

“Rise up”

Sermon by Dan Harrison, pastor, Church of the Covenant – Lynchburg, VA 6/27/2021

Mark 5:38-42

The past 16 months have held challenges for us like no other. We have seen a pandemic that we are still navigating, cautiously. We have seen racial inequalities front and center, a system in significant ways still broken and oppressive for the marginalized in our country. Change is needed everywhere, justice lacking. Those of us who seek God’s help join the ancient psalmist as we continue to cry out “Where will our help come from?”

And equally it can be said that God’s justice rolls down from the mountain above, so let our eyes look up. Let us not be discouraged. I can only imagine the lowest point of one’s life, for each it is different. But for a parent, to lose their young child, it is surely the lowest. And here in this story, we have Jesus going out to help a desperate father whose daughter is about to die. Jesus comes to his house but by then, the girl has already died.

The worst for a parent to imagine has already happen. They’ve lost the greatest gift God has given them. They lost the flame in their home, the brightness in their family, the jewel in their crown: Their child. Their daughter. The parents and family are beside themselves in pain. However, Jesus says: “She is not dead.” I tell you this morning if you’ve been told there’s no way forward, listen for God’s voice. Is God telling you differently? Are you hearing a whisper of hope?

Listen to the winds of hope that surround us every day, the songs of the birds reminding us of a life outside of the pain we feel. This is where Jesus took the moment to, a new place of understanding, a new plain of hope. When you are at your lowest, and there is nowhere else to go, no further down you can sink, God shows up. And that’s where we need to be. Ready.

Are you ready? Jesus took the little girl by the hand. And I tell you this, feel God’s touch this morning in your life. How is God reaching out to you? Whose hands are trying to grab your own? Maybe you haven’t paused long enough to notice. Be alert to God’s movement in your life. Then Jesus speaks the words, “Talitha koum.” Rise up. Rise up, my child. The story tells us that the girl stood up. And I ask you today to do the same. Stand up and live. Rise up and bring healing to this world with your heart, with your words, with your breath, with your hands, with your arms, with you feet. Rise up. Rise up.

This is God’s command for us. Not to stay silent. Not to stay seated. Not to stay irrelevant. Be relevant. Make a difference. Be present in others lives, in the good and the bad. Talitha Koum. Rise up.

Peace