

## **Gospel: Mark 5:21-43**

*Jairus, a respected leader, begs Jesus to heal his daughter. A woman with a hemorrhage is ritually unclean, treated as an outcast in Jewish society. Both Jairus and the unnamed woman come to Jesus in faith, believing in his power to heal and bring life out of death.*

<sup>21</sup>When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. <sup>22</sup>Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet <sup>23</sup>and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." <sup>24</sup>So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. <sup>25</sup>Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. <sup>26</sup>She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. <sup>27</sup>She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, <sup>28</sup>for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." <sup>29</sup>Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. <sup>30</sup>Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" <sup>31</sup>And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" <sup>32</sup>He looked all around to see who had done it. <sup>33</sup>But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. <sup>34</sup>He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

<sup>35</sup>While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" <sup>36</sup>But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." <sup>37</sup>He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. <sup>38</sup>When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. <sup>39</sup>When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." <sup>40</sup>And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. <sup>41</sup>He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" <sup>42</sup>And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. <sup>43</sup>He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

“But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, do not fear, only believe. He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother James. But they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping. And they laughed at him.”

They laughed at him. They laughed at him. Can you think of times that you have been laughed at in a way that was not flattering? It may have made us feel stupid, foolish, or dumb; it certainly is often made to make the other person feel less than. So often in those moments, we want to make sure that those who laughed at us, later see their errors and misjudgment. Some people have taken being laughed at and used it as inspiration to accomplish great things. I wonder what it felt like to be one of the three chosen disciples to be there alongside Jesus when they were being scoffed upon as they went privately into that room. And then a few verses later we are told that they are overcome with amazement of what happens. So, we know, the disciples indeed got the last laugh in this situation.

Last Sunday during the children’s sermon, I mentioned how I recently discovered a sizable snake crawling in my backyard. I mentioned that while I particularly don’t care for snakes, I do not have an unhealthy fear for them but rather a respectful fear. What caused me the most fear in that moment however, was not being bitten by the snake, but rather that any one of our three dogs might not be suitably afraid of the snake and a mass chaotic and ugly event could unfold. The dogs were out with me in the backyard but had yet to notice my discovery. I wanted to get them back into the

house, but I also did not want to leave the snake and lose track of where it was, since it was going under parts of my landscape wall. So, while guarding the snake, I yelled for Karen, and then I yelled for Karen again, while guarding the snake, and then I yelled even louder for Karen while guarding the snake, while at the same time trying to keep the dogs from noticing that anything was awry. After increasingly louder shouts for Karen to come and help I was able to get the snake, with some prodding, back to corner where I at least could pound on the side of the house and window. And I did this several times, increasingly pounding harder and harder to the point that I was afraid I was going to break the window if I hit it any harder. It all had the same result. Crickets from inside the house. Nothing. So, I am stranded were I felt I couldn't leave the snake nor can I leave the dogs alone. In the end, it turns out that Karen was up with Theo in his room trying to put him down for a nap and had turned on the white noise machine so she could hear nothing, though she said later admitted she heard the occasional banging but just thought what in the world is he doing in the backyard now, and making such a racket. However, such noise did not arouse her curiosity to come and save my life. Over a period of time, I was eventually able to very strongly encourage the snake to head outside my fence and hopefully toward the nearby woods. Then I came in and told Karen what happened and you know, she found it quite amusing. Now at that point there was a part of me that wanted to go back outside and catch that snake and take it back into Karen and show her what the racket was about, so that I could have the last laugh. However, I did not because that was probably not going to end well for me either.

The last laugh. Stories that end with the phrase that's how I got the last laugh, often are wild tales of the things that of happened to people that

are often amusing to tell and retell again and again. We often use that phrase when we speak to others and say well I got, or she got, the last laugh. Sometimes the last laugh means that the apparent victor in a situation actually was the loser and got their comeuppance.

Sometimes I wonder if Jesus ever felt he got the last laugh. I have an easier time imagining that sometimes the disciples felt that way. I can almost imagine that these three disciples that got to go inside the room with Jesus, having experience being laughed at as they went in there, only to come out with the daughter of Jairus, being totally alive again and well. I think if I was one of the three of them I would have been tempted, when seeing the crowd again after coming back out, to show my last laugh by perhaps sticking out my tongue at all the jesters and doubters.

In this season of Pentecost, as we continue in the gospel of Mark, one thing about this account of Christ is that in Mark, the writer really takes us on a roller coaster ride from story to story with one event going almost immediately into another event. At times events are bookended within another story, just like is the case in our gospel text today.

How is it that we see Jesus in these stories? He is not out to get a last laugh or give anyone their comeuppance. Instead he is about demonstrating the breaking in of the reign of God. In this lesson, he actually heals in two different ways. In the first way he doesn't even know that a woman is approaching him until he feels her touch and she is healed. Then, at the conclusion of the second episode, we have a young daughter being resuscitated to life by Jesus after he picks up her hand. Which, by the way, was strictly forbidden by the Jewish practice of life in the faith, one did not touch a dead person's body, but Jesus obviously put that aside takes her hand and heals her. While some of those standing by might've

felt the disciples, and/or Jesus got the last laugh, what outweighed it all was there feeling of amazement of how this man was changing not only the life of this girl, of this synagogue leader, of this family, of those gathered there, of those three disciples, but this was an example of how Jesus coming into the world was changing everything.

This morning while we worship, 19 of our youth among the 33 of our traveling group, between our congregation and Peace Lutheran in Ashland, are making their way towards the final mass event of the ELCA youth gathering for worship and praise. They will soon be taking communion with one another, this group of 30,000 plus, communion, can you even imagine? They have met this week under the theme: "This changes everything" and hopefully this experience will continue to impact their lives of faith forever more. I guess and hope that this week has been one and which they have experienced a gamut of emotions, not only in their spiritual lives but their entire being. I am guessing that there will have been moments of tears, cheers, fears, jeers, among much laughter. Part of the theme: "This changes everything" points to the empty tomb event of God in which, in a way, God does indeed get the last laugh. Hopefully for those who are about to gather and hear presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton preached to them this morning, they will recognize, react, and respond to the event of God that indeed changes everything for their lives. In many ways, because we have been told of the good news of Easter morning, we as Christians have the last laugh. For we know the ways of this world, the ways of governments, the ways of the rich, the ways of the powerful, do not get a final say or the final laugh. And so, God gets the final word, God gets the last laugh. However, it is not one of ridicule, it is one of love, it is one of love that accepts, recognizes, and forgives each and every one of us. Amen.