

Proper 8B (Pentecost 4), 2009

Text: Mark 5:21-43

Title: Jesus Keeps Going

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Into the house of death walked Jesus. Into the house of weeping, and crying and mourning He comes.

But everyone thought Jesus was too late. What could He do in the face of death and despair. What good could Jesus bring once death had snuffed out this young life?

The young girl's father had done everything He could to get Jesus to his house.

He sought Jesus out, begged and pleaded for Him to come and heal his daughter, as He had so many others. But before Jesus could get there, death visited the home of Jairus. He was too late.

What a blow this must have been to Jairus. Jairus was one of the most powerful men in His town. He was the leader of the synagogue, the congregational chairman, so to speak. He had money, he had servants, but he surely would have traded it all to have his daughter well.

Jairus was a powerful man, but he was powerless to stop the disease. He watched his daughter get worse and worse with every passing day. He felt helpless and useless.

So Jairus went to Jesus for help. He got down on his knees and begged. This important, wealthy, powerful man humbled himself and acted like a poor beggar. He believed that Jesus could help his daughter. No price was too high to pay to have his daughter healed. Jairus would do whatever it took, even if it took his dignity, even if it meant relying on one more powerful than he.

To his great relief Jesus agreed to go with him. Finally some good news. Finally some hope.

But those hopes were soon dashed. When Jairus saw his servants coming, he just knew. He could tell by the looks on their faces that the worst had happened. He knew that his daughter had lost the fight and that she had died.

I can't begin to imagine Jairus' grief. He would never again hear his daughter laugh or sing. He would never again play with her. He would not see her grow up to be a young woman. He would not be there to give her away in marriage or to see her become a mother herself.

The pain must have been unbearable.

His mission to heal his daughter was over. He had lost. He had failed to bring her the help she needed. Now it was time to return home and grieve with his wife and the rest of the family, to try to pick up the pieces and go on with his life.

There was no more need for Jesus. No need for a healer once death had won. It was too late. “Thanks anyways, Jesus, but we don’t need you any more.”

To everyone’s surprise, Jesus doesn’t stop. He doesn’t turn aside. He doesn’t miss a beat. Jesus is not fazed by the news of death. Jesus keeps going. He turns to Jairus and says, “Don’t be afraid, just believe.” “Trust me.” And then Jesus continues on His way. Jesus keeps going to the house of death.

When Jesus arrives, the scene is utter chaos- mourners everywhere weeping and wailing for the dead girl.

Still, Jesus keeps going, all the way into the house.

When Jesus gets inside the house, Jesus starts telling people what to do. Jesus acts like this is His house, and He’s the one in charge.

First, Jesus tells the folks there to stop crying. “Why are you weeping and mourning?” he asks. What an insensitive thing to say! The young girl has died. Why do you think everyone is weeping? When death comes and takes away a young life, a girl only twelve years old, how can you not cry?

Last Wednesday night, nine year old Chastity Turner was shot dead as she was washing her dogs with her dad. A nine year old girl. Could you imagine what her family’s house was like later that day? Can you imagine walking into that and telling her family to stop crying?

Now Jesus gives them all a reason not to cry. Jesus tells them that the girl is only sleeping. But the people don’t believe Jesus. In fact, they laugh at Jesus. They mock Him and ridicule Him and make fun of Him. “What does He know?”

But Jesus will not let this stop him. Jesus keeps going. Jesus has work to do, and Jesus won’t let this mob keep Him from it.

And so Jesus throws them out. Jesus acts like this is His house. Jesus casts them out. This is what Jesus does with demons. He casts them out and keeps going.

Jesus takes the parents along, too. Jairus believed that Jesus could heal her daughter. Jairus had said to Jesus that if Jesus laid his hands on her, his daughter would live. And Jesus does. Jesus takes her by the hand, and with a simple, “Get up,” the girl is back on her feet and walking around.

And Jesus is still not done. “Give her something to eat.” In all of the excitement, Jesus cares for this child and wants the best for her.

Jesus kept going. Nothing would stop him, not even death itself, from bringing life to this child. Jesus kept going. Even when the news of death had come, Jesus comes to the house of death and puts this family back together.

And Jesus keeps on going - through Galilee and Judea, to Jerusalem, to the Mount of Olives, to high priests' house, to Pilate and eventually to Calvary. Nothing stops Jesus. Nothing slows Him down.

Along the way people laugh at Jesus, mock Him, and ridicule Him. "Hail, King of the Jews," say the soldiers, as they beat him. "He saved others, but He cannot save Himself," say those who see Him hanging there on the cross. They laugh at Him, just like the mourners in the house of death.

And Jesus keeps going, all the way to the house of death itself, there on the cross. He casts out Satan and brings His gifts of life, even to those who have died.

Jesus is never too late. He's always doing great, exciting things. He's creating and transforming, He's growing and using His power, and He's rising from the dead for you and for me.

Jesus keeps going. Even when the situation seems hopeless. Even when it seems like there's nothing He can do. "Don't be afraid, trust me," says Jesus.

One day, like death will visit your house. It may be your daughter. It may be your parents. It may be your husband or wife. And it will seem like Jesus is too late. But death is not the end, even for Jesus. Death does not stop Jesus. Jesus comes to raise the dead. Like Jairus' daughter, one day you too will die. But that will not be the end. Jesus is coming.

When Jesus returns, He will take you by the hand, He will say to you, "Arise," and immediately you will live. You will be completely healed, restored, good as new, up on your feet and walking around. And that's not all. There's always more. Jesus keeps going. Jesus gives you something to eat, a seat at his table in the heavenly banquet.