



CHRISTIAN CRUSADERS

7401 UNIVERSITY AVE., CEDAR FALLS, IOWA 50613

(319) 277-0924

INFO@CHRISTIANCRUSADERS.ORG

WWW.CHRISTIANCRUSADERS.ORG

Give Them Jesus

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Rev. Steve Kramer

TEXT: Luke 8:40-56 (ESV)

Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

As Jesus went, the people pressed around him. And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!" But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me." And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more." But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well." And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

On more than one occasion, I have heard a parent say, "I fear for my kids sometimes about what they face now and what they might possibly face in the future." As parents and grandparents, we often times do find ourselves fearing for our kids. We have those moments when they get really sick or they're taking the car out for an evening with

friends and they're running late, or they're struggling with fitting in at school. And there are so many dangerous temptations lurking around out there on the internet as we see them on their cell phones all the time. And we have a little fear after they move out of the house as well, perhaps to college or trade school or the armed services or off to a job and independent living on their own. It seems to just be part of the job of parenting: fear.

On this Father's Day, we have a story about a fearful, desperate dad who was fearful about his 12-year-old daughter who was dying. His only daughter. She was his little girl. The man's name was Jairus. He lived in a community on the Sea of Galilee named Capernaum. He was a respected person in that community, in charge of the synagogue, the place of worship. He was looked up to by many – a success in life. He provided well for his family. He could get things organized and done around town. He was a real leader. But then he ran into a situation that he couldn't fix. His daughter became incurably sick and she was dying. And he felt so helpless. He wished he could take her place, but of course he couldn't. And as a religious man, he prayed constantly to God to do something for his little girl. Then one day, Jairus heard that Jesus and his disciples had just gotten to town. They'd arrived by boat and the townspeople were down at the seashore welcoming him. Now Jairus knew Jesus. Jairus' hometown being Capernaum; Jesus, you see, had already been there, taught in the synagogue, cast out a demon and healed many people. He's quite a celebrity, popular among the folks. But also the religious establishment was not so sure what to do with him. He broke many of their ceremonial laws, which upset them, and they observed him from a distance, criticizing him. Even Jesus' own hometown had tried to stone him to death for things he'd said.

So Jairus, being involved with the synagogue, wasn't so sure himself about Jesus. But he did know this: this miracle worker seemed to command such godlike power and authority. So then there he decided, "I'm going to go to him and ask him to help my daughter. I don't care what anyone might think of me. I'm willing to risk my reputation for her if I have to. I'll even get on my face and beg him to come to my home." Desperate times call for desperate measures, and that's exactly what Jairus did. There was this huge crowd around Jesus by the Sea of Galilee, but Jairus pushed his way through with that mass of humanity. And when he got to Jesus, he fell on his face, at his feet, and begged Jesus to come to his home and save his little girl. And Jesus didn't miss a beat. He went with him. He followed Jairus as they pushed their way through the crowd. And here we have this wonderful picture of our savior as one who's

compassionate, interruptible. He had so many things to do in this short span of time that he had. But off Jesus went with Jairus for that little girl. But then he was interrupted again as the crowd pressed against him, Jesus felt someone touch him, and some power just went out of him. He stopped and said, "Who touched me?" A woman finally came forward with great fear and trembling and told her story of 12 years of chronic bleeding. And she testified that when she touched Jesus, she was healed. People were amazed. Jesus was pleased by her testimony, and he said to her daughter, "Your faith has made you well, go in peace."

Now, in the meantime, Jairus, that desperate dad had to have been standing there, panicked, of course, because, you know, he was glad for the woman and he was glad to see Jesus had power to heal her. That was reaffirming. But what about his little girl? Time was of the essence. He had to have been saying under his breath. "Come on, come on, come on, Jesus. Let's get going before it's too late." Suddenly someone from his house tapped him on the shoulder and Jairus turned and recognized that troubled face, one of his servants. And he heard these dreadful words "Your daughter is dead. Don't trouble the teacher anymore. It's too late. He can't do anything now." But Jesus wasn't about to leave this broken-hearted dad ready to collapse with grief. He said to him, "Don't fear, only believe and she'll be well." And obviously, Jairus took Jesus at his word as he looked in his face. And though the situation looked hopeless, Jairus continued to lead Jesus to his home. And when they got to the house, the mourners had already arrived before them, and they were weeping and wailing and out of respect for the family. And Jesus said to them, "Don't weep. She's not dead but sleeping." They laughed at him because they could see she was dead. Little did they know that with this statement, Jesus was expressing his power and authority over death – that he could even bring the dead back to life. And his comment about her being asleep was meant that she would soon wake up because of him. He told everyone to stay outside except for Peter, James, and John, and the girl's parents. They went into the house. Jesus leaned over her, took her by the hand, said, "Child, get up". And lo and behold, she began to breathe, opened her eyes, got up, taking a step towards her parents. And she was alive again. And Jesus said, "Now give her something to eat," probably to confirm for them that she really was alive and not some spiritual apparition before them.

The parents were thrilled and amazed. Of course they were. Tears of joy flowed from their eyes. They were speechless, in awe, and they must have gasped at the sight of their little girl standing there before them alive. Because only God could do something

like this. Jesus had blessed their home with the gift of life. Could it be? He's God. While Jesus charged them to tell no one what they had just witnessed. Just let people guess when they see her alive. Jesus said this to protect his mission from political talk of Jesus as a messiah king sent from God to throw out Roman oppressors – that would be detrimental to the accomplishment of his mission to save the world from sin.

As I read this story, it left me wondering what was the rest of their story, Jairus and his family after this. Did Jairus and his wife become Christians? One commentator writes “The fact that the name of Jairus is recorded may indicate that he was a well-known person in the early church.” It's as if Luke is saying to this Theophilus person that he addresses at the beginning of his gospel, “Theophilus you know Jairus. He's an old man now, but you can still go ask him about this story.” I also wonder if sometime after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus if Jairus and his wife sat their daughter down and told her this story of what Jesus had done for her. We'll never know those things. But what we do know is what we have before us: that a believing father brought Jesus to his dying daughter and an amazing thing happened. Life. Jesus showed his power and authority over death. You see, the truth is he still does have that power and authority even today. He went to a cross later on and paid for your sins and mine and rose again so that we may be saved from the power of sin and death. His resurrection was the first fruits of the resurrection, scripture tells us. And because he lives, so shall we. Those of us who believe him and trust in him – death no longer holds those captive who trust in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Whether we live or whether we die, we belong to him and he promises, “I'm the resurrection and the life. And whoever believes in me, though he die yet shall he live.” Hallelujah to that!

I hope that this truth from our risen Lord is something you have placed your faith in. Jesus is not merely a teacher, as the public referred to him that day in the story. He is Mr. Resurrection in life – to be trusted and submitted to. And if you haven't done that yet, do it today. Tell him you want his gift of eternal life and you want him to be the Lord, the master over every area of your life. Your eternity actually depends upon this. Only Jesus can give you everlasting life, and He offers it to you freely today. Take it. And I think there is some encouragement here for those of us who are believing Christian dads and moms and grandparents. You know, I would imagine Jairus saying later on, “The best gift I ever gave my daughter? It was Jesus. I'm so glad I trusted him and brought him home. He gave her life.”

So here's the big idea I want you to consider and act upon on this Father's Day: the best gift you will ever give your kids as Jesus. So, give them Jesus. Our children, you see, are going to face all kinds of challenges in this life, just like you and I do. They need Jesus, so make sure you give them Jesus. They'll experience times when life will throw a curve at them and cause them to have great fear and anxiety like Jairus did. And that's why it's so important that you give them Jesus. He's the living, present Lord over the storms of life, with us even today. There will be decision times, times of testing, times of confusion, when they need guidance and heavenly wisdom from above. And only Jesus can give them that. So, give them Jesus. They'll have times of needing someone to walk beside them as a faithful friend, propping them up. And Jesus has promised, "I'll never leave you alone or orphaned." So, give them Jesus. And there will come times when they'll have to consider their own mortality and when they will breathe their last breath in this world. And Jesus, only Jesus, promises eternity. So, give them Jesus. He's the way, the truth, and the life, and the best thing they can have going in their life as they face these things. He's the all-powerful, resurrected, present, compassionate son of God who died for their sins and rose again and lives to give them eternal life now and forever.

Years ago, I attended a youth conference and a speaker named Andrea Fieldhouse asked us "If you could give your child anything in the world, what would it be?" She paused and said, "How about a living relationship with Christ?" And she's right. We want to give our kids everything. But the best thing we can give them is Jesus.

So how can I bring Jesus to my kids? Well, that's not all that complicated, but it does need to be intentional on your part. You need to make a plan for your children's spiritual growth. Many of us parents believe we're primarily responsible for the spiritual development of our children, but few spend time interacting with their kids on religious matters. They don't have a plan. Well, first, when they're growing up, here's part of your plan, what it could be: read to them from the gospel stories. There are some wonderful children's story Bibles out there. Make use of them. In this story, we see the power of Jesus's word at work, changing things, bringing life. Well, that power is still at work through the Word of God. And pray. Pray in front of them and pray with them and pray for them. Pray for their relationship with Jesus to grow and be the solid rock upon which they can build their lives; and do it every day. And worship with them, bring them to the church so they can hear the stories of God's love for them through Jesus. And tell them yourself what Jesus has done for your life. Explain the way of

salvation to them, and let them ask the questions they have about the Christian faith. Don't avoid that for fear of feeling dumb or uncomfortable or preachy. They need you to plant the gospel seeds in them. And be an example for them what it means to follow Jesus because faith is caught, not just taught. Let them see you keeping Jesus at the center of your life, of being a parent with deep convictions about Him and deep faith in him, whose drive and action and decision making to be faithful and consistent with what you profess as a Christian. Finally, love them unconditionally, sacrificially, like Jesus did and does; love them every moment, no matter what. Give them Jesus because He is who they ultimately need in their lives, just like us. And he loves them even more than you do. He laid down his life for them so they could have forgiveness and Heaven. Only he can give them real, eternal, abundant life that God wants him to have.

Parenting... It's not easy, it's challenging. But here's some good news to always remember: you are not alone as you raise your children in the faith. The living risen Christ stands ready to help you through the working of His Holy Spirit as you bring the good news of Jesus to them. He has promised to disciple-making parents: "Lo, I am with you always to the end of the age." His actions in this story for today encourage us to come to him in faith when we're consumed with suffering or fear for ourselves or our kids. He is powerful and he is kind. In fact, he welcomes us to trusting only come to him in our time of need.

I want to share one last story that touched my heart. Michael Reagan received many gifts from his father, President Ronald Reagan. But at the president's sunset funeral, Michael described the greatest gift a child can receive. He said,

I was so proud to have the Reagan name and to be Ronald Reagan's son. What a great honor. He gave me lots of gifts as a child, but there's a gift he gave me that I think is wonderful for every father to give every son. Last Saturday, when he opened his eyes for the last time, that's when I realized the gift that he gave to me that he was going to be with the Lord and Savior Jesus. He had, you see, back in 1988 on a flight from Washington, D.C., told me about his love of God and his love of Christ as his savior. I didn't know then what it all meant, but I certainly know now. I can't think of a better gift for a father to give a son. And I hope to honor my father by giving my son Cameron and my daughter Ashley that very same gift he gave to me.

Give them Jesus.

Let's pray. Lord, thank you for the privilege of being a parent. Help each one of us as fathers to trust in you in all things, and to obediently bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ into our children's lives so that they may have the salvation that only you can give. Amen.