

Meet Jesus: As he utters Talitha Cumi

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[0 : 00] Oh man, we'll find our reading on page 840 of the Bibles and Kate Haley is going to come and read for us. Kate Haley, she works here in the city centre and I understand Kate, you do something with the environment, you're involved with the environment.

Is that the sort of work that you're involved in? Yes, yes we do, we help organisations who are helping the environment so we help them get funding applications together or do business planning or things like that.

Oh that's interesting. It's a bit sneaky because I also live in the city centre, I actually work from home but I live and work in the city centre. That's convenient, just think of all the time that she cuts in commuting and all the anxiety that that can be when there's traffic and hold-ups and so on.

Good, so Kate's going to bring our reading to us. This is from Mark chapter 5, we start at verse 21. And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him and he was beside the sea.

Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his seat and implored him earnestly, saying, My little daughter is on the point of death, come and lay your hands on her so that she may be made well and live.

[1 : 21] And he went with them. Then we go to verse 35. While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, Your daughter is dead, why trouble the teacher any further?

But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not fear, only believe. And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John, the brother of James. They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, Why are you making a commotion and weeping?

The child is not dead, but sleeping. And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the children's father and mother and those who were with him and went in to where the child was. Taking her by the hand, he said to her, Talitha, kumi, which means little girl, I say to you, arise. And immediately the girl got up and began walking, for she was 12 years of age.

[2 : 25] And they were immediately overcome with amazement. And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat. Thank you, Kate.

We've got two points today, and our first point is the clarity of a crisis. I love reading the obituaries in the Daily Telegraph and the Herald.

And I find it particularly fascinating when we look back at the heroes from the Second World War. If you just imagine, if somebody was sort of in their early 20s during the Second World War, they're in the late 80s now.

And so there's a real mine of interesting stories from the Second World War. I find it fascinating. Perhaps it's turning into a bit of a hobby. I seem to cut out these articles. Colonel David Sutherland, a soldier with a special boat service, who later became deputy commander of the SAS.

[3 : 35] There's a gentleman here who passed away, George Miller. He made a daring escape from a German POW camp, then became a secret agent working with the French resistance.

He was an adventurer who faced death repeatedly, but lived until he was 94. And last month in June, I was learning how to defuse bombs, how you pour liquid into the timing mechanism of bombs.

It was Air Marshal Sir John Rowlands, his obituary, and I was with him in an aircraft hangar as he defused this bomb. And I think almost without exception, life and death, conflict, it sort of brings the ingredients of heroism.

You know, the clarity of thinking, the urgency, and the selflessness. And that seems to be the ingredients of heroism. And Jairus, well, he's got a life and death situation on his hands, hasn't he? And it's sweeping aside all his other priorities, sweeping aside his social etiquette. The tips are down and he wants Jesus. And so just like a soldier, Jairus is sort of on a mission, isn't he? [4 : 52] To get to Jesus, he's focused. And let's first of all notice the crowds. And we'll see the crowds in verse 21 and 24. Look there at verse 21.

And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. And verse 24. And he went with him, and a great crowd followed him, and thronged about him.

Masses of people. But by contrast, it's a person that we're interested in. A person who grips our attention, and he's the synagogue ruler, Jairus.

He's a man of standing, isn't he? In the first century world. A man of power. But on this day, he knows that his worldly power is what?

He's hopeless. His little daughter, she's there, isn't she? On a deathbed. Imagine him in your mind's eye. He's sort of heard about Jesus on the religious grapevine.

[5 : 53] And so he's making his way to this scene, isn't he? Yes, he's a ruler, but he knows that he's got no rule over death. He's running towards a dusty scene, a hustle and bustle of the crowds.

You can imagine him pushing through, can't you? Can you imagine that? All the doors. Excuse me, it's my daughter. Will you let me through? He's pushing his way through. The crowd all seem to be looking forward.

It's Jesus. He's captivating. Everyone's looking forward. And Jairus is sort of bumping into people, trying to get through. Excuse me, he says repeatedly. And suddenly, there he is.

Suddenly, Jairus is not looking at people's backs, but Jesus' face. Was it fear or reverence?

We don't know. But he fell to his knees, didn't he? And he looks at Jesus again, the ruler. Dust like blotting paper, absorbing the sweat on Jairus' face.

[6 : 56] The crowd gasping as the drama sort of unfolds. It's Jairus, the ruler. He's on his knees to Jesus, they muttered to each other. Yes.

If you think about it, a crisis has brought him this far, hasn't it? It sort of cut away through all superficiality, and it focused his life.

And verse 23, look at verse 23. He looks up to Jesus, and what does he say? My little daughter, she's at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live.

Point of death. Live. Yes. Jairus knows, doesn't he, that Jesus, the one who he's speaking to, has power over death.

And so he combines these two words together in the same sentence. Think about this. He's after, isn't he? Jesus' innate power. It's not that he just wants sort of a gradual healing.

[7 : 56] He could have gone to the doctors to get some sort of medication for that. No. He wants the power to impart life. He needs, doesn't he, Jesus. It's gone straight for him, a beeline.

And friends, isn't that true sometimes in our own lives? You know, a crisis can come along, can't it? And it can sort of snap us back to our senses, a bit like smelling salts or something.

You know, we suddenly see what matters and we see who matters in life. As children. I imagine your childhood's pretty much the same as mine. You know, we fall over, fall off our cycle and then we're running with short, our shorts on, our short trousers to mum, aren't we, in a crisis when we're children.

But as we grow older, who do we run to? You know, when death sort of winks at us or when we come across some other sort of crisis in our life and things start to fall apart at the seams, who do we trust?

Where do we go when we're up against the ropes? And Abraham, if you think about the Old Testament, Abraham had sort of lost all worldly hope, hasn't he?

[9 : 04] As he looked at his son, Isaac, laid out to die. And think of Moses, you know, he got to the sea, didn't he? It was like getting to a dead end.

He could smell the sea air, he could see the waves coming up on the shore and behind it was the glistening of the Egyptian army as they chased him.

And he came to one of those moments. Gethsemane was such a point. And we look at Jairus and we peer through the ages and well, it's as if Jairus is taking our place.

You know, he gives the inmost yearning of our hearts. It's what our prayers look like, isn't it? The picture of it. It took a violent storm at sea, didn't it, for John Newton.

Do you remember John Newton? I was lost but now I'm found. I was blind but now I see. And yes, through the ages, friends, it's pleased God to awaken people through difficult times.

[10:13] And perhaps someone listening, you know that's the shape of your life right now. So that was our first point, the clarity of a crisis.

And our second point is the command of Christ. Verse 35, friends, is a statement and a question. We get them both in verse 35.

But I very much doubt that Jairus actually heard the question. Just look with me there at verse 35. While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, your daughter is dead statement.

What will the teacher any further question? Do you see? I was talking to a man at the printers last Wednesday afternoon. And he was giving me his view of Christianity.

And he thought it was just one of the many options on offer. You know, something like joining a football club or something like that or having an interesting hobby.

[11:12] And he reeled off a list of things that can help one's well-being. And he'd be the one speaking in verse 35, your daughter's dead, why bother the teacher anymore?

You know, you're clutching at straws, he'd say. And imagine poor Jairus. Imagine what was going on in his mind as he heard those words, as he reached him.

You know, put yourself in Jairus' shoes. You know, his faith, it had taken him a long way, hadn't it? It had seen him push through all of those crowds to get to Jesus.

It had seen him fall on his knees and plead for Jesus' help. But verse 35, was it to be, well, almost like the straw that broke the camel's back?

Was it something like that? You know, and friends, something in your own life might have come across. You might have come across something in recent times, you know. Something that seems to be overwhelming your trust in the Lord just now.

[12:13] You know, are we making connections here? Do you sense how it was for Jairus? And then verse 36, a lovely word. Look at that, verse 36, the beginning.

But, do you see? But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, Do not fear, only believe. And what a contrast that is in just one little sentence there.

Juxtaposed, isn't it? Do not fear, only believe. Fear is sort of being overwhelmed by something, isn't it? Feeling yourself out of control.

And belief is believing in some sort of outside help. Fear is losing hope. Belief is seeing hope. Fear is facing death with a big question mark.

And belief is Jesus, isn't it? Isn't he? Do not fear, only believe. Jesus lovingly says to Jairus here.

[13:14] And it's the word of God, isn't it? Entering our world. What with hope? Do you see? And then verse 37. Verse 37. And he allowed no one to follow him, except Peter and James and John, the brother of James.

For your eyes only. He's shed the crowd, hasn't he? Jesus has shed the crowd. No hangers on. Just these three disciples. And the crowd turn away. And so it seems, well, Jesus has a deep focus, doesn't he?

Do you think so? On what's ahead here. I know that some of you here are medics. Have you got a stethoscope with you? Have you got a stethoscope with you?

You could put the stethoscope on verse 38. And it would sound like Genesis chapter 3. Look at verse 38. They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue.

And Jesus saw a commotion. People weeping and wailing loudly. Sounds like death, doesn't it? Do you see? But this is so exciting. Hasn't Jesus come to reverse death here?

[14:22] What we have here is deeply incarnational. It really is good news. You know, Jesus, he can see the commotion. He can hear all this crying and weeping.

He can feel Jairus' feelings, can't he? His emotions. And in a moment he'll be holding on to this dead girl's hand, won't he?

Pouring his life back into her. You know, evoking thoughts of Eve in the Garden of Eden. You know, how he brought her out of Adam's sleep. It's really amazing.

You know, what's happening here. It's sort of anticipating the new creation as well. Our resurrection in Jesus Christ. Oh friends, what it is that God became flesh.

I don't know if any of you have sort of seen in reality or seen on TV some people who restore cars. They can often find an old wreck of a car, can't they?

[15:23] That's rusted away in a barn. They buy it off the farmer for 50 pounds or something. Spend three years renovating it and suddenly it's in pristine condition and it's winning awards in exhibitions.

It's probably worth 20,000 pounds or something. I've got a friend down south and he can look at an old motorcycle and he can see the potential that nobody else can see. And verse 39, we look at death through Jesus' eyes.

Just look right at the end of verse 39. Look at the end, the last sentence in verse 39. Do you see it? What does Jesus say? He says, the child is not dead but sleeping.

And what does the world say to that? What does my printer think to that? Well, verse 40 is what he thinks. And they laughed at him. But he put them outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was.

And it's that intimacy again, isn't it? Something about life and death, am I right? Something about it. You know, deathbeds and giving birth. You don't want great crowds, do you?

[16:33] A minister by the edge of a grave. You know, the family around. Dust to dust. Ashes to ashes. There's something about it. Something human.

Something not to be fully analysed or entirely understood. And so Jesus, he sends these mockers outside, doesn't he? Sends them outside. And Jairus' mission, it's turned into something bigger than he ever imagined.

I think the military expression is mission creep, isn't it? And that's what's happened here with Jairus. And so Jairus is standing there in this little room, isn't he? With his wife.

Perhaps they're holding hands. And the words of Jesus are sort of echoing in his mind as he looks at his little dead daughter. Do not fear. Only believe.

And the question God is bringing us is sight or word. Which will it be? And it's a question, friends, that's permeated your whole life.

[17:33] We're heirs of Adam. We're attracted by sight. The immediate things of this world. And here, Jesus has entered our humanity. With, listen, words of reversal.

Do not fear. Only believe. So there's daughter, isn't there? Lying there. There's mum and dad. There's Jesus. There's these three disciples.

Intimacy. It's family, isn't it? If you think about it. And now, just think about this. It's the sheer, absolute confidence of Jesus Christ.

It's almost, well, it is staggering. It's out of this world, but he's in it. Verse 41. And probably Peter had said to Mark, probably Peter had brought this account along to Mark, and he said, you must get this right, Mark.

You've got to get it right. I want it to go out live, right across the world. It was Talitha Kumi. Write that word down in Aramaic. I want it to sound like it was, you're just in the room.

[18:36] I want to bring people in so they can hear it. And so Mark's done that, hasn't he? And into a dying world. Into a dying world, these words have echoed for 2,000 years.

Just look with me there at verse 41. Taking her by the hand, he said to her, Talitha Kumi, which means, little girl, I say to you, arise. And immediately the girl got up and began walking.

Well, she was 12 years of age, says Mark. And they were, well, I would think they would be. They were immediately overcome with amazement. Wow.

Just picture the scene. The creator of the universe, standing there, holding this little girl's hand. What a way, what a way to come back to life, that is, isn't it? How romantic that would be.

Just picture it. Her eyes open, and she's back into this world. It's romantic. The crowd. Do you remember the crowd by the Sea of Galilee?

[19:33] They're home now, eating the tea. The crowd outside, they're still laughing, cracking jokes about Jesus. But on the inside, on the inside, we know that death is but sleep to Jesus.

Don't we, friends? Yes. And tears of grief are turned into tears of joy. Aren't they? And we glimpse here, don't we, the reception awaiting ourselves in this same Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Yes, it's the dawn of a bright new day. We saw last week, didn't we, Jesus' power over Satan. And today, here in this passage, it's his power over death.

An empty bed. An empty tomb. And people are overcome with amazement. And so, friends, like Jesus, like Jairus, we need to, we need to know that in our hopelessness, we can turn to Jesus.

You know, when the world mocks, it's to Jesus that we need to turn. And give us something to eat, he says.

[20 : 43] Shall we pray? Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending your Son into this world.

And especially in these times, as we look around the world and we see so much destruction, so much loss of life, we thank you, Father, that your Son, Jesus Christ, came to reverse all of that.

And he did it through taking upon himself the suffering and the hatred of this world. And we thank you that we can have our portion in that through faith, through not fearing, and through believing your word.

And so we pray that your Spirit would be amidst us afresh in our lives and that we'd cleave to you in these times and that we'd radiate the hope that is ours in Christ.

So we pray that you go with us now into this world, into the rest of the week. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us now, this day and forevermore.

[21 : 44] Amen.