

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Few stories in the Gospels carry more emotional impact than this story of Jairus' daughter. As a parent, I find it goes right to that place in me that is the most emotionally vulnerable. Try reading the story with your children in its original setting, Mark 5:21-43. You will notice that the story of Jairus' daughter is interrupted, by the episode of the woman who had been hemorrhaging for twelve years and crept up to touch the hem of Jesus' garment. In his rush to the house of an important local leader, when every minute might mean life or death for a beloved only child, Jesus allows himself to be detained by an outcast, untouchable woman, seeking relief from a chronic ailment. In contrast to the desperate case of Jairus' daughter, there is little about the woman's situation that would tug at the heartstrings of the onlookers. Jesus need not even have stopped; the woman was healed, whether he took note of it or not. But he honors her: he insists on hearing her story, and testifying to her faith.

And the worst happens. "The little girl is dead; why trouble the rabbi any further?" The delay to attend to this marginal woman has cost the life of a precious child, full of promise ... Think how you would feel if your child were critically ill: suppose the time taken to respond to some non-emergency, such as this woman, delayed medical attention to your child till it was too late?

Jesus, however, insists, "She is not dead, but sleeping," though they laugh in his face. In his mercy, there is time for the dead as well as the living, the marginal as well as the socially prominent and acceptable. Time given to one is not taken away from another; all times are in his hand. No wonder they were amazed!

And what about us? What if we have suffered loss or grief to which Jesus did not respond with such amazing grace? Perhaps after all we are more like the desperate woman who bled, uncomforted, for twelve years before she was healed. And Jesus attributed that healing to her *faith*. As on the stormy lake, his message is (often in the teeth of the evidence), "Do not be afraid, trust in God."

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THE SUNDAY PAPER, 19 Colony Road, New Haven, CT 06511, USA
203 - 624-2520 • www.the-sunday-paper.com



THE SUNDAY PAPER JUNIOR

Year B
PROPER 8
TRACKS 1 and 2



Jairus knelt down to Jesus. He was crying. He said, "My daughter is about to die!"



Jesus hurried to Jairus's house. But someone ran up, and said that the little girl had just died.



At Jairus's house, everyone was crying. But Jesus went in, with the girl's parents.



Jesus said, "She is only asleep. Little girl, get up!" And the little girl got out of bed! She was well!



When Jesus said the little girl was only asleep, people laughed at him. They knew she was dead. But Jesus's power and love were stronger than death. He could bring the little girl back to life. He could fill her parents with joy.

Only God, and Jesus the Son of God, can bring a dead person back to life. But everybody can do something to help someone who is sad.



Make up a story about each of these pictures. Why is each child sad? What can someone do to help?