

Haverhill Methodist Church 16th May 2021 Worship from Home

Hello! I am pleased to be leading the service this week, and hope and pray you are well wherever and whenever you follow this worship from home resource.

This is scheduled to be our last service away from each other, and I thank God that we will be able to return in person to our sanctuary to worship as a church family again. I also know some will not feel quite ready to return just yet, but as always, those not present on Zoom, or in person are just as much present with us in spirit and remembered as being part of the body of Christ.

This week we will be thinking about the story of Jairus, and how Jesus raised his young daughter from death. What a wonderful story of hope when we think there is no hope left. We'll consider how this story might relate to church ministries after so many lockdowns as well to our own lives.

Call to Worship and opening prayers

To begin, please read Psalm 78, vs 1-16.

Father God we come before you, grateful to belong to your family and with the freedom to praise and worship you wherever we are. We remember all the great things you have already done throughout history of humankind, and even before it. We thank you for your goodness, grace and mercy and we praise you that you are the same yesterday, today and forever.

We are sorry for the things we get wrong, in thought, word and deed. Even as we ask for your forgiveness, we know you have forgiven. Help us to be more like you Jesus, to be loving, merciful and pursuing justice. We thank you for your presence in our lives. Help us to stay close to you, to seek more of you and to allow your light to shine out of us to those we are in contact with. Amen

Hymn Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty

Reading Mark 5, vs 21-24 and 35-43

Sermon

Father God we thank you for this amazing resurrection story. We pray that you will open our hearts and minds to your message to us today. Amen.

A few weeks ago I attended an online youth conference that was very inspirational. In fact, one of the talks was so powerful that half way through I knew this was an important message for now, and that I should share it. So, my sermon is taken from that talk by Chris Curtis. I have taken the main points and adapted it a little bit. This relates to youth work and I believe possibly all areas of church ministry at the moment, and I'm sure some of us will also be able to apply it to our own personal lives.

This incredible Bible story starts with a crisis, a young person who is critically ill. What makes this fact into a story, is there is someone who cares deeply about this situation, about this young person and who is willing to do something about it. The man is Jairus, father to the girl.

He is also a synagogue leader, one of those opposed to Jesus and all he was doing and trying to stop him. I can only imagine he may have felt stuck between a rock and a hard place with this one. A daughter who needs to be made well and a Rabbi who he knows has healing powers and then his peers, and probably himself fighting to get this Rabbi, Jesus, arrested and stopped. What to do?

By coming publically to Jesus, getting on his knees and begging for help Jairus was risking his reputation, livelihood, respect and status. Despite that, he has faith in Jesus, and of course his love for his daughter was greater than the risk to himself. And so Jesus agrees to go with him and they set off to the house.

Next the crisis turns into tragedy. News comes that his daughter has died. And with the news comes some unsolicited advice. 'Why bother the teacher anymore?' Or 'we don't think you should...' or maybe 'what's the point...it's too late'. They try to end the story.

Are there times in our ministry when we feel like the group or project we are running is critical, or even dead? Over lockdown so much has not happened, or has adapted, but perhaps not successfully, that we might think it's too late. Sometimes this just happens naturally, there are seasons for things, and they may be great for a long time and then dwindle to almost nothing.

Maybe it is a relationship or job situation that is not working out. We need to care enough to do something about it. And we need to follow in Jairus' footsteps and take it to Jesus, to fall at his feet and say 'I need you'.

What makes ministry, of whatever type, work is not a great strategy, programme, budget or space. It is people like you and me getting on our knees before Jesus and pleading for help. If it is something in our personal lives the same applies. Whether we are directly involved or not, we can all do this.

Back to the story...Jairus is advised to turn away from Jesus. 'Don't bother the teacher anymore.' But Jesus wasn't just a teacher, he was a miracle worker. He says to Jairus 'Don't be afraid; just believe.' How many times in our lives do we so desperately need to hear those words from Jesus? 'Don't be afraid; just believe.'

I would like to add in here that I do believe that there are times for endings, particularly when it is to make way for something new. There is a huge difference between us deciding not to carry on-to prematurely stop God's story and to be led by God into new things. Again, the same is true in our own lives.

Just like Jairus' friends, we might have others offering opinions on what to do. We have our own opinions too, but the only one that matters is that of Jesus. He will never lead us into loss, rather into transitions and the new. He always has more and better for us, there is always hope.

Back again to the story...they arrive at the house and Jesus finds much anguish, of course. He says 'Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.' But they laughed at him.

We are now in two realms, the earthly realm...she is really dead, he has not made a mistake, and the realm of the Kingdom of God, Jesus' reality. Jesus brings with him the Kingdom into our broken world. He brings heavenly hope that connects the reality of this world to the one to come.

Jesus reaches out and takes the girl's hand, tells her to get up, and brings new life into her.

When the church reaches out to young people, or the lonely, or the grieving, or the hungry....the list goes on...we bring new life and wholeness through Jesus to those people.

Are there areas where Jesus is saying to us 'just believe, it's not dead, just sleeping'?

As society starts to open up again physically we will naturally be evaluating where we are at, making plans. Where we are unsure, or have even lost hope, let's kneel before Jesus and ask for help, for new life, for direction. Let's have ears to hear. That is definitely a challenge for me at Haverhill & District Youth for Christ, and I'm sure it will be for many churches, and I'm sure it will be for individuals too as they look to put their lives back together.

Amen.

Song/time of reflection Lord I need you

We are going to have a time of reflection now, to bring our thoughts and prayers that have been stirred up in us from that message before God. It can be a time to ask God to guide us, to reassure us, to clear muddy waters for us, to encourage us, to speak to us. As we do this we can remember how Jairus knelt before Jesus, begging for help

You might like to read through the words to a song by Matt Mayer called Lord I Need You.

Lord I come, I confess
Bowing here, I find my rest
Without You, I fall apart
You're the one that guides my heart

Lord, I need You, oh I need You
Every hour, I need You
My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You

Where sin runs deep, Your grace is more
Where grace is found is where You are
And where You are, Lord I am free
Holiness is Christ in me

Lord, I need You, oh I need You...

So teach my song to rise to You
When temptation comes my way
And when I cannot stand, I'll fall on You
Jesus, You're my hope and stay

Lord, I need You, oh I need You...

Songwriters: Christy Nockels, Daniel Carson, Jesse Pryor Reeves, Matthew G Maher, Kristian Paul Stanfill

Hymn What a friend we have in Jesus

Prayers of intercession, from Joyce Rinaldi

Father God, we give you thanks for the many blessings you bestow upon us day by day.

As we come to the end of this time of lockdown and look forward to meeting together and sharing personally in worship again, we want to give you thanks for your protection and support through this time of isolation.

We pray for confidence that we will be able to pick up again the things we used to do without fear or thought of danger. Please help us to trust in your ever-present Spirit and your promise to command your Angels to guard us in all our ways. Open

our eyes and our hearts to recognise new opportunities and seek to follow where you lead us in the future.

We do not yet know how many people will find that their jobs have been affected by this pandemic and when furloughing ends there may be more job losses. Father we lift anyone affected in this way to you and pray for new doors to open for them. We give thanks for the work done by REACH and for other agencies throughout the country and pray for ongoing resources for them.

We pray for those who are sick and for their families and we silently bring before you now those known to us.

(Short pause)

Lord, there are still so many areas of conflict around the world and we long to see peace come to all nations. So, we pray for the Peacemakers, that new vision and determination will prevail to bring peace and hope for the future.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Amen

The Lord's prayer

Hymn Great is Thy Faithfulness

Blessing

I bless you in the name of Jesus Christ to know his resurrection power in your lives today and always. I bless you to be filled with the light of Christ and to shine it out for all to see. I bless you to know the Father's all-consuming love for you, and to know his comfort, peace and joy so that you may live life to the full, which is his will for you. And I bless you to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that you may be able to share the Gospel boldly with those God leads you to. May God be with you in every aspect of your life this week. Amen