

Mark 5:21-24a,35-43

July 2, 2015 – 6th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Don't be afraid. Just believe!

✠ **Wait in hope.** (vv.21-24a)

✠ **Live by faith.** (vv.35-43)

Dear fellow children of the heavenly Father,

If Jesus were alive today, would He have support of the media and government? Dumb question – Jesus is alive today. After He rose from the dead and just before ascending into heaven, Jesus promised His disciples: *“Surely I will be with you all the days to the gathered goal of the age.”* (Matthew 28:20 TPA)

But Jesus also promised, *“If the world hates you, know that it hated me first. ¹⁹If you were of the world, the world would love its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, for that very reason the world hates you. ²⁰Remember the saying I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you too. If they held on to my word, they will hold on to yours as well. ²¹But they will do all these things to you because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. ²²If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin. But now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³The one who hates me also hates my Father. ²⁴If I had not done the works among them that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. ²⁵Yet in this way the word is fulfilled which is written in their Law: ‘They hated me for no reason.’”*¹ (John 15:18–25 W.P.) **Don't be afraid. Just believe!**

✠ **Wait in hope.** (vv.21-24a)

What are you hoping for? If you want to preserve our precious freedom remembering the *Declaration of Independence* this July 4th weekend, don't forget to pray as if everything depends on God and work as if everything depends on you. What's going on in America today should grieve everyone who fears God and takes God's Word seriously. Especially rulers and judges who rule against God's Word. A simple reading of Psalm 2 would do them much good before they face their almighty Judge.

But what about us. What are we really hoping for? Is it a heaven on earth God wants for us when His Holy Spirit tells us today to **Wait in hope**?

When I was about to begin knocking on doors in 1986-87, my personal devotions brought me again to the Gospel account of Mark. I had read it many times before, but this time I decided to look for how Jesus handled rejection. What surprised me in those months was how polite our neighbors were back then. I could count the rude ones on one hand, maybe two at a stretch. These days we could expect less sympathy for Christ's message. But can we still **Wait in hope**? If so, what **hope** are we waiting for?

In Mark 5 alone is a real eye-opener for us. Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee where He drove a Legion of demons from a poor man so possessed that iron chains could not hold him. No one could subdue him. And the demons had him wandering the tombs and hills, cutting himself with stones. When asked, Jesus let the demons go into a herd of pigs that rushed off the cliffs and drowned. Were all the farmers happy for the man delivered from the demons? No, they were afraid and asked Jesus to leave their country. And when the man wanted to go with Jesus, his request was denied. *“Go home to your people and tell them everything the Lord has done for you, and how he had mercy on you.”* (5:19 W.P.) And that's really strange because of the order we hear Jesus give at the end of this text.

But **hope** Jairus had when his little daughter got so sick because He had heard about Jesus. As a “*synagogue ruler*” Jairus was like a lay member of our Board for Lay Ministry with administrative duties in God’s house of worship. All his hard work and influence could not save his daughter. But Jesus could. So he rushed to Jesus begging: “*My daughter is near death. Please come and place your hands on her that she may be healed and live.*” Did Jesus dash his hopes or criticize him? No, “*Jesus went with him.*”

We **hope** in Jesus for earthly things like family and more. On the way a woman bleeding for twelve years found Jesus. She hoped for medical help, and Jesus healed her. But He also showed her that **hope** for earthly things alone eventually disappoints everyone so limited. The woman came trembling to admit she touched Jesus. Do you remember what He said? “*Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your suffering.*” (5:34 W.P.) He reminded her that she was a daughter of the Most High God whose gift of faith for her could take hold of God’s peace and free her soul from suffering too. How about you? Is that the real **hope** in which you **Wait** for God? In other words do you...?

✠ **Live by faith.** (vv.35-43)

What a shock to be on the way with Jesus when someone tells you it’s too late! *Some men came from the house of Jairus....“Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher any more?”* They used a word which was really harsh as if Jairus’ request might be something like fingernails on a blackboard to Jesus. Have you ever wondered if God just didn’t have time for you? “He’s too busy taking care of the world so how can I pray?” We only prove how foolish we are with such fears. God’s power is infinite, so He’ll never run out of energy to help you and every other pleading soul – day or night. Plus God’s love is infinite. Tough times don’t mean God wants us to suffer, as we heard in today’s Lesson: “*He does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men.*” (Lamentations 3:33 NIV84) How would we ever know the full extent of His love and power if we never saw God’s grace in action? So *when Jesus heard this report, he told the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid. Only believe.”*

That’s the best advice for all of us. Even when everyone else in your home is wailing, or at least whining and complaining. **Live by faith** and you’ll always find more reasons to give thanks and rejoice in the Lord like Paul from prison to the Philippians: “*Rejoice in the Lord always...*” (Philippians 4:4 NIV84) Whether free or in prison, we have faith’s confidence our sins are forgiven for Jesus sake. **Live by faith.**

Your godly view of death will help against the comedians. Most modern English translations can’t match the KJV: “*laughed him to scorn.*” This is the kind of howling laughter you’d get if you were on with a late night comedian who asked about your views on marriage, abortion and salvation in Christ alone. Then you’d know you were in good company because they laughed that way at Jesus. Did that stop Him from helping? Not at all. He taught us again that death is just a sleep from which He can wake us as easily as He took this young girl by the hand. They knew she was dead by the normal definition. But He said in Aramaic, “*Talitha koum!*” – “*Little girl, I say to you, get up!*” – and that’s exactly what she did! Not sometime later. Not after surgery or medications from a health care plan. *Immediately the little girl stood up and began walking around. (She was twelve years old.) They were completely and absolutely amazed.*⁴³*Then he gave them strict orders not to let anyone know about this. And he said, “Give her something to eat.”*

Things were so bad in the church those days that Jesus had to make sure they did not tell this story in the synagogue where Jairus served. Jews were looking for political / military freedom from the Romans. That’s all they wanted from their promised Messiah – unless he could make water into wine or feed 5,000 men plus women and children with a little boy’s lunch. That would be okay too, easy life with a Bread King.

You and I have work to do. It won’t be powered by politics, medicine or media approval. “*It is God who works in you to will and to work for His good pleasure.*” (Philippians 2:13 TPA) God’s forgiveness in the Gospel powers you by Baptism and His Holy Supper that sustains your soul. **Live by faith** and you won’t

W.P ~ Wartburg Project translation in popular review. Other Scriptures: NIV84.

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burn out on the immorality around us. Pray and point souls to Jesus. **Don't be afraid. Just believe!**
Amen.