

# IDLEWILD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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The Reverend David J. Powers  
Sunday, July 10, 2022

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Mark 5:21-24, 35-43

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him, and he was by the sea. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and pleaded with him repeatedly, "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." So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him.

While he was still speaking, some people came from the synagogue leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the synagogue leader, "Do not be afraid; only believe." He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the synagogue leader's house, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. Taking her by the hand, he said to her, "Talitha kum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" And immediately the girl stood up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this and told them to give her something to eat.

gracious spirit as you moved across the waters of creation we pray that you would move once again here move around us and within us quiet any voice within us but your own that we might hear your word for us this day and that in hearing we might be called to be lies of response so may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all of our hearts be acceptable to you god our rock and our salvation amen mark chapter five

the grass withers in the flower phase but the word of our lord endures forever amen

we learn nothing else this day it is that hands have power one of my favorite professors loves to tell the story of a time he was preaching at church in louisville at the crescent hill presbyterian church in louisville kentucky during the prayers of the people the pastor asks the congregation to speak aloud their prayer concerns when i was there as a guest preacher one young girl whose name i found out later was leslie asked the church to pray for her pet turtle who was sick after the worship service when i was greeting her at the back of the sanctuary i told her i was so sorry to hear about her turtle but was curious as to how she knew that the turtle was sick

i remember that this seven-year-old actually rolled her eyes at me at this apparently ridiculous adult question and said with an attitude because he's moving so slowly

i thought to myself look you're seven lighten up

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but before i could respond another little girl ran between us right between us heading out of the sanctuary i thought it was amusing but leslie was not impressed she yelled hey what do you think you're doing and before i could tell leslie to calm down she ran up to the girl who was looking terrified and leslie said to her hey this is my church and in my church we don't run like that

good grief leslie

in my church we don't run by ourselves in my church when we run we hold hands leslie grabbed the little girl's hand who was now smiling she said come on we're getting some cookies they ran off perhaps to the crescent hill presbyterian church's surgery this is my church and in my church we don't run like that we don't run by ourselves in my church we hold hands and we run together hands have power hands can hurt the hands of the abuser the hands of the fighter hands wrapped around weapons hands can indeed hurt and destroy

hands can also heal they can make things new the farmer's hands in dirt the nurse's hands tending a wound the mother's hands the father's hands hands that clean us hands that pour water from font to forehead hands that fix engines and direct our choirs we learn nothing else this morning we must learn that hands indeed have power

when we meet up with the gospel of mark in the fifth chapter we see jesus surrounded by many people and a desperate father making his way to him

jairus this leader of the synagogue as the scripture tells us pleaded earnestly with jesus my little daughter is dying please come and put your hands on her so that she might be healed and live

jairus knew something about the hands of jesus christ that there were there were different powers at work within this one this divine wrapped in flesh

so they began to make their way and the part that we skipped there is a is a part that you're familiar with hopefully the woman suffering from hemorrhages she has an encounter with jesus as he's making his way from the seashore to the home of jairus it's the story that i commend you if you don't know it well already but but even on his way to lay hands just his presence and the power of his cloak it it heals this woman her faith makes her well jesus says

but they're they're caught up in that scene right they're making their way rapidly from the sea to the home but then then this other thing happens and while they're there something else happens this desperate father's worst nightmare happens and so a group who has been at his home makes their way they meet them halfway and says and they say to the father your daughter is dead and in one of the most terrible refrains or moves not to console him no they decide to say why bother the teacher anymore they teach us what not to do when someone is grieving your daughter is dead why bother the teacher anymore see it turns on our way from from worry and death to healing there's a skepticism along that journey right outside voices that would say why bother the healing can't take place in the way that you think it's going to take place don't bother jesus any longer but to that jesus reassures jairus says do not be afraid just believe and they keep making

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their way toward the home he comes to the home and scripture says there's a great commotion there's wailing perhaps you've been in a place of deep grief and so that's happening in this home the little girl has indeed died at least according to everyone who has gathered there and so they are terribly sad about that jesus says why are you wailing why the commotion she's not dead she's sleeping but they laughed at him scripture says more skepticism of course in the healing work the hands of god and then he only lets a few people come in with them jairus his wife and then the three disciples that he's allowed to come with him on this journey they go in to a quiet place with her and she is indeed resting there and scripture says that he took her by the hand

hand to hand and he touched her and he said talitha kum which means little girl get up

immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around and i love the parenthetical here she was 12.

astonishment came upon everyone who was there at this they were completely astonished scripture tells us they couldn't believe what had just happened she begins to move around and he tells them don't tell anybody hold this healing what you've experienced here what i love about the gospels what i love particularly about mark's gospel is that we can find ourselves in the stories of jesus at one point in time we might see ourselves as every character in this story

perhaps you know what it's like to be girus desperate for a family member or a loved one for one that you fear is heading down a difficult path or one that you know is close to death and so you you go with your anxiety and your worry and your fear and there's really no place to go but to bring it before god

perhaps you have also been the skeptic the one unafraid to entertain the possibilities of the divine and so you say why bother why bother showing up why bother praying the die is cast don't bother jesus any longer with this

perhaps you're a little girl laid out one who's known what it is to be ill and sick and you are the one in need of a of a healing touch this morning i think at one point in time or another we can be every character in the stories of the gospels

indeed we are the little girl in need of god's healing touch we need a voice of jesus to tell us get up but we also know the little girl and we can communicate by the power of the spirit of god god's healing touch

you know we based this sermon series off of a quote that tells us that christ has no body in this world anymore but ours ours are the hands ours of the feet that will bring the good news and healing and compassion to the world

and so when i think about this story this day and i ponder what it means for us to indeed be the body of christ be this day the hands of christ i think about the power of our hands to communicate the healing touch of god because what i know about our world in this moment is

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that it needs a group of people maybe who call themselves a church to say get up you have been made well

you know i joked with the kids earlier about lifting your hands um i mean that would be kind of fun some sunday if we you know raised our hands in praise i know i'm not holding my breath uh for that to happen but uh it could be could be nice uh but i want to tell you about the first sunday where i when i worshipped at that church where i pastored in georgia madison presbyterian church the first sunday i was there interim director of youth ministry that's how i ended up in madison georgia a friend of mine i told you all this before a friend of mine said you want a job while you look for a real job and i said as long as it's not youth and he said it's youth and i said i need a job okay so i went they didn't have any other helpers and so they asked me to be a liturgist and so i stood up that first sunday and um as jess is leading us in worship i did the same thing right and we made our way through the service and it was it was fine it was nice lots of people i had never met before we had another liturgist up here with us an elder in the church and we got to on the end and the pastor stood up and gave a charge and benediction and then everyone in the congregation they they joined hands

and then the pastor and the other liturgist they grabbed my hand and we sang a congregational response that it turns out we would sing every single sunday we have a hymn in our hymnal called bind us together bind us together lord bind us together with cords that cannot be broken we would sing that as our congregational response after having heard the word of god proclaimed to us each week we would join hands as we stood and we received that blessing then we would sing just one verse of that hymn together and i'll tell you as someone who didn't grow up with that tradition it was probably one of the most uncomfortable and exciting moments of worship every single week uncomfortable because uh i'm not used to holding people's hands that i don't know all that well right exciting because i got to watch the congregation and those who were visiting for the first time have someone reach across the aisle to them and grab their hand too and so all of a sudden we'd have you know between 150 and 250 folks singing bind us together and holding hands and it went without saying that after worship people would come out and they were first time visiting they would say to me do y'all do that every week and i would say yeah we do it every week and it would come up every six months in our worship music committee meetings are we going to keep doing that and i would stay quiet and no one would say we shouldn't and so we would

it was corny for me when i first saw it and slightly uncomfortable of course until it wasn't until tragedy struck until sundays when loneliness felt unbearable until you needed to be reminded of the goodness of your neighbor that's when you might realize holding hands singing a congregational response that hands have power

they have power to heal us to draw us up from our graves to comfort us to make us new

when i think about what it means for idyllwild presbyterian church to be the hands of christ in the world i think a lot about the desperation of jairus and the skepticism of the people that he called friends and the perseverance of the one that we know in jesus christ to continue to move

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towards healing i think about the few that were privileged enough to be in that room when he laid hands upon that little girl and told her to get up and she did she went about living in a brand new way

so my prayer and our hope my hope for us this day is that we might remember our calling to be the body of christ and particularly to be the hands of christ in the world

that we may never underestimate the power of god to comfort and to reassure to heal and to raise us to new life again in the name of the father and