

**Jesus heals Jarius' daughter:  
it's all about God – from beginning to end**

Acts 2:36-39; Hebrews 8:1-6; Mark 5:21-24, 35-43

I love today's Gospel story of Jesus' healing of Jarius' little girl because it encapsulates so much of what the Gospel is about...

The Holy Scripture asserts that our fundamental need as human beings is to be put in right relation to God, to each other and to ourselves.

Meeting this need is put in terms of “salvation”, “redemption”, “rescue”, “deliverance”, “justification”, “making peace”, “reconciliation”, “breaking down walls that divide”, “new birth” and “new creation”, “abundant life”, “forgiveness”, being declared “holy and blameless”, “being made alive”, “raised up”, “set free” and so on (and so on!).<sup>1</sup>

“All this”, Paul tells us in his letter to the Corinthians, “is *from God*”<sup>2</sup> and is *promised* to us in Christ. It is *his* work, not ours, which is the *only* basis upon which we find healing and restoration.<sup>3</sup>

This is the Gospel, the “Good News” of Jesus Christ (as Mark puts it at the start of account), and God's present and future reign upon the earth.<sup>4</sup>

A close reading of today's Gospel story reveals elements of all these things. But what I especially like about the story is that it's full of *grace*.

It's not as if the Jarius the Elder was Jesus' friend but when the man humbled himself, and threw himself on Jesus' mercy, he went to the man's home anyway where he found the girl at death's door. And despite the ridicule of the man's neighbours he healed her, right there in front of Jarius and his wife.

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17-19; Colossians 1:13-14; Ephesians 1:7-8; Colossians 1:19-22; Ephesians 2:1-9; Romans 3:23-24, 5:1-2; Galatians 5:1; John 10:10.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17.

<sup>3</sup> Jeremiah 30:17; Malachi 4:2.

<sup>4</sup> Mark 1:1-15.

Think of how they must have felt. What parent among us hasn't fretted and feared the worst for a sick child at some point? Which one of us hasn't felt that sense of powerlessness at seeing a loved one terribly ill? And here she is restored to them, brought back from the brink of death to life.

The girl, of course, knew none of this. She was unaware. All she would have known was that she woke up well. Yet God's *grace* of healing had fallen upon her in a kind of microcosm of the coming of God's Kingdom. The little girl had exercised no faith of her own. Her father had exercised that faith on her behalf and so, at Jesus' command, God's promise was realised both in her life and that of her parents.

"All this is from God"...

In Paul's letter to the Roman's we read,

"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."<sup>5</sup>

The act of baptism is a kind of enacted parable of the Kingdom. It signifies the work of Christ in our lives, it is a sign of God's gracious activity within us to cleanse, renew, restore and refresh. It is an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible work of God.

Today Felix Thirkell-White is being brought for baptism by his parents – Kate and Ben. In doing this, they are laying claim to the promise that is made, as we heard earlier, "to you and our children and those who are far off".

Felix is being made a part of us, a member of God's people whose task it is to proclaim all that God is doing among us and for us in Christ. God's grace extends to Felix as part of the "new and *better* covenant" of which the book of Hebrews speaks.

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<sup>5</sup> Romans 6:3-4.

Like the little girl, Felix is unaware that all God's best is his. Yet we know that the promises of God will be actualised in his life as his parents and God parents believe on his behalf.

Here then, embodied in Felix's baptism, is the point of today's Gospel reading. It is all about what *God* graciously does for us in Christ; it is all from God from beginning to end.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!