

Dear Friends,

Mark 5: 35-43

Jesus has been delayed in getting to a little girl. Now it's too late. The girl's father is given a message. "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" This is a reproach to Jesus. They think that if he had come more quickly; if he hadn't wasted time on an unclean woman, then he might have saved the little girl from dying. He is clearly no good and not to be troubled.

Jesus "Overhears" what they say. It could be translated, Jesus "ignores" what they say. Jesus knows that no attention should be given to the voices that speak negative messages like this. He says to Jairus "Do not fear, only believe." Be like the woman who found the power of God in her. Don't be frightened, don't lose heart.

Jesus does not allow the crowd to follow, only Peter, James and John go with him. They get to the house where they find "a tumult and weeping and wailing much." Jesus says to them "Why all this commotion and weeping. The child is not dead but sleeping." They laugh at him. More negativity. This kind of laughter helps no one. He sends them all away, except for the father and mother and his three friends. These go with him, to the child.

Jairus wanted Jesus to lay hands on his little daughter. He wanted the hands to come from above, for the power of God to flow out of Jesus and into the child. But Jesus doesn't do it that way. In these circumstances he does something different. He takes her by the hand and says, "Talitha cum," which means "Little girl, get up." He is saying "arise, little girl. You can find the power of God in you. You can stand on your own two feet. You're only little, but you mustn't let a little thing like little stop you, you can be a strong little girl".

And immediately, she gets up, stands on her feet and begins to walk. Everyone is amazed. And Jesus says, "get her something to eat." She's a strong little girl with the power of God flowing through her. But let's be practical, she needs to be properly fed. Mum and Dad, take care of her.

Jesus is pulling down the boundaries between the insiders and outsiders, the respectable and disreputable, the clean and unclean, the blessed and cursed. And what about the boundary between life and death? He even seems able to cross over that boundary with ease. He crosses from life to death to life again.

And people have taken comfort from this passage. You may trust that at the hour of your death, Jesus will come to you, take you by the hand, call you by your name and say "Arise. Go in peace. God is with you. God is in you. So it is".

And that, for now at least is the end for Keeping in Touch. I am very grateful to you for being my travelling companions as we have taken journeys through these wonderful stories from the Bible. Thank you for reading them and for your encouragement and comments. You have been an inspiration. You probably won't ever know how much of a support you are to me. You have often kept me afloat and held me together. Ours is truly a shared ministry. We all give. We all receive. Thank you for all that I've received from you.

God bless you,

Tony