

21 When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. 22 Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. 23 He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” 24 So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. 25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26 She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” 29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

30 At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

31 “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’”

32 But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. 33 Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. 34 He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

35 While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

36 Overhearing^[a] what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

37 He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. 38 When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. 39 He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” 40 But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. 41 He took her by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha koum!*” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). 42 Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. 43 He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Waiting for Nothing?

Whenever I'd visit Erna she was always waiting, waiting in the hallway, waiting in one of the many wheelchairs. She was always there. Sometimes a music was playing and there was a performance at other times she was simply by the door. I'd try to give her materials church bulletin, newsletters, and sermons - she'd refuse, "Wait till I get home." I'd try to commune her and bring God's Word and sacrament and she'd respond, "Wait.. I have a church and I'll get back." Life for the moment was on hold and she waite.

To be honest waiting is boring but when you add stress to it - waiting can test the patience of a saint. Imagine waiting on traffic with a sick child on your way to the emergency room. I'm not talking about Erna but what about Jairus? Jairus was desperate. He'd rather lose friends, reputation, prominence, than his daughter. This ruler of the synagogue falls at Jesus' feet and pleads and yet it doesn't look like Jesus cares or is in much of a hurry. Jesus takes the long route, gets stuck in traffic, heals another woman (who has been struggling for 12 years with the same issues - so what's one more day). Jesus' waits until it is too late and all hope is extinguished.

It may look like Erna was at that same moment - beyond hope, too late. But Jesus still shows up - not at the last moment but throughout her life and throughout our lives even waiting for us when we are afraid and leading us to believe that he holds the power over life and death. No he may not provide a miraculous healing like he did for Jairus. But we have one has promised to care and provide even when it looks like hs saints wait for nothing.

Mark tells us Jairus' daughter was beyond sick, she was at her lasts, at her end. One hope remained and that was Jesus of Nazareth. Jairus may have heard of his miracles. Simple request, "*Come and put your hands on her and heal her that she may live.*" There is hope if he leaves immediately.

But that race home must have felt like they're waiting at DMV - an eternity. The crowd was pressing against them, slowing progress. They struggled for every step. They could hardly move and if that weren't bad enough. Someone touched Jesus and then he stopped, "Who touched me?" Jesus disciples are amazed, "*Can't you see everyone around you and now you're asking who touched you?*" Jesus stopped to talk to the woman who had been healed by touching the fringes of his clothes. You can imagine Jairus chopping at the bit while Jesus tells her, "*Your sins are forgiven.*" Then as they turn to leave they are greeted by, "*It's too late. Your daughter is dead.*"

Was it easier for Jairus to trust the Lord while his daughter was still alive, and while Jesus was still walking with him to his house? But now that the crowds slowed them, and now that Jesus stopped to heal the woman, and now that his friends came delivering the bad news, did he lose hope? Think about all that must have been running through his head as they arrived. The mourners were already there. His daughter is dead. The wait was just too long. Jesus responds, "*Do not be afraid, only believe.*" Is that what you tell someone who has just lost a loved one. "Just believe." How could

he not be afraid. What was he supposed to believe? Dead is dead. Her life is gone and yet you have the nerve to say, "She is just sleeping."

The death of a child is hard for us to handle. The death of a senior citizen - we think they had it coming. But both should remind us that we too will die, whether you are 12 or 95 both cry out, "Just wait... You're number will come." I'm going to die. That makes me terrified.

We can learn from death and say, "Cherish every day. Savor life don't sleepwalk through it. Don't take your loved ones for granted. Who knows how long you have left? You're born, you grow old, and you die." That's all good advice but a Christian waits for a whole lot more than just this world.

Christianity does not see death as natural. It was not God's intention for his creation. When we remember death we recall the fall into sin when an enemy was unleashed upon this world and is now at work upon our bodies. Death hounds us, waiting for a moment to overtake us all. Life is a progressive story of losses until the end when our body cries out to us that we once had a home that we can no longer find. And we wait.

But imagine your wait is up. You get to go home only for Jesus to say - "Wait a little longer." Jesus' bringing back a 12 year old girl doesn't make much sense. She was just going to die again. She may have lived to the ripe old age of 95 but then she did die - so why bother to raise her up?

Jesus brought her back to life not so she could enjoy life to the fullest. He didn't do this for her sake but for the sake of her father, Jairus. He wanted him to understand who he was and what power he had. Jesus has power over life and death. Here he leads Jairus to believe and not be afraid because the one who stands before him can and does care. That's why Jesus can and does say, "*Do not be afraid, only believe.*"

That wasn't the only time Jesus displayed his power over death. After coming into this world, helping and healing so many. He gave up his life for the death we deserve and if that weren't enough - after he rested from his work, God assured us this payment was acceptable and Jesus came back. (Giving many convincing proofs that he had risen) He proclaimed, "*I'm making all things new.*" The wait is over.

And so Jesus comes to us today and lays his hand on our shoulder and says to us, "*Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.*" Jesus compares our death to sleep. For Erna, for the believer death is only a sleep. The body will rest until the resurrection. Those who die in the Lord are united with Christ. Not because of who we are but because of what he's done. He reminds us in our fear that we are forgiven. How can we know? Erna was baptized into the Christian faith, confessed the Christian

faith, Communed, and taught others to do the same. Am I to believe that Jesus carried her through life only to give up on her at death? Absolutely not!

Jesus points us to baptism and says, “Here you are united with me in my death.” You are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Baptism now saves you.” He gives us himself in Communion where once again he says - this doesn’t depend on you but on my body for you.

He wants us to understand that he has power over life and death and to hold on to this hope. He freely forgives us. That’s what Erna believed. That’s who Erna waited for. And all the while she waited she retained her humor and wanted me to remind Emil, “I’m still older.” Now she has one more boast, “I made it first.”

And now she is with Jesus. She waited 95 years. Some wait 12, some struggle through 12 years of sickness, yet God cares for them both. Whether he calms the struggles in life or those who struggle - we know for whom we wait and when we die - the wait will be over. Until then, “Don’t be afraid. Believe.” Jesus is the Christ - the son of God and by him you have life. Amen.