

The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, July 1, 2018, Year B

St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Douglas, GA

The Rev. Fr. John E. Commins+ Rector

Scripture: Mark 5:22-24, 35b-43

“Don't Be Afraid; Just Believe”

There are three kinds of people: those who make things happen; those who watch things happen; and those who wonder – what happened? Have you ever thought about which one you are?

I can tell you about a group of nine people who made things happen yesterday, here at St. Andrew's. A group got together to clean up and add some beauty to the grounds here at the church. Holly and Wesley Lott, Henry Martin, Andrew and Stephanie Deas, George and Jeanette Blampied, Deacon Bob Millott, and me. (Brooke Morgan also was there working in the kitchen – so I did not see her – sorry Brooke!) Two others had every intention of joining us – Gabe Evans and Jay Vickers - but could not because of circumstances. You may have seen that changes and additions to our gardens, the planting of Lantana plants, the pine straw in the beds, the trimming, the pressure washing – the parish hall was almost black and looks so much better now. Rome was not built in a day – so we will continue to make things happen. You may see it all when you leave. You would be in a group that might say “what happened?” I hope you can join us for our next work day in the cooler fall. Speaking of ‘coolers’ we drank a lot of water yesterday due to the heat – you have got to hydrate!

Let me ask you about Vacation Bible School: are you a person who is going to say ‘I want to make things happen’ to help “SHINE” Christ's light in me? Are you going to ‘watch what happened,’ or are you going to say, “What happened?” Once again, I told you the opportunity to make some of the meals – get with Holly and Marilyn. There are a lot of opportunities, brothers and sisters!

Today's Holy Gospel reading is an event at which you might easily recognize the three different types that I just spoke about. Jesus, on the other side of the lake (you will hear the Sea of Galilee spoken of as a lake – Lake Gennesaret, the Sea of Tiberias or the Sea of Galilee) had just driven out a legion of demons from a man and sent them into pigs – and then sent the pigs into the lake where they drowned. This was the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee – the pagan side of the lake. Jews didn't grow pigs or eat pigs – so you know it was the pagan side of the lake – near the Decapolis. Jesus was now back on the western side of the lake. In order for us to follow our Gospel message more clearly, I would ask you to open your red Pew Bibles to page 1563 – Mark 5, and let's go to verse 21. This is the verse right before our reading and it reads: “*When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake.*” (Mark 5:21) I want us to understand that Jesus was now back on the “Jewish” side of the lake – and He is met by one of the leaders of synagogue. This is NOT the Temple, but one of the local synagogues near the shore. It could have been Capernaum, Bethsaida, or Chorazin – we are not told. This man named Jairus comes to Jesus and begs Him to come, falling at Jesus' feet, pleading. Look at verse 23: “*My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.*” Jesus who is always compassionate, went with him. Jesus is certainly one who makes

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things happen – and apparently so is Jairus. He wants his daughter to live – and so humbles himself – begging the Savior to come with him. Understand the faith that it took for this man, a Jewish leader, to get on his knees and say without a shadow of a doubt in his heart, in his mind and in his voice “if you lay hands on her – she will be healed and live.” It took a lot of guts¹ for him to get on his knees, possibly in front of his congregants, and go before this itinerant preacher, and beg Him, not just asked, but he begged Him, to come and save his daughter. Think about this – if one of your children or grandchildren, and many of you have had that situation, the thoughts that you would say or do anything to the doctor, to the nurses, to the caregivers, for anything possible to heal them You know what I am talking about. I don’t need to go into detail; he wants his daughter to live! And so he doesn’t just come up to Jesus – he humbles himself – begging our Savior to come with him.

Now look at your bulletins and notice that there is a comma after verse 24, and then leads us to verse 35b -or the second part of the verse. I am not a big fan of the lectionary being parsed because a lot of times in the ‘old world’ it was cutting out portions about sin and repentance. I am telling it like it is! There is a reason this one is parsed; you see it says Mark 5: 22-24, 35b-43. What does that mean? The b means that you are going to the second part of that verse. So why the parse you might wonder why? It is because something else is happening along the way. A woman who has been bleeding for 12 years has had enough and decided to just go and touch His garment, His clothes – and she will be healed. I would say that she is definitely a person who makes things happen – wouldn’t you? A woman who has a bleeding issue would be considered ‘unclean’ and if she touches Jesus she would make Him unclean too – according to the Law of Moses! When she touches Jesus – He immediately feels the power go out of Him – and He asks, “*who touched my clothes?*” (verse 30) So I have to ask you – in this situation is Jesus a “make things happen” guy or a “what happened guy?” Can He be both? This situation is another sermon for another day! I wanted to explain to you why the ‘comma’ was there. We weren’t cutting anything out – but because that is a whole ‘nother sermon and a whole ‘nother miracle.

We have to move on; let’s go to verse 35b: “*some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said.*” Can you imagine getting closer to home and having someone come and tell you ‘your daughter is dead?’ Jesus has up to this point in His life exhibited miraculous power over demons, over sickness, physical disabilities, the forces of nature, and now He is about to take death ‘head on.’ Jesus is about to give Jairus a hint that all will be well, because of his great faith in coming to Jesus in the first place. Look at verses 36 and 37: “*Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe." He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James.*” (Mark 5:36-37) Jesus and His trusted trio of Peter, James and John (who went many places with Him, including to the Mount of Transfiguration) went to the home of Jairus and when they got there they found an air of despair and confusion as the people who were present were emotional and crying loudly. Jesus was very confident and in control – knowing exactly what was ahead for the girl and her family. “*He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep."*” (Mark 5:39) You would think that they might

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find hope in Jesus' words – after all Jairus went looking for Jesus, knowing that all Jesus had to do was touch her and she would live. All of the family and people present laughed at Jesus. Can you imagine the emotion and tension that must have been in that room? *“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.”* (Mark 5:40)

Jesus is Master of all and was taking on the greatest physical roadblock to known humanity – death. It would be one of three times in the Gospel readings that Jesus would bring someone back from the dead – Jairus' daughter, the son of the widow from Nain, and of course Lazarus – His friend. Three people – a significant number – a spiritual number – three days in the tomb, three persons – Father Son and Holy Spirit, and it would lead to the greatest restoration of life of all – Jesus' own Resurrection from the dead on the third day after His crucifixion.

Let's take a look at verse 41 *“He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”)* Can you imagine the expressions on the faces of her parents and the three apostles? Look at the next verse – verse 42: *“Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). And they were completely astonished.”* That is putting it mildly to say the least! Put yourself in that room? The Gospel says that Jesus told them not to tell anyone and then to get her something to eat! Think about this – she would have to go out into the room where the people were wringing their hands and mourning – can you imagine their shock? To prove that she was really alive Jesus wanted her to have something to eat – a sure sign that a teenage is alive! If you fast forward to the Risen Jesus – He ate with the Apostles to prove to them, besides His hand and feet and side, that He was alive. With those on the Road to Emmaus – He sat and ate with them and when He broke the bread they realized it was the Lord. Eating was a sure sign that this teenage was alive! We know teenagers. Do teenagers love to eat? So, do youngsters, and that is why we need food for the VBS.

As I said before, Jesus had conquered nature, sickness, demons, physical disabilities and now death – He would conquer death completely as well as sin on the cross at Calvary – but His time was not yet at hand – He had much more to teach us and to do before His arrest, torture, trial and murder. One of the Apostles who was present that day at the home of Jairus was also present at the other miracles. As a matter of fact, in the 20th chapter of the Gospel of John – John wrote *“Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that **by believing** you may have life in his name.”* (John 20:30-31) The key word here is believing. *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that **whoever believes in him** shall not perish but have eternal life.”* (John 3:16) The difference between life and death is believing in Jesus Christ! Can it be that easy? Yup! Jesus knows how you are wired, and He knows how difficult it is on this life. He walked in our shoes and knows that by believing in Him the door to death is closed, the door to sin can be forgiven, simply by believing.

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Jesus' miracles were not to prove to people who He was – but many were so that people's faith was rewarded, He told the woman with the bleeding issue that "your faith has made you well." Also, to see that their needs met.

How many people in here have been prayed for by me, by others, and felt a sense of peace, a sense of healing? That is how much He loves us! Do you remember the words that Jesus said to Jairus? Look at Mark 5:36 "*Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe."* You do not have to be a 'rocket scientist' to believe. Those are important words for all of us today and in any circumstances; words of faith and truth – from the author of both – "*Don't be afraid; just believe."*"