**

In the name of the Lord of Life, our Savior Jesus, dear brothers and sisters,

***“How long, O LORD, how long? Will you forget me forever?”*** King David wrote those words in Psalm 13, you may have read them in this morning’s silent prayer. We don’t know what was going on in his life when he wrote them, but I can’t help but wonder if it was what we read about in our First Lesson: watching his newborn son drift closer and closer to death.

***“How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and my sadness and every day have sorrow in my heart?”*** Four times in Psalm 13 David cries out, ***“How long?”*** – “When is it finally going to be enough?” It puts a picture in my mind of God pouring into King David’s cup the same way a father would pour milk into a cup for his child, whispering, “Say when.” Only, instead of pouring milk, God was pouring pain into David’s heart and tragedy into his life until David finally cries out, “When! When! When, enough already!!” But God keeps pouring.

Are there ever times that you feel the same way? Times when you look at your life and you have to say, “God, I think this is about enough”? “When, Lord. I can’t take anymore” – but it feels like God just keeps on pouring? It’s an overwhelming feeling. But you’re not alone. You’re not alone because that’s a feeling that all people know sometime in their life. You’re not alone because that’s a feeling that even Christians know. You’re not alone because that’s a feeling a man named Jairus knew. And we see his tragic story in this morning’s conclusion of Jesus’ path strewn with sinners.

Every once in a while, Jesus allows something to come into our lives that reminds us what we need most. We read about that this morning, ***Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet and 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."***

How do you picture this scene? Whenever I read this section, I see the crowd around Jesus, everyone there calling out what they want most from him: *“Jesus, my farm is suffering in this draught. They said you can control the weather; could you send rain? Jesus, my family’s arguing about our inheritance – which one of us is right? Jesus, I have this little spot on my skin…*you can imagine the long list of things people asked from him.”

But starting from the back of the crowd, the voices start to go silent. Someone’s walking through the crowd, and everyone knows him. Mark called him ***“one of the synagogue rulers” –*** one of their church leaders who normally had it all together, but the look on his face is one of a man whose life is falling apart. He finally gets to Jesus, and he drops. On his knees, he looks up with only one thing to say: *Jesus, it’s my little girl. She’s dying, Jesus.*

Every once in a while, God allows something into our lives that reminds us what our real problem is. It isn’t war. It isn’t debt. It isn’t a fight with our spouse or the schedule down at work. It isn’t depression. It isn’t cancer. It isn’t extended hospital visits. It’s all of those and none of those: It’s sin.

*You* hear it so often here that it might just seem like a “church word,” but it’s not. Sin is everything about us that separates us from God – our worries, our selfishness, our self-love – and because we sin, we die. The stuff at work, the things we want, the depression we deal with, the sicknesses endure, – those are all real – but every once in a while God brings us face to face with the only problem that really matters: *I don’t want to die, and I don’t want my family to die.*

You know that. Jairus knew it, too. ***"My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live."*** Jairus had one child. She was twelve years old. She was dying. Can you see that his cup? Can you hear him crying out? “*Enough! God, I watched my daughter get sick and suffer. Stop pouring, my cup is nearing the top, I can’t handle anything else?”*

So he comes to Jesus with what would seem to be a wonderfully God-pleasing request: Heal her!

And Jesus could have. He could have kept walking, turned it into a sprint, gotten to that house just in time to lay hands on this girl and save her life. But Jesus stopped. You’ll notice in our section today, there’s a section left out (verses 25-34). In that section, Jesus stopped because another woman needed his help. She was very sick, she grabbed hold of his robe and felt his healing power. And that’s great…for her. But as Jesus stands there speaking with this woman, Jairus is left tapping his toes, pulling on the sleeves of his Lord, feeling the life drain from his daughter’s body as he waits. And then he sees what he feared most. You can imagine this scene too.

It’s the familiar faces of his friends, walking up the road to Jairus from the direction of his house as he stands there waiting for Jesus. And immediately Jairus can tell, it’s the look eyes, a refusal to make eye contact, a downcast expression. Jairus knew immediately what they were going to tell him, and he felt as though his heart dropped into his stomach, the air left his lungs, his life was drained from him, ***“Jairus, your daughter is dead; why bother the teacher anymore?”***

Can you imagine being in such a situation, with Jesus standing right there. Someone who could have helped her. Jesus could have healed her without taking a step. But he didn’t. Jesus could have spared Jairus having to hear the terrible news of his daughter’s death, but he didn’t. Jairus’ daughter still died.

And it was at that moment, when Jairus was knee-deep in despair, that Jesus spoke what he speaks to the despairing -without any irony or hint of humor. He says something almost foolish, silly, at least to the despairing people around him. It’s like the friend telling the friend diagnosed with cancer not to worry. Jesus says, “***Don’t be afraid. Just believe.”***

“Don’t be afraid, just believe?! Death had just swallowed up this man’s daughter, the most precious gift he had been given in his life. So what exactly was this man to *believe*?

We don’t always know how to respond to hardship. When people tell us about something that’s extremely difficult in their lives, or maybe the grief they’re going through, we either change the subject, or we try to find a silver lining in their problems to make them feel better. It’s what we naturally do, only, it’s usually not what someone needs.

When Jesus says, ***“Just believe,”*** He’s not telling this man to believe in a generic silver lining or a general plan for good. No Jairus is being called to believe in the ability of Christ to do what He set out to do.

In essence, Jesus is saying this to Jairus, and to every Christian who has had to endure hardship: “Do not fear, only believe that I will do what I have bound myself to do.” “Believe that I will come through on every promise I *have* made to you.”

So lets take a break here for a moment and just try to apply this practically. Jesus has not given me any indication that He will not give me cancer at some point in my life…or, if He does, that He will heal it. I may be given the faith to pray for healing and–if so–wonderful. However, this passage can not be applied as “Do not fear your cancer, only believe that Jesus will heal it and He will!” That’s not what God is saying to us here.

Rather Christians, it should–in that situation–be applied as this, “Do not fear your cancer, only believe the powerful and sweet promises of God in Christ for you….that you are not destined for wrath, but for salvation. That this sickness, as difficult as it it, will not ultimately win, because it cannot separate you from His love, from his promises, from his grace. And this sickness itself *will* turn out for your good, because you will be given the opportunity to glorify God in your body even now.”

***“Do not be afraid, only believe”*** “believe that I will do what I have promised and be whom I have shown myself to be.”

***“Don’t be afraid, Just believe….[and then] Jesus went with him.”***

When you leave here, some of you will be returning home to a reality you don’t really want. Maybe to something that you would like to have just disappear from your life. Some of you may feel today as though your cup is overflowing with pain and no matter how much you cry out “enough already!”, there’s nothing that seems to stop it from pouring over.

Jairus knew that feeling. But Jesus wanted to give Jairus something even better. He wanted him to know that no matter what he was going through, ***Jesus [ still] went with him.***

Dear Christians, Jesus goes with ***you.*** And if you ever doubt that, just remember the time he went on without you. There’s only one place where Jesus went without you: the cross. Because the Father had poured a cup full to overflowing, but that cup wasn’t for you. It was all the suffering for all the sins, and as he poured it out, Jesus didn’t say “Enough, stop!” He drank it down; he suffered every last drop of God’s anger for sin, and when it was finished, your Father had nothing but love for you.

But it’s a tough love to see sometimes. ***When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, 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.***

The whole house was filled with people who wanted to help – the only problem was, there was absolutely no help they could give. All they could do was show that they were just as sad and miserable as Jairus was. Sometimes, things simply look hopeless.

Do you wonder why Jesus didn’t heal Jairus’ daughter right away? Listen again: ***He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished.***

No matter how bad things look, they are never hopeless. People might laugh and shake their heads at your faith in Jesus through a difficult situation, or his promises to you when you have nothing else to hold onto, but friends your trust in him is never misplaced.

Having friends and family and good doctors and medicine and savings and insurance are all wonderful blessings, but that’s not where your hope belongs. The same thing Jesus said to Jairus’ daughter, he says to you in His Word.

You see it when with a few drops of water and his Word of grace Jesus says to a child, **“Little boy, little girl, get up! You are now made alive as my dear child!”** You hear it when your pastor or your Christian friends tell you that Jesus forgives your sins – Jesus is saying to you, **“Dear child, get up – I’m giving you a completely new and perfect life again!”** You see and hear it when people come to the communion rail and Jesus says, **“Dear children, get up – I’ve set you free from your sins, you’re at peace with God.”** And one day, after your eyes close in death, your ears will hear Jesus saying it again: ***My child, I say to you, get up, come with me to everlasting glory.***

Psalm 13 is just six verses long. If you read the first few verses, you might think that God doesn’t know how to show love to his people. But go home and read the Psalm again and think how wonderful it is that in the last two verses, despite everything he endures, David can say, ***“But I trust in your steadfast love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me.”***

Read those words and think about Jairus again. Think about how heartbroken he was when his daughter died, and picture his face – and his heart – when he saw her breathing and walking around again. Can you see the look on his face when he recognized just who Jesus was – and how much Jesus must have loved him?

Think about those verses when you feel like crying, “Enough! Stop pouring Lord, I can’t drink anymore,” and remember this: The Lord who heard David’s prayers is the God who went with Jairus to his house. And no matter what you’re going through, he walks along with you. He goes with you in his love, and his power will always be enough.

So dear Christians, who often feel too weak and overwhelmed, ***“Don’t be afraid, just believe…”*** your Jesus goes with you.

When you remember that promise, you too can conclude with David, ***“I will trust in your steadfast love,*** [yes, Lord, always, I will trust in Christ, in the heart he revealed for me at Calvary, yes this is where I anchor my trust. And because of Him, I know that even in my darkest night, ***my heart, will rejoice in his salvation.***