

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church  
Des Moines, WA  
July 8, 2012**

**Mark 5:21-24a, 35-43**

**Jesus Walks**

**Hymns: 222 – 452 – 349 – Closing: 431 (v. 1,3,6)**

All Scripture quotations from NIV 1984

*When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” So Jesus went with him.*

*A large crowd followed and pressed around him.*

*While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher any more?”*

*Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”*

*He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” But they laughed at him.*

*After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). Immediately the girl stood up and walked*

*around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.*

Mark 5:21-24a, 35-43

No matter what happened, I knew my life was going to change. My daughter was sick, gravely sick, and she was going to die. I couldn’t lose her. She was my little daughter, my world, the reason for my smile. If I lost her, I don’t know what I would do with life.

But...if I went to Jesus for help, I knew I would be putting my important position in the synagogue at risk. Every day, as I carried out my duties there, I heard how the Jewish leaders spoke against Jesus. They all had serious doubts about who this man was, and many even resented Jesus and actually wanted to kill him. If I now went to Jesus for help, my reputation amongst my peers would be shot. That was my dilemma, you heard about it in the Gospel of Mark. My name is Jairus and today, I want to tell you about the day that Jesus walked with me.

As I think back to that day, I’ll tell you that the decision to go to Jesus was really a no-brainer. All the stories about his healing power were not made up, I knew without a doubt that he could help my daughter. The question was, “Would he help?” It was pretty intimidating going to Jesus and personally asking for his help. After all, the crowds that surrounded him at all times were mind-blowing. I don’t know how he dealt with those constant crowds, people clamoring to hear his words, to simply touch his clothes, to find healing for their problems. The truth is that many of those people needed Jesus’ help just as much I did, what would make him come and show his compassion to me?

As I went to Jesus, I decided I would leave no doubts on my end. After pushing my way to the front of the crowd, I dropped to my knees and pleaded my case. If Jesus couldn’t help, it wouldn’t be because I didn’t let him know how dire the situation was.

And Jesus responded to my plea with a simple action that blew me away. He didn’t ask any questions. He didn’t give any promises. Jesus simply went with me. Though there was a huge crowd of people who also had needs, Jesus chose to walk with me, giving me company with his presence. And I’ll tell you what, that simple action had an instant impact on me. It is hard to explain the change in emotion that occurs when Jesus is walking with you. He hadn’t even said a word, and yet his presence gave this worried father a sense of calm and relief.

And it turns out, that I would need Jesus’ company in the biggest way. As we were walking, an update came about my daughter’s condition. It was a

crushing update. My little daughter had died. In an instant, she was taken away from me, snatched by death before I could even say goodbye. My worst fear was now reality. The feeling that came over my entire body was debilitating. I couldn't think. I couldn't speak. I could barely stand on my feet. I didn't know what to do. My friends who had brought the news knew that it was time to stop looking for a cure; instead, it was time for me to grieve with my wife. So, they urged me to come with them. They realized that Jesus had other people who he could actually still help. And I have to admit that I knew they were right. Jesus could heal the sick, but power over death? I didn't think so.

As I left Jesus, my head was spinning with questions. Why had Jesus chosen to walk with me at all? Why did he get my hopes up, just to have this news delivered? Why had I wasted my time with Jesus at all? I had put myself out there, I had relied on Jesus, what was the point now? I could've spent that time at my daughter's side. There was certainly disappointment. There was even anger. Tragedy hit and I just wanted to scream, at the world, at Jesus, at God himself, "Why!?!?"

But as those negative thoughts swirled in my head, I noticed something strange. Jesus hadn't left me. In fact, he kept walking...with me, a frail, doubting, grieving man. He continued to walk by my side and in that moment of grief, he spoke words that I'll never forget, "Don't be afraid. Just believe."

Those were words of comfort. They were words of promise. They were spoken with gentleness, but they were delivered with power. How assuring that in a moment when I heard the worst possible news, Jesus was walking with me... giving me comfort with his words.

However, no words could prepare me for what we were walking home to see. The grave reality of what was there again filled me with doubt and anger. Whatever Jesus said to me was overshadowed by what I saw. The funeral was already in progress, the funeral for my precious little daughter. Our family and friends were shedding tears. The professional wailers had arrived. They made it clear to everyone that death had reared its ugly head in my home. There was no doubt that my daughter was gone. And everyone knew it...everyone except Jesus, apparently.

Again, he chose to speak and he delivered words of hope for me. In a matter-of-fact way, Jesus stated, "She is not dead, but asleep." Unfortunately, all the people who had gathered doubted what Jesus could do. They laughed at the notion. They knew why they were there. The girl was dead.

But once again, Jesus kept walking. He took my wife and me, along with three of his disciples, and we went into my daughter's room. I held my wife closely as we looked upon our daughter, just twelve years

old, so much of her life yet to live. Finally, Jesus acted. He took my little daughter gently by the hand and spoke quietly to her. His words were short, yet they were filled with love and care. "Talitha koum," he said. "Little girl, get up." The same endearing term I used for my daughter, Jesus also used now. He genuinely cared for her.

And as soon as Jesus spoke, the unthinkable happened. My daughter, my daughter who once was dead, listened to Jesus' command. She sat up! She was alive!

Every one of us who was in that room was astonished at what we had seen. How could we not be? As I think back to that entire day, I'm so grateful for what Jesus did. He could've simply healed my daughter when I asked. Instead, he walked with me, giving me company with his presence; giving me comfort with his words; giving me confidence with his actions. And he gave me faith in who he was. You know, I went to Jesus looking for him to help my daughter, and he helped me as well. At first, I didn't understand his plan, but now I know. It wasn't just my daughter that he was saving that day. He was saving me as well. Through the ups and downs of that day, Jesus tested and strengthened my faith in him. The skeptics in the synagogue wouldn't ever be able to shake what was given to me that day. My faith was made strong and secure...walking with Jesus will do that for you.

Now I know what each of you is thinking as you hear my story...How amazing must it have been to be there! I wish Jesus could do that for me when I face trouble or when I have to deal with death. But here is the thing: Jesus walks with you as well. And your situation isn't so different from mine.

You live in a world where so many need Jesus each day. Think of how many people come to Jesus every day. Think of how many lay their cares and worries and troubles on Jesus every day in prayer. They clamor to him, searching for help. It would be easy to think that Jesus doesn't have time for everyone, that he doesn't have time for you. But maybe you still come, just like I did, with nowhere else to go, with no other answers to be found. You come completely helpless, and what does Jesus do for each one of you when you need him?

Jesus walks...giving you company with his presence. He is by your side each and every day. I know the promises that he has given to you. He has promised to be with you always. He has promised that he is your Good Shepherd and that he knows and takes care of each of your needs. I know that he never leaves you alone, walking the troubling roads of life alone.

But I also know that it is easy to doubt at times. It is easy to doubt when the troubles hit hardest. It is easy to doubt when death strikes suddenly. It is easy to doubt when you feel all alone. At those times, the

questions come out. Why are you walking with me, Jesus, if you aren't going to do anything? Why are you walking with me, Jesus, if you are still going to allow pain like this to come into my life? What is the point of having you by my side?

When those questions arise, listen for Jesus' voice. He hasn't left you. He is still walking right beside you and as he walks, he gives comfort with his words. He speaks those same words that he spoke to me after I learned my daughter was dead. They are words of comfort. They are words of assurance. They are words which call for faith and trust. "Don't be afraid. Just believe."

And as you continue to walk in faith, you will see something astonishing. Jesus will fulfill all those promises that he has made to you with action. A time is coming when all your troubles will be gone. A time is coming when all your fears will be swept away. A time is coming when death will no longer shake you. As Jesus walks with you, you can find confidence in what he has done already, and you can find confidence in what he will do one day soon. Through his death on the cross, Jesus showed his love. Through his resurrection, Jesus showed that he has power over death.

And for all who have been touched by death and for all who will be touched by death, as you walk with Jesus, he will show you that power over death in your life just like he did in mine. I know the world doubts and laughs when you talk about the hope that you have. I know how those around you mourn and grieve without any sort of comfort. But as long as Jesus is walking by your side, you can be filled with confidence and joy. Because Jesus will say to each of you, "My little child...get up." You are freed from the bondage of death. You are free to enjoy the glories of heaven.

It is all because Jesus walks....with you. Amen.