



MINISTRIES

A Ministry of the Athens Universal Life Church
Dr. Rob White – Senior Minister
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TITLE: Jesus, come QUICKLY!

SERMON IN A SENTENCE: Jesus can redeem even the most difficult moments in our lives.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 5:21-43

Today's scripture lesson comes from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 5, verses 21 to 43.

Starting at verse 21:

When Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around Him while He was by the sea.

One of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at His feet and kept begging Him, "My little daughter is at death's door. Come and lay Your hands on her so she can get well and live."

So Jesus went with him, and a large crowd was following and pressing against Him.

A woman suffering from bleeding for 12 years

had endured much under many doctors. She had spent everything she had and was not helped at all. On the contrary, she became worse.

Having heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His robe.

For she said, "If I can just touch His robes, I'll be made well!"

Instantly her flow of blood ceased, and she sensed in her body that she was cured of her affliction.

At once Jesus realized in Himself that power had gone out from Him. He turned around in the crowd and said, “Who touched My robes?”

His disciples said to Him, “You see the crowd pressing against You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’”

So He was looking around to see who had done this.

Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came with fear and trembling, fell down before Him, and told Him the whole truth.

“Daughter,” He said to her, “your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be free from your affliction.”

While He was still speaking, people came from the synagogue leader’s house and said, “Your daughter is dead. Why bother the Teacher anymore?”

But when Jesus overheard what was said, He told the synagogue leader, “Don’t be afraid. Only believe.”

He did not let anyone accompany Him except Peter, James, and John, James’s brother.

They came to the leader’s house, and He saw a commotion—people weeping and wailing loudly.

He went in and said to them, “Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep.”

They started laughing at Him, but He put them all outside. He took the child’s father, mother, and those who were with Him, and entered the place where the child was.

Then He took the child by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha kum!*” (which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”).

Immediately the girl got up and began to walk. (She was 12 years old.) At this they were utterly astounded.

Then He gave them strict orders that no one should know about this and said that she should be given something to eat.

-- May the Lord add His Blessing to the reading of His Word!

-- Hello, I am Doctor Rob White with the A U L C Ministries with our message this week.

-- I am happy that you can take a few minutes out of your busy week to be with us today!

The book, *Up and Running* by Mark Patinkin, tells the story of Andrew Bateson, a six-year old boy who had meningitis. There is more than one form of meningitis, and Andrew had the worst form—a bad case of the worst form. I hope you haven't experienced meningitis, and I hope that you never do. It's a terrible disease.

While working on this sermon about Jairus and his sick daughter, the story of Andrew Bateson came to mind. In a bad case of meningitis, every minute counts. A half-hour stuck in traffic on the way to the hospital can make the difference between life and death.

In our Gospel lesson for today, Jairus had that kind of urgent situation. Jairus asked Jesus to help his daughter who was "at the point of death". I can't imagine anyone more focused than a father trying to get help for his child at the point of death. In that kind of situation, nothing is more important than getting help and getting it NOW! Jairus came to Jesus saying—begging—pleading:

"My little daughter is at the point of death.
Please come and lay your hands on her,
that she may be made healthy, and live".

Those words don't quite do it for me.

"My little daughter is at the point of death.
Please come and lay your hands on her,
that she may be made healthy, and live."

Those are namby-pamby words. They don't convey how Jairus must have felt. He must have been nearly hysterical—pleading, "Jesus, come QUICKLY!!! Come NOW!!! My daughter is DYING!!! Come RIGHT NOW before she dies!!! PLEASE!!!" If that isn't what Jairus said, it is surely how he felt.

Jesus started to go with Jairus to see the little girl, but got kinda caught in traffic you could say. A great crowd of people blocked the way. Then a woman with a hemorrhage distracted him, and he stopped to talk to her.

Let's put things into perspective. This woman was sick—no doubt about it. She had been sick for twelve years. Her sickness was terrible—BUT IT WASN'T LIFE THREATENING! If Jesus didn't heal her today, he could heal her tomorrow. Jairus' daughter was AT THE POINT OF DEATH! If he didn't get there RIGHT NOW, she was going to die.

Can't you imagine how Jairus felt as Jesus allowed this woman to distract him? Jairus must have been beside himself. He didn't want to offend Jesus, but he needed to get him MOVING. Jairus' daughter was DYING, and Jesus was telling this woman, "Go in peace". How could anyone go in peace while Jairus' daughter was DYING!

That's the part that reminded me of Andrew Bateson. When Andrew's parents realized that he needed to go to the hospital, they put him in the car and got moving. The father "turned the key in the ignition and flew, steering past anything in his way, asking (his wife) how Andrew was doing." That's how you are supposed to act when a child is sick— when a child might be dying.

That's how Jesus should have acted when Jairus told him that his daughter was at the point of death. It would have been different if Jairus had said only that his daughter was sick. Everyone gets sick. Sick isn't necessarily terrible. But Jairus' daughter wasn't just sick. She was at the point of death.

Andrew Bateson was at the point of death too. It was touch and go. The doctors did everything they could, but Andrew came within an inch of dying. The disease poisoned him and cut off his circulation. The doctors had to amputate his legs to save his life.

Later, after he began to recover, Andrew asked the doctor if his parents should have called an ambulance. Could they have saved his legs if they had called an ambulance? The doctor told Andrew that he would have died if his parents had waited for an ambulance. Nobody could have gotten him to the hospital quicker than his father did. That seemed to settle his mind. It also happened to be true.

Jairus was trying to get Jesus moving quickly too, but Jesus was caught in traffic—slowed by the crowd—distracted by the woman with the hemorrhage. I can't imagine anything more terrible than for Jairus to have to watch Jesus talk to this woman.

When Jesus finally got to Jairus' home, the little girl was dead. Jesus assured Jairus that his daughter was only sleeping, but people laughed at him. They had already started the grieving ceremony. They would bury her soon. They knew that she was dead.

But Jesus went to her room and said, "**Talitha cumi!**" which means, "**Girl, I tell you, get up!**" (v. 41)—and the little girl got up and began to walk around.

People were amazed. They didn't know what to think. The little girl had been dead—they knew that—but now she was alive.

Andrew Bateson didn't die, but he came within an inch of dying. He did lose his legs. The disease had so impaired his circulation that the doctors had to amputate his legs to save his life. The big question was whether they would have to amputate above the knees. They wanted to badly to save his knees. It would make such a difference in what he could do. Andrew had always been such an active little boy. He loved sports.

His parents began to pray for Andrew's knees. Someone suggested that they place cloth scapulars on Andrew's legs. They got had never heard of that custom, but they got a couple of scapulars from their priest. The scapulars were small pieces of cloth with a picture of the Virgin Mary on one side and a prayer on the other side. They taped them on Andrew's legs—below the knees.

When I read about that, it brought to mind the Hymn, "I Need Thee Every Hour".

"I need Thee ev'ry hour, most gracious Lord." Annie Hawks was busy about her household chores one day when she started thinking about how much she depended on the Lord to help her through the day. Inspired, she took pencil and paper and began to write. The words came quickly and easily. She never imagined that her hasty verse would mean anything to anyone.

But then her pastor, Dr. Robert Lowry set her verse to music (and added the refrain: "I need Thee, O I need Thee")—and then the famous evangelist Dwight L. Moody and his song leader, Ira Sankey, discovered the song—and then the song itself became famous, much to Mrs. Hawk's surprise.

But it is no wonder that this hymn became so well known. Who among us hasn't felt a great need for God—for God's presence—for God's guidance—for God's help? The need that Mrs. Hawks felt for God is a need that all of us feel at some time in our lives. Her little verse expressed the deepest feelings of her heart—and of our hearts as well. That is why this hymn has been a favorite for more than a century.

Andrew's father asked a friend to bring a statue of Jesus that had belonged to his grandmother. They put the statue on a shelf behind Andrew's bed. Andrew couldn't see it, but he would ask about it. The priest said a healing Mass for Andrew, and the church was full. Everyone was praying for Andrew. They were praying for his knees.

When the time came, the surgeon told the parents that he wouldn't know whether he could save Andrew's knees until he was well into the surgery. He warned them that, in most cases of this sort, they had to amputate above the knees.

The surgery seemed to take forever. Every hour or so, a nurse would come out and report that there was no news yet. After several hours, she finally reported that they had finished one leg and had been able to save the knee. Everyone cheered! An hour later, she reported that they had been able to save the other knee as well.

The priest, who had been with the family through the surgery, invited them into the chapel where he conducted a Mass of thanksgiving.

After the surgery, a friend discovered that the surgeon had amputated at the very places where the mother had taped the scapulars.

I'm not suggesting that those pieces of cloth had some sort of magical power. I'm suggesting that Jesus somehow redeemed that situation, just as he redeemed the situation when Jairus' daughter died.

Nor am I suggesting that Jesus will redeem every situation in such an obvious way. The fact is that people of faith have bad things happen. Things don't always turn out as we would like. Our prayers are not always answered as we asked them.

But Jesus loves us in good times and bad. He is with us even through the valley of the shadow of death. He helps us even when he doesn't bring the little girl back to life—even when they have to amputate above the knees. He redeems our lives—even in bad times.

In the French Pyrenees Mountains, there's a shrine where people come to pray for healing. Sometime after the Second World War, a veteran who had lost a leg made his way to that shrine. As he was praying, he overheard someone say, "Look at that silly man! Does he think God is going to give him back his leg?" The man looked up from his prayers and turned toward the voice. He said, "Of course I don't expect God to give me back my leg. I'm praying for the grace to live without it."

Jesus helps us in many ways. Sometimes he brings the little girl back to life. Sometimes he makes it possible for the surgeon to amputate below the knees. And sometimes he just gives us the grace to live well in spite of life's hardships.

As I was working on this sermon, I came upon a little poem by Joyce Kilmer that I would like to share with you. You might not remember Kilmer, but you will remember his poem, "Trees":

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

I say "his poem," because Kilmer was a man. Can you imagine what his life must have been like as a middle-schooler—a boy with the name Joyce!

Kilmer was a young man during World War I. He served in France and was killed on a French battlefield in 1918—not long before the war ended. But before he died he wrote these words:

Because the way was steep and long,
And through a strange and lonely land,

God placed upon my lips a song,
And put a lantern in my hand.

I wish I had known Kilmer. He was a man of rare spiritual insight. He knew that God does not always the steep way level—or the long way short. He knew that God sometimes allows us to live in a strange and lonely land. But he also experienced the power of God to redeem every difficulty. He said:

God placed upon my lips a song,
And put a lantern in my hand.

I thought that was beautiful.

Because the way was steep and long,
And through a strange and lonely land,

God placed upon my lips a song,
And put a lantern in my hand.

That's my prayer for you:

- When the way seems steep and long—when you find yourself in a strange and lonely land—I pray that God will place on your lips a song—and put a lantern in your hand.
- I pray that God will give you grace to live faithfully through life's ups and downs.
- I pray that God will redeem your life.

-- That's our Lord's message for this Lord's Day and I hope you got a blessing out of it!

-- Go out this week and be a blessing and be blessed! -- For the more you are a blessing, the more you will be blessed!

-- Thank you all for watching and listening and we will see you all next week!

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