

## SERMON FOR SUN. JUNE 27 AND WED. JUNE 30, 2021

Pent 5B Mark 5:21-43 “The Will of God Is Always Best” Hymn Great is thy Faithfulness

Dear fellow redeemed of the Risen Lord Jesus, the will of God is always best. That’s easy for us to say when we’re in good health, have a home to live in, a good job, plenty to eat, clothes, good friends, a car or maybe two, books, television, smartphones, and more free time than you know what to do with.

Yes, ***The Will of God is Always Best*** is easy to say when you live in such luxury.

But let one or two of these things get taken away or break down, and who’s first in line at the heavenly complaint department window? Yep, that’d be you and I.

And then when things go seriously wrong, when your world begins crumbling, *The Will of God is Always Best* isn’t so easy to say when the will of God doesn’t seem good to us at all.

And so, it was with Jairus in today’s Gospel lesson. His little girl wasn’t just sick; she was at the point of death. She was only twelve years old. She had her whole life ahead of her, yet he helplessly watched as her life was slipping away.

So Jairus finds Jesus, falls at His feet, and begs Him: **My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her so that she may be made well and live.**

***Lay your hands on her. Your divine, creating, healing hands.*** Jesus begins to go with Him . . . ***until this woman shows up.***

Imagine if your daughter was in the hospital, seriously ill, and the doctors said the next 24 hours were critical and would make the difference between life and death.

You’re in her room, worrying and praying, when all of a sudden, all those machines start beeping, lights are flashing, and alarms are sounding, and you go rushing out into the hallway and yell for the doctors to come.

And they begin running toward your child’s room . . . but then they stop. They stop because a lady in the hallway needs a new bandage on her wound and they start taking care of her. Her and ***her twelve-year-old wound.***

And you’re thinking: ***The Will of God is Always Best***, right? NO! You’re thinking: ***she’s had that wound for twelve stinkin’ years! She can wait! Help my daughter, who may not even have twelve more minutes! Don’t you understand? I need help! I need help, now!***

We’re not told what Jairus thought or if he wanted to complain. Maybe he never got the chance. For while Jesus was still speaking, he heard those four little words that every parent dread: **“Your daughter is dead.”** It was too late.

*The Will of God is Always Best?*

The story is not over yet, of course, as you heard. But we should pause here for a moment to consider the number **twelve**.

This little girl was *twelve* years old. This woman had been bleeding for *twelve* years. Those number aren't coincidental.

Twelve is the number of the church. It is 4 times 3. Four: the number of the world, of wholeness, representing the four directions of the compass - east, west, north, and south.

And three: the divine number, the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**The twelve**, then, are those from all over the world, from all times and places, who are in God through Jesus Christ.

Twelve is the twelve tribes of Israel. Twelve is the twelve apostles. Twelve is the church. In other words, **twelve is you**.

So, put yourself in this "Twelve" story. Have you ever thought God wasn't helping you fast enough? Do you ever believe that He didn't understand how serious your problem is?

Or that He was helping the wrong people at the wrong time when He should have been helping you?

Or maybe you've felt more like the woman who had been bleeding for twelve years - why was God taking so long?

Why didn't He help sooner? Why did I have to suffer so much and for so long? ***Have you ever thought those ways?***

Well, imagine if Jesus had just walked past that woman. ***I'll get back to you when I have the time. I have important work to do now.***

That would seem fair enough; think of it as a kind of "divine triage" – He's got to help the neediest people first.

But it is not that way with Jesus. There is no "divine triage" with God. Triage implies that God has a limited supply of mercy, compassion or healing ability.

But God does what is good and best for. His will is always good even if that reason and purpose is hidden from us. Even if what He does seems the opposite what you think is best.

The common denominator in both of these healings is faith. It is **faith** that says: *The Will of God is Always Best*. Even when that faith is looking into a very dark future.

And so, Jesus says to Jairus: **"Do not fear, only believe."** Believe that *The Will of God is Always Best, Jairus*.

And Jairus is privileged to see what only a few of Jesus' twelve disciples ever saw: Jesus raise his daughter back to life again. Jairus saw Jesus confront death, and death backed down.

That foreshadows what's going to happen to you. The world laughs at that, just as those around Jairus' house laughed at Jesus when He said: **The child is not dead but sleeping.**

But unless Jesus returns first before you die, you will be like this little girl. You will be awoken from your sleep of death at the sound of Jesus' voice. He will take you by the hand and raise you to a life that will never end.

***For that is what happened to Him.*** I talked at the beginning about how upset we become when things or people are taken away from us, but Jesus gave up all his treasures - willingly - for you.

St. Paul said: **For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich.**

Jesus gave up his life for you. He didn't try to hang onto it. He didn't just become poor, but the sinless son of God took all of your sins upon himself, including the sins of grumbling, complaining, and doubting God's will for your life, so that you'd be forgiven.

He took all your sin that is killing you and causing you to focus, love, and worship what you have been given instead of the One who gave you everything, so that your sins would be washed away by the blood that flowed from Jesus' cross.

And that sacrifice was applied to you in Baptism. In Holy Baptism, Jesus said to those who dead in their sins and trespasses, **my child, arise.** *Talitha cumi.*

In the same way, Jesus is going to say that to you at His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming, My child, arise.

That's why Jeremiah could speak the words that we heard earlier: **The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.**

Those words weren't easy for Jeremiah to confess.

God's people, Israel, had just been defeated in war, hauled off as prisoners, their land and the temple lay in ruins.

*The Will of God is Always Best?* Israel, as a nation, had, in effect, just died! But Jeremiah knew there would be a resurrection. This dark night would end, in God's time, and then there would be a morning. A new life.

**The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.**

***And they are indeed new every morning.*** Yes, for the Christian, every morning is like a little resurrection.

We lie down in sleep, tired and worn out and beat up by sin, and when we rise in the morning, a little resurrection. The Lord gives us rest, and then a new day.

In a way, then, each night and each morning are like we're practicing for our death and resurrection!

For on that day when you and I will sleep the sleep of death, we'll awaken in the morning of eternity, in the new day that will have no end.

Until that day, when you rise each morning - on *this* side of eternity - the love and mercy of God will be with you.

Working to help and heal and save you. No triage. No favorites. No limited time and resources. Jesus is big enough to help all in His time and according to His will. *The Will of God is Always Best.*

Oh, you'll have your moments of doubt and fear and grumbling, as I do. But at those moments, remember Jesus' words, "**Do not fear, only believe.**"

Or maybe you will be the one to remind others who are facing tragedy or loss, confessing the truth of God's goodness and mercy.

Finally, did you notice what this little girl needed after Jesus raised her to life? He **told them to give her something to eat.**

You, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, have been raised with Christ in baptism to a new life, too, and Jesus has provided food for His "Twelve" - for His church, for you - His very Body and Blood.

The divine food of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

The food that nourishes you not just for this body and life, but for eternal life.

That you live not just now, but live forever. So come, you who are the Twelve - take and eat.

And then go - confess, serve, and rejoice in the fact that the Will of God is Always Best, **for Great is His faithfulness. AMEN**