

Salford Methodist Circuit



Just Keep On Believing – 11th July 2021
John Brocklehurst

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
The Lord is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul that seeks him.
It is good for us to wait quietly
for the salvation of the Lord.

Let us just reflect in silence

[Silence]

Hymn: Let All the World in Every Corner Sing

*Let all the world in every corner sing:
my God and King!
The heavens are not too high,
his praise may thither fly;
the earth is not too low,
his praises there may grow.
Let all the world in every corner sing:
my God and King!*

*Let all the world in every corner sing:
my God and King!
The Church with psalms must shout,
no door can keep them out;
but above all, the heart
must bear the longest part.
Let all the world in every corner sing:
my God and King!*

Prayers

Eternal God,
we adore you for your incredible, life-changing love.
Parents are given back their beloved child.
You care enough to ensure a fragile child is fed.
You are mighty in power and yet so gentle.
God our creator, our redeemer and our comforter,
we adore you, and we raise our hands in praise
singing, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

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We give you thanks, Lord, that your healing ministry transcended cultural and social barriers.
We pray for a cleansing of all prejudice,
and for those whose illness or situation distances them from others.
We pray especially for the mentally ill, the homeless,
for refugees and all on the fringes of society.
May they, and all creation, know your healing and accepting love,
and may we all reach out where we can, in your name.

God of the streets and crowds of the world,
we come to you in sorrow and shame for the times we have allowed prejudice to distance us from those you would draw close to.
Raise us up to love and serve you.
We bring to you the times when we have been too proud to ask for help and too distracted to help others.
Raise us up to love and serve you.
And so we acknowledge the times we have been quick to judge those we don't easily identify with, and ignored those whose plight we have not taken to heart.
So, Lord, raise us up to love and serve you.
In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.*

Hymn: When Jesus the healer passed through Galilee

*When Jesus the healer passed through Galilee
Heal us, heal us today!
The deaf came to hear
and the blind came to see
Heal us, Lord Jesus!*

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*A paralysed man was let down through the roof
Heal us, heal us today!
His sins were forgiven;
his walking the proof.
Heal us, Lord Jesus!*

*The death of his daughter caused Jairus to weep
Heal us, heal us today!
The lord took her hand
and he raised her from sleep.
Heal us, Lord Jesus!*

*When blind Bartimaeus cried out to the Lord
Heal us, heal us today!
His faith made him whole
and his sight was restored.
Heal us, Lord Jesus!*

*The twelve were commissioned and sent out in twos
Heal us, heal us today!
To make the sick whole
and to spread the good news.
Heal us, Lord Jesus!*

*The lepers were healed and the demons cast out;
Heal us, heal us today!
Now lame leap for joy
and the dumb laugh and shout;
Heal us, Lord Jesus!*

*There's still so much sickness and suffering today;
Heal us, heal us today!
We gather together
for healing and pray:
Heal us, Lord Jesus!*

We now come to our Bible reading. Mark 5 contains 3 stories of healing: the man healed from the demons, the woman with the haemorrhage and the healing of the daughter of Jairus. Jesus was on a visit around Galilee and today we are focusing on the healing of Jairus' daughter and more particularly on Jairus himself. We are going to hear the whole story from the book "Telling the Gospel, by Bob Hartman.

*His heart was breaking.
She was his only daughter.
And she was dying.*

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*And in spite of his piety and his position in the community - ruler of the local synagogue - there was nothing that Jairus could do.
So he ran to Jesus and fell at his feet and begged, "Heal my daughter, please!"*

*Jesus agreed. And now Jairus's heart was racing. They were on their way, pushing through the crowded streets, when, suddenly, Jesus stopped.
"Who touched me?" he asked.
And even if time had not been an issue, Jairus thought, it would still have been a ridiculous question.
"There are people everywhere," one of his disciples observed. "Pressing on us all around."
"Point well made," nodded Jairus. But still Jesus dawdled.
"C'mon. C'mon. C'mon," he whispered, like a man in a traffic jam, late for an important date.*

*And then his heart sank.
"But I felt the power go out of me," Jesus announced, as if there was all the time in the world.
And then a woman spoke. "It was me," she said. "I'm the one who touched you."
And with a lorry on the left and a coach on the right and no place to turn and no exit in sight, all Jairus could do was stand there and wait, engine running, while the woman explained how twelve years of illness had suddenly come to an end.
"Twelve years, yes. Twelve years. That's all my daughter will have," was all he could think, "if this conversation doesn't finish soon."
But before it could, one of his servants appeared.
And Jairus's heart stopped.*

*That's what it felt like, anyway, because the look on the servant's face said it all.
"Your daughter is dead."
The servant said something else. "There's no need to bother the teacher, now." But it hardly registered. Jarirus was alone. In a haze. Everything at a standstill.
And then somebody touched him.
"It will be all right," Jesus said. "Believe. And she will be healed."
So Jairus did. What else was left? What else could he do?
But as he approached the house, his heart began to ache. There was his family, wailing with the mourners, There was his wife, looking like there would be no tomorrow.*

*But Jesus acted as if nothing was the matter. He called three of his disciples to his side and strode right through the crowd.
"Stop your wailing," he said. "The girl's not dead. She's only sleeping."*

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And hopeful as that might have sounded, Jairus could not help feeling that it was a bit hard-hearted.

The crowd must have felt so, too - and they laughed at Jesus, in reply.

But he took no notice. Instead, he took the girl's hand, and like he was, indeed, waking her from a nap of a long night's rest, he simply said, "Get up, my child."

And she did.

And Jairus's heart? It leaped. It soared. It nearly broke again, but with joy this time.

A few weeks ago you may remember the lectionary reading was about the women with the haemorrhage and Jairus' daughter. These stories were intertwined and appear in all three synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. As I was reading these stories I was fascinated by one thing, faith. Jesus has few comfort zones, is no respecter of the social, cultural or religious barriers of his time. He breaks taboos and conventions so he can meet people where they are and address their needs. One of the biggest challenges that faces any person who attempts to walk by faith, is the dilemma of what to do when faced with a major setback that steals all hope for a difficult situation to be resolved well.

This is the exact circumstance that faced Jairus in the story. Jairus was the ruler of the local synagogue. And it is as though many other religious leaders of that time were trying to discredit Jesus and call him a blasphemer. But somehow Jairus had come to believe in him. In fact, he had faith that Jesus could heal his ill daughter. And so, in Mark 5:23 it says "Jairus says to Jesus, "come and lay your hands on her, so that she will get well and live.""

Jairus was a lot like us. Jairus had a need, and he believed that Jesus could take care of that need, and so he approached Jesus in faith. Jesus responded immediately by agreeing to go with him to his house, and 5:24 says "and Jesus started off with him"

But what happened next almost derailed Jairus' faith. Some messages came from Jairus' house and in Mark 5:35 it says that they told him "your daughter has died. Why bother the teacher any longer?"

Suddenly, it was as if Jairus had hit an immovable wall. His faith was stretched to the breaking point with the reality of those painful words. Have we faced a major setback in a faith battle we have been fighting? And now the only reasonable conclusion is to stop believing God so that we could get a good resolution? That is what Jairus' friends told him to do. "stop bothering the teacher," they said. In essence they were telling Jairus to stop believing God for the healing of his daughter.

But we can gain victory for our own lives by looking at the three faith keys that Jesus taught Jairus after those men delivered the sad news to him.

The first key is how Jesus reacts to the news



The Amplified Bible gives us insight into how Jesus reacted to the announcement of the death of Jairus' daughter, because in Mark 5:36 - overhearing but ignoring what they said... imagine this - Jesus heard the words the men spoke about Jairus' daughter being dead. And his response was to intentionally ignore what they said. He knew what they said to Jairus - and Jesus knows what people (and circumstances) have "said" to us. Jesus didn't ignore the words because he was in denial or pretending it didn't happen. But Jesus understood what a person has to do when they are faced with a faith challenge the size of a mountain! And he taught Jairus by example the secret of what to do when confronted with impossibility. The first step was to ignore people who encourage us to give up on believing God.

The second key could be found in Mark 5:36 where it tells us - "Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, do not be seized with alarm and struck with fear; only keep on believing".

Jesus immediately exhorted Jairus to not allow himself to be gripped with fear. You see there is always a spirit of fear, which is always the first "devil" that attacks a person when bad news is reported. But we have to make a decisive choice to refuse to be "seized with alarm and struck with fear." And yes, we can really refuse to accept fear as our only option when bad news is delivered! But most people think they have no choice. They believe fear is "natural" in such circumstances. And because they believe that way - they are tormented with fearful thoughts in times of crisis. Jesus obviously believed otherwise or he never would have told Jairus that he could refuse to fear.

The third key, is that Jesus instructed Jairus to do one more thing - "...only keep on believing."

This was the master key to overcoming what appeared to be an impossible setback. From all natural appearances, there was no point in believing God anymore. But Jesus was adamant - "...only keep on believing." This is the same counsel Jesus would give us right now if we were standing with him discussing our impossible situation. This means don't do anything else but this one thing - "...only keep on believing."

Jesus walked with Jairus, walked with him until they arrived at his house. Jairus had to keep on believing, believing when he was faced with the sight of his daughter lying still on the bed in the house, believing when the crowd of mourners wailing at the top of their lungs. Jesus reminded Jairus, his daughter was not dead but asleep. But you can imagine everything inside of Jairus must have screamed, "it is too late!" But he kept the words of Jesus fresh in his heart, "...only keep on believing."

As always Jesus was the calm of all that was raging around him, just as he was the calm on the Sea of Galilee. And so Jesus quietly stood by the bed side and

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reached out his hand to the girl and said calmly, "talitha, koum," "little girl, I tell you to get up" and in that moment her life returned. We could leave it there, but if we look at the story it was in this moment that Jesus did a lovely thing. He told the girl's mother to go and get her something to eat. The mother, with the sudden pain of grief and the sudden shock of joy, must have been almost on the point of collapse. And Jesus would have known that it is in these moments it is best to have something to occupy one's mind and to calm the nerves. Jesus, as always, thinks of others. Jesus is the calming influence in all our lives and it was because Jairus was willing to ignore the words of those who told him to give up, because he refused to fear, and because he obeyed Jesus' command to keep on believing, Jairus received the impossible made possible. His daughter was raised from her bed before his very eyes. And yes, God wants to do the same in our situations. He wants us to take hold of these three faith keys that Jesus taught to Jairus, apply them to ourselves, so God can do the impossible for us and hold onto the promise of Jesus, the promise to just keep on believing.

Hymn: Have Faith In God, My Heart

*Have faith in God, my heart,
trust and be unafraid;
God will fulfil in every part
each promise he has made.*

*Have faith in God, my mind,
for when your light burns low;
God's mercy holds a wiser plan
than you can fully know.*

*Have faith in God, my soul;
his cross for ever stands;
and neither life nor death can pluck
his children from his hands.*

*Lord Jesus, make me whole;
grant me no resting place,
until I rest, heart, mind, and soul,
the captive of your grace.*

Prayers

Lord, we pray for all who are ill.
Come, **and lay your hands on them.**

We pray for all who tend the sick.
Come, **and lay your hands on them.**

We pray for medical staff.

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Come, **and lay your hands on them.**

We pray for carers:
and we remember those who care for their own loved ones
and those who care for the loved ones of others.
Come, **and lay your hands on them.**

We pray for researchers and scientists.
Come, **and lay your hands on them.**

We pray Lord, for support services:
for cleaners and managers, porters and budget holders.
Come, **and lay your hands on them.**

Lord, we pray for paramedics
and those who go into difficult and unknown situations.
Come, **and lay your hands on them.**

We pray for medical staff who work beyond their own communities,
for medical charities, mission organisations, campaigning groups.
Come, **and lay your hands on them.**
And so Lord, we come to pray for those in our own community,
those who need our prayers at this moment,
Those in hospital, at home, those who may have lost loved ones.
Lord, we ask you to come **and lay your hands on them.**

And so, Lord, grant us all a healing touch,
Give us the wisdom and respect to see each person we help
as an individual,
a child of God. **Amen.**

Hymn: Blest Be The Tie That Binds

*Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Jesu's love;
The fellowship of Christian minds
Is like to that above.*

*Before our Father's throne
We pour our fervent prayers:
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.*

*When for a while we part
One thought shall not be vain
That we shall still be joined in heart,
Until we meet again.*

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*One glorious hope revives
Our courage by the way:
That each in expectation lives
Of that tremendous day -*

*When from all toil and pain
And sin we shall be free,
And perfect love and friendship reign
Through all eternity.*

Blessing

Let us pray;
Lord, as we head into a new week,
help us to be people who choose to stand out from the crowd,
rather than simply to follow it.
By the power of your Spirit, we ask that you be with us
and help us to also step out of our comfort zones,
and give us the courage to challenge barriers
that confine or constrain or control us.
In Jesus' name we ask this, our prayer,
Amen.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
The Love of God
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with us all for evermore.
Amen

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Let All The World In Every Corner Sing - George Herbert
Performed by Jason McMahon

When Jesus The Healer Passed Through Galilee - Peter Smith
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Have Faith In God, My Heart - Bryn Rees
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