

GREATER THAN

"GREATER THAN OUR DEATH"

MATTHEW 9:23-26

This Week's Core Competency

Trinity – I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2 Corinthians 13:14, *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

According to the Gospel accounts, Jesus raised individuals from the dead on three different occasions. The first three Gospels record the raising of Jarius' twelve-year-old daughter (Mt 9:18-19, 23-26; Mk 5:21-24, 35-43; Lk 8:40-42, 49-56). Luke alone records the raising of the widow's son outside the town of Nain (Lk 7:11-17), and John alone records the raising of Lazarus, Mary and Martha's brother (Jn 11:1-44). As far as the significance of Jesus' miracles in general and the raising the dead in particular is concerned, our Lord himself indicates they provide indisputable proof that he is the Messiah. When from prison John sent his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" the Lord answered, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor" (Mt 11:4-5). The significance of raising someone from the dead in particular is perhaps best

Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

– Jesus

seen in the account of the raising of Lazarus.

Death is irreversible, and everyone in the story of Lazarus knows it. Jesus and his disciples cross the Jordan to escape an angry crowd of Jews who attempt to stone Jesus in Jerusalem during the Feast of Dedication (Jn 10:22-39). On the other side where John the Baptist once baptized, they receive the bad news from Mary and Martha, "Lord, the one you love is sick" (11:3). Two days later, Jesus tells his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea," but the Twelve are skeptical—and for good reason. From their point of view, if Lazarus is alive, he'll get better; why risk returning to Bethany? If he's dead, there's nothing anyone can do; why risk returning to Bethany? Jesus abruptly cuts to the chase, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, *so that you may believe*" (v. 14). They agree to go with him, convinced together they will *all* die in the end (v. 16).

When Jesus speaks to Martha and then to Mary outside their village, neither one believes Jesus can do anything for Lazarus. It's too late. Martha says, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (v. 21), and Mary says the very same thing (v. 32). They aren't scolding Jesus for arriving late; they are simply expressing their faith in him. They believe he could have healed Lazarus had he arrived before their brother died. But now, he's dead, and there's nothing anyone, including Jesus, can do. The Jews who were there to comfort Martha and Mary express a similar point of view. "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?" (v. 37), but now that Lazarus is dead, even he can do nothing.

Is Martha the only one who holds out hope for Lazarus? After expressing her disappointment, she
con't pg. 2

she says to Jesus, "But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask" (v. 22). Perhaps she believes if Jesus asks his Father to raise her brother from the dead, his prayer will be answered, or perhaps she is simply expressing her continuing faith in him in the midst of her bereavement. In any case, her words introduce a profound interchange. According to one commentator: "Verse 23 is a masterpiece of planned ambiguity. At one level Jesus' words *Your brother will rise again* could be taken as no more than a devout, orthodox attempt to provide Martha with solace by drawing her attention to the resurrection at the end. Death will not have the last word: at the last day (v.24), the resurrection will take place and her brother will be restored to bodily life. That is the way Martha understands Jesus' words (v. 24). She shared with Jesus and with Pharisaic Judaism a belief in the resurrection (cf. Acts 23:8; Jos., *Bel.* ii. 163; Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 10:1), a view roundly denied by the Sadducees (Mk. 12:18-27; Acts 23:8). But at another level, Jesus is promising more immediate resurrection for Lazarus. That point escapes Martha; only the unfolding drama will disclose this meaning in Jesus' words" (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC, 412).

Technically speaking, Lazarus is not resurrected, since resurrection entails a change in the body. Paul writes: "The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1Co 15:42-43). Lazarus' mortal life is restored, but the restoration of Lazarus' merely mortal life confirms what Jesus says next to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (v. 25). Jesus is the Son of God who holds the power of life and death in his hands. In the future when he returns, he will call the dead from their graves, the righteous unto eternal life at the first resurrection and the unrighteous unto eternal death at the second resurrection a thousand years later: "My Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn 6:40; cf., vv. 35-40).

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Matthew 9:23-26

[18 While he was saying this, a ruler came and knelt before him and said, "My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live." 19 Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples.]

23 When Jesus entered the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd, 24 he said, "Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him. 25 After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. 26 News of this spread through all that region.

Cf., Mark 5:35-43

[21 Jesus got into the boat again and went back to the other side of the lake, where a large crowd gathered around him on the shore. 22 Then a leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus, arrived. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet, 23 pleading fervently with him. "My little daughter is dying," he said. "Please come and lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live."

24 Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding around him . . .]

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 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. (NIV 2011)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

* Circle "ruler's" in v. 23.

* Circle "flute players" in v. 23.

* Circle "noisy crowd" in v. 23.

* Circle "asleep" in v. 24.

* Box "but" 2x indicating *contrast* in v. 24.

* Bracket "took the girl by the hand" in v. 25.

day **2** **EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Read Mark 5:35-43. Matthew's account of the raising of Jarius daughter is *much shorter*. What does he accomplish by omitting so many of the details included in Mark?
2. Explain the presence of *musicians* in the ruler's house.
3. And the "noisy crowd," *who* were they and *what* were they up to?
4. What does the very presence of these people indicate for certain?
5. Why would Jesus say "the girl is *not* dead" when, in fact, she is, and everyone knows it?
6. Explain the *contrast* in verse 24.
7. Why would Jesus move the crowd outside?
8. All three accounts of this miracle in the Synoptic Gospels record that Jesus took the young girl "by the hand" but not that he spoke to her. What do you make of that?
9. **Discussion:** Talk about the following "living" question: How is God making himself known to you in this passage?

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Matthew 9:23-26 returns to the story of the raising of the ruler's daughter that was interrupted by the story of the sick woman. Scholars puzzle over why the two stories are told in the intertwined way they are. One speculates: "It is difficult to find a special reason for this connection of the two stories, which are otherwise quite different. Perhaps Mark and Luke tried to do this in their note (Mark 5:42; Luke 8:42), omitted by Matthew, that the dying girl was twelve years old (corresponding to the twelve years the woman had suffered from her disease.) Faith is common to both stories in Mark (cf. Mark 5:34, 36); in Matthew it is only stressed in one (v22). It may be that the two stories were handed on as they are for no other reason than because the healing of the woman actually did happen on the way to the dead girl's house. This is not to deny, however, the dramatic building of tension that occurs through the delay caused by the parenthetical, new story" (Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 33a, *Matthew 1-13*, 247).

Another expositor has identified some interesting comparisons between the major characters in the two stories. He writes: "It is interesting that Jairus and this woman—two opposite people—met at the feet of Jesus. Jairus was a leading Jewish man; she was an anonymous woman with no prestige or resources. He was a synagogue leader, while her affliction kept her from worship. Jairus came pleading for his daughter; the woman came with a need of her own. The girl had been healthy for 12 years, and then died; the woman had been ill for 12 years and was now made whole. Jairus' need was public—all knew it; but the woman's need was

private—only Jesus understood. Both Jairus and the woman trusted Christ, and He met their needs" (Warren W. Wiersbe, "Matthew," in *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 1:35).

One thing to notice at the outset is the brevity of Matthew's account. As one commentator puts it: "In this extremely economical statement, [the girl arose'] Matthew records one of the most impressive miracles of Jesus in the whole of his narrative" (Hagner, 250). Matthew tells his readers in simple terms that Jesus enters Jarius' house to find an unruly crowd of mourners; some of them are playing flutes while others are wailing loudly. All of them, it seems, are professionals, who confirm by their very presence that the ruler's daughter is truly dead. Jesus throws them out, when in unbelief they scoff at his ability to reverse what they deem her irreversible state. She is undoubtedly dead, but for him what is called death is no more permanent than sleep. So at the tender touch of his hand, she gets up. The simplicity of Matthew's account spotlights Jesus and Jesus alone.

On the significance of this miracle, Hagner writes: "The raising of the dead to life is a basic symbolism of the gospel (e.g., Rom 4:17; Eph 2:1, 5; Col 2:13). What Jesus did for the dead girl he has done for all in the Church who have experienced new life. There is too, beyond this life, the church's confidence that Jesus will literally raise the dead (cf. 1 Thess 4:16; 1 Cor 15:22-23). He is in his own words "the resurrection and the life" (Jn 11:25).

The Message of the Passage

Jesus' raising of Jarius' daughter demonstrates that he is the Son of God with ability to free those who believe in him from the sting of death.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

“Greater Than Our Death”

(Use the space below for Sunday’s message notes)

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 23 **ruler's** Cf., v. 18. Identified by name in Mark 5:22, Jarius, as "the ruler of the synagogue was a very important person. He was elected from among the elders. He was not a teaching or a preaching official; he had 'the care of the external order in public worship, and the supervision of the concerns of the synagogue in general.' He appointed those who were to read and to pray in the service, and invited those who were to preach. It was his duty to see that nothing unfitting took place within the synagogue; and the care of the synagogue buildings were in his oversight. The whole practical administration of the synagogue was in his hands" (William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, TDSB, 2nd ed., 1:350-51).

v. 23 **flute players** "When Jesus reached the house he found some flute players and a noisy crowd, which we must understand as the normal mourning at a time of bereavement. The Mishnah lays it down that 'Even the poorest in Israel should hire not less than two flutes and one wailing woman' (*Ketub.* 4:4); for the daughter of a ruler there would be much more than that. Matthew is referring to professional mourners who were on the job very promptly (cf. Jer. 9:17-18). But relatives and friends would join in with their loud wailing (the noisy crowd)" (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 231).

v. 23 **noisy crowd** Cf., "disorderly crowd" (NET). "When Jesus comes to the ruler's house, he encounters a gathering of people readying themselves for the funeral that would take place the same day, as was the custom in that culture . . . 'crowd in an uproar,' represents the loud wailing, typical in that culture, of those mourning the death of the girl (cf. Jer 48:36; Mark 5:38; Jos. J. W. 3.9.5 §437 and Str-B 1:521-23 [*m. Ketub.* 4.4; *m. Sabb.* 23.4]). All of this indicated that the girl had died" (Hagner, 249-50). "The garments would be being rent; the wailing women would be uttering their shrieks in an abandonment of synthetic grief; the flutes would be shrilling their eerie sound. In that house there would be all the pandemonium of eastern grief" (Barclay, 1:3553). "For Jesus, who is about to bring the girl back to life, the lamenting is inappropriate, and so the mourners are told to 'go away'" (Hagner, 250).

v. 24 **asleep** The mourners are not needed because "the girl is not dead but asleep" (v. 23). "Death for Jesus is not the final word; the dead can be brought back to life. This expectation causes the Church ultimately to use the same verb [*katheudo*], for those who have died: they are but 'asleep' (1 Thess.5:10; Eph 5:14; cf. [*koimasthai*: 27:52; John 11:11-14; 1 Cor 15:6, 20; 1 Thess 4:13-18; for OT background, see Dan 12:2). Jesus does not deny the girl's death but rather the finality of that death . . . The crowd ridicules Jesus (*[kategelon autou]*, 'laughed at him') for any suggestion that the girl was not truly dead. This note, which is common to the Synoptic tradition, serves as an indirect confirmation of the actuality of the girl's death" (250). "He [Matthew] is not telling a story of how Jesus woke a girl from a daytime nap, but recounting a miracle of a raising from the dead. For him what we call death is nothing more than sleep (cf. John 11:11); the girl's death, though real, was not permanent. For the people there the girl was dead; all that remained was to go ahead with a decent burial and the proper period of mourning" (Morris, 231).

v. 25 **by the hand** "He took her by the hand (touching the dead meant contracting ceremonial uncleanness; cf. Jesus' healing touch of the leper, 8:3) and raised her. As we have seen, Jesus did a number of cures by taking people by the hand, and for Matthew evidently that was what mattered . . . When he did this, the girl was *raised* (or 'arose')" (232).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

The emotions in our passage this week feel a little like riding a roller coaster. The man first approached Jesus in a state of panic. His daughter was dying and he was desperate. Next, after she died, there was great mourning. The crowd showed complete shock and disbelief when Jesus announced the girl was only sleeping. Minutes later they were thankful and jubilant when the girl got up and walked around. The emotions surrounding death are always intense and unpredictable. Most of us would agree that death is one of the hardest parenting conversations we must have with our kids. Here are some tips to help guide you in those times. (1) If you know a death is inevitable, prepare your child for what's coming. (2) Tell the truth about dying. Our bodies get old or sick or hurt and don't last forever. Someday, we will get a new body that never dies. That's good news! (3) Prepare your child to grieve. Grief takes many forms. Denial, anger, betrayal, guilt, and intense sadness are all common emotions while grieving. They are normal and ok. Jesus has promised to be with you through it all. (5) Use the circumstance as an opportunity to talk to your child about eternal life. While our earthly bodies will pass away, our spirit lives with God forever and one day He will erase sin and death and we will grieve no more!

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Matthew 9:23-26

1. What did Jesus see when He entered the house?
2. What did He say to the people?
3. What happened to the little girl?

What Do You Think

1. Why do you think the people laughed at Jesus?
2. Sometimes people make fun of things they don't believe or understand. How can you stand firm in your faith when others may not understand?

What R U Going To Do

Make a family tree to display at Thanksgiving this year. Cut out leaves and put a family member's name on each leaf. Don't forget to include those who are already in heaven. Pray for everyone by name at dinner that day!

Core Comp

Trinity - I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Memory Verse

Psalm 23:5 - *You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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