

August 23, 2020

## **"Who do you say that I am?"**

**"Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say that I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."**

**"But what about you?" he asked, "Who do you say that I am?"**

Mark 8:27-29

Most often our answer to Jesus' question, **"Who do you say that I am?"** is colored by our personal experiences with him. If I have struggled with some serious and troubling issue and Jesus has helped find healing then he is my healer. If I have been confused by some major question and Jesus has helped me find the answers then he is my teacher. And if Jesus has helped me to overcome my overwhelming fears then he is the Master of my storms.

In today's context in Mark 5 Jesus has returned to the area around Capernaum. As his boat comes into harbor he is met by one of the local **"...rulers of the synagogue..."** who begs him on bended knee to heal his daughter who is dying. As Jesus begins to move through the crowds beside this desperate father a woman comes up behind him and touches his robe.

In the midst of this massive crowd Jesus suddenly stops and asks who it is that has touched him. The disciples are, of course, incredulous, but finally a woman comes out of the crowd to confess that she has touched him hoping to be healed of a bleeding disease that has plagued her for years.

Taking the time, even in the face of the desperation of the dying child's family, Jesus reassures this woman that her faith has led to her healing. As Jesus moves on from this distraction, servants from Jairus' house come to tell him that his daughter has died and hope dies within him.

Jesus reassures him, **"Do not be afraid; only believe."** In Jesus' day burial customs required that the dead be buried at sundown on the day they died and so, by the time Jesus arrives at Jairus' house, mourning rituals have already begun. When Jesus again reassures the grief-stricken parents that, **"The child is not dead, but sleeping..."** the crowd of mourners mocks the Master. They, after all, know death when they see it.

Jesus pushes them all out of the house and taking only the parents and Peter, James and John along as witnesses, enters the dead girl's room. Taking the child by the hand Jesus commands, **"Little girl, I say to you, arise!"** and immediately she does. Jesus, the life-giver, has given this little girl life!

What an amazing miracle! Jesus gives life to this little girl who was dead. During his ministry Jesus raised three individuals from the dead that we know of, and each time everyone is amazed at his great power. In some ways knowing Jesus as the life-giver in our circumstances is a lot different than the experience that these parents and this little girl shared.

But in another way, all of us can know Jesus as the life-giver. All of us who believe will experience the same amazing miracle when Jesus calls us up from the dead. In his first letter to the believers at Thessalonica the Apostle Paul wrote, **"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise..."** (I Thessalonians 4:15-16)

In no less a miracle, those who have died in Christ will be raised again to a far more glorious resurrection than that experience by the three raised from the dead in Jesus' day. Without a doubt, these three whom Jesus raised to life all those years ago, died again.

But when Jesus raises those of us who have hidden our lives with him, our resurrection will be eternal. Paul writes, "**When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowd up in victory!"**" (I Corinthians 15:54-55)

Jesus can be our healer, our teacher, and the Master of our fearful storms. But Jesus is also our life-giver and one day he will command each and every one of us, "**I say to you, arise!**"

