27 June 2021 Saint Athanasius Lutheran Church
Pentecost 5 Vienna, VA

Jesu Juva

"Exactly Right"
Text: Mark 5:21-43; Lamentations 3:22-33; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9, 13-15

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The first time I heard the word *triage* was when I was young and watching the TV show M*A*S*H - a show about doctors and nurses during the Korean War. Ambulances full of wounded soldiers would come into the hospital compound and the doctors had to *triage* them - determine who got treated first. The most seriously wounded would be attended to right away, and those with lesser injuries would have to wait. Because they *could* wait.

Doctors and nurses still do this today, which you know if you've ever been to the Emergency Room at the hospital. If your problem isn't acute or life-treatening, you'll probably have to wait your turn. And maybe wait a long time.

I'm sure those who make such decisions sometimes get it wrong. What appeared to be not-so-serious turned out to be quite so. Doctors aren't perfect. And if you're the one waiting, and in pain, it's easy to disagree with the doctors and nurses assessment and think you should have the higher priority. Maybe you even voice your opinion and try to make it so.

Then there's this, too: who you <u>are</u> matters. If you're waiting in the Emergency Room and a VIP comes in, he or she is probably going to get treated before you.

Well, Jesus seemed to get His triage wrong today. There was a little girl who was the daughter of one of the rulers of the synagogue who was dying, and there was woman who was just one of the folks from the town, who had a bleeding problem for twelve years. So surely, a few more hours, a few more days, wouldn't have made much difference to the woman, while it could mean life or death to the little girl - a little girl who also happened to be the daughter of a VIP. And it <u>did</u> make a difference. For while Jesus stopped to tend to this less-important-case, this woman . . . the little girl died.

What good is having the power to heal if you don't use it right?

And people were frequently telling Jesus He wasn't doing it right. The Scribes and Pharisees were constantly criticizing Jesus. The folks in His hometown once tried to throw Jesus off a cliff. We heard last week that many thought Jesus was out of His mind.

There were folks who asked Him to please leave them alone. Even His own disciples rebuked Him on more than one occasion. *Jesus, You call Yourself the Messiah, but You're not doing this Messiah-thing right!*

And you know, if there's one thing professionals, or people who have been doing something for a long time, *love*, it's when amateurs, or people who've been doing something for like five minutes, tell them they're doing it wrong!

But Jesus puts up with it . . . even from us. For I doubt there's not a person here or watching this online, who hasn't thought, at one time or another, that God should be doing something differently. In my life. In that person's life. In the church. In the world. Why did you bless that person? That's not right! Why did you afflict that person? That's not right! Why didn't you do *this*? Why are you taking so long? What about the really important problems in our country and in our world - why aren't you doing something about them? How come You're not answering my prayers? *You're being God all wrong!*

It sounds ridiculous when I say it out loud . . . but isn't that what we sometimes think?

So instead of getting to Jairus' house before his little girl died, Jesus wastes time with this woman. *Really? Who touched You? Lots of people are touching You, Jesus! Why are You asking such an absurd question?* Except it wasn't absurd to Jesus, nor did He consider her a waste of His time. He was important to her, so she was important to Him. So He will not go on until He finds out. How long did it take? How long was the delay until finally this woman comes forward and tells Jesus what she did. The ***whole truth***. In ***fear and trembling***. Would He take His healing back? Would something even worse happen to her now? Had she crossed the line?

Well, she finds out. No. Jesus is, in fact, pleased with her. As He is with all who reach out to Him in faith, no matter who you are. He calls her ***daughter*** and commends her faith. She came bleeding, she left healed. She came in fear and trembling, she left in peace. She came in hope, and she left with that hope fulfilled.

But one woman's hope fulfilled is another man's hopes dashed. For before Jesus even finished speaking, Jairus is told: ***Your daughter is dead***. Don't bother Jesus anymore. We're not told if Jairus says anything at this point, or if he was too overwhelmed with grief to speak. But Jesus speaks. ***Do not fear, only believe.*** It is as if He is saying to Jairus, this VIP synagogue ruler: Be like this woman. Grab hold of Me and don't let go. ***Do not fear.*** Do not fear this bad news. Do not fear death. ***Only believe***. Believe in Me. **That what I came to do, I will do.**

Of course, what Jesus came to do is save a world plunged into sin and death. A world hemorrhaging life. A world trapped in fear and trembling. A world in search of hope. That is to say, a world dead in trespasses and sins. Jesus came to give life, peace, and

hope *with the forgiveness of our sins*. For it is sin that robs us of life, takes away our peace, and fills us with fear and trembling. So it is forgiveness that gives us life, peace, and hope, for our life now and our life forever. And just as it was with these two daughters, Jesus accomplishes this through (1.) His own bleeding and (2.) His own dying. That is to say, through His cross, which remember, when Jesus told His disciples He was going to do it that way, Peter told Him: *No Lord! You're doing it wrong!*

Well, turns out, both on the cross and in this account, Jesus knew exactly what He was doing. His triage was exactly right. ***The child is not dead, but sleeping***, He says. They laughed at Him - jeering, mocking laughter, like He would also endure on the cross. **Those who mocked would not get to see the resurrection**. Jesus' or this little girl's. He takes Mom and Dad and His three disciples only. He takes the hand that is <u>unable</u> to reach out to Him and says ***Talitha cumi. Little girl, I say to you, arise***. And tears of sorrow are turned into tears of joy. Mocking laughter is turned into the laughter of delight and amazement. What seemed wrong was right; what seemed not good was good after all.

Good, right, and salutary not only for these two daughters, but also for us. For <u>we</u> are now this little girl and this woman.

(+) For to us who are dead in our trespasses and sins, Jesus reaches out to us in the waters of Holy Baptism and says to us: *Little child, I say to you, arise.* And we are given life in Him. His life becomes our life because our death became His death.

(+) And to us who are hemorrhaging life, the sin in the world and the sin in us sapping us of life, we reach out and grab hold of Him in His Holy Supper, for we know that *if we touch Him,* if we eat His Body and drink His blood, *we will be made well,* healed from the disease of sin.

(+) And to us who fear a great many things in this world, be it a virus, another person, a difficult situation, persecution for our beliefs, what the future holds, or the consequences of our sins, Jesus says to us: ***Do not fear, only believe***. And He speaks to us His Holy Gospel which gives us such faith to believe. That nothing in this world is greater than He. That your sin is forgiven, your death is defeated, and this sinful world is overcome. *Only believe,* and you will see.

For as Jeremiah said of the LORD: ***Great is your faithfulness***. And he didn't say that when everything was going well! He said that when everything had fallen apart. When Jerusalem had fallen to King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians, the city and its walls had been destroyed, and the Temple leveled. He was *lamenting* what had happened to God's people - how far they had fallen and how greatly they had sinned. But in the midst of that, he confesses, teaches: ***The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end.*** Though it looked like they had! Felt like they had! Like

everything was going horribly wrong. Like it seemed to that woman for twelve years. Like it seemed to Jairus that day. But Jeremiah was telling the people: ***Do not fear; only believe***. . . . ***For the Lord will not cast off forever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men***.

He does afflict and grieve, but in the abundance of His steadfast love. To bring us to repentance for our sins, to turn away from them and turn us to Him. To look not to sin for what we need, but look to Him. The pleasures of sin and the success of the world are fleeting, but the life the LORD gives is eternal. And if it takes a little affliction or grief for us to receive that gift, it is well worth it.

And so was Jesus afflicted for you. ***That***, as we heard Saint Paul say today, ***though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich***. That is, the perfect, sinless, almighty, glorious Son of God, became the worst and vilest, most fallen and filthy, weak and shameful sinner, that we poor, miserable sinners might be sons and daughters of God. And it was worth it for Him. You were worth it. Every drop of blood, every stab of pain, every mocking taunt, every lash of the whip, every moment of darkness and forsakenness. You were worth it to Him **who did it exactly right.**

So ***do not fear, only believe***. Whatever you are going through, for however long. The Jesus who healed a bleeding woman, who raised a dead little daughter, and who died on the cross, has done and will do the same for you. ***Do not fear, only believe***.

And what you have received, give. What you have received, take out with you and give it to a world, to people, bleeding and dying, suffering and hopeless. Again, as St. Paul said, ***let your abundance supply their need.*** Just as Jesus did - and does - for you.

In the Name of the Father, and of the (+) Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Now the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.