

Time's Up!

“ ... ‘Do not fear, only believe.’ ” Mark 5:36b

(*Begin with humming familiar tune*). Time's up! That's what this tune indicates for the final round of Jeopardy. But the truth is, this tune has become so iconic, it's likely that you've heard people break into a version of this tune in all sorts of situations. You might have heard this song during the awkward silence when people are thinking. You might have heard this song when somebody wants you to quit deliberating and finally make a decision. You may hear this tune again when somebody gets wise and determines that this sermon's time is up! For all these moments and many more, this tune's message is quite clear and widely recognized, we're on the clock and time is running out!

Being on the clock and constantly driven by the notion that time is slipping away is such a challenging thing. In this sinful world, at times these notions can create huge burdens for our lives. We're bogged down by fears, worries and anxieties that we're not going to accomplish everything we need or want to do with the time that we have. Other times in this sinful world, these notions can become powerful weapons against other people as we attempt to force them to do what we want in the timeframe that we have in mind. Sadly, for sinners like us, our sense of being on the clock and time slipping away quickly shows how easily time becomes an idol for our lives and dictates our relationships.

Between parents and children, the battle over time can rage on from infancy to adulthood. Friends can run into issues with time as more and more responsibilities demand their time. Spouses might feel like they're always competing for their loved one's time as work obligations spill over once precious and sacred boundaries. And there's no greater struggle than between our time and God's time! I mean, who of us, hasn't tried to use something like that Final Jeopardy tune with God – sorry God, tune's over, time's up!

The conflict between our time and God's time is something that we witness in our Gospel reading this weekend too. Could you imagine how that woman wrestled in relationship with God throughout those twelve years she dealt with her ailment? Time wasn't her friend either, because things weren't improving; no matter the earthly physician she saw, things only got worse. Or consider that father with the dying daughter. How hard must it have been to not rush Jesus when He stopped to find that woman who had just touched His garment? Even Jesus' disciples thought, why in the world are You stopping in this crowd to find one person!

Maybe the most poignant and clear example of this struggle between our time and God's time comes in verse thirty-five of our text. After Jesus had stopped to address this woman who had touched His garment, word came that the dying daughter had finally passed. The verse reads, **“While he (Jesus) was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, ‘Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?’”** (Mark 5:35)

That question is so telling, “Why trouble the Teacher any further?” In other words, time's up! Nothing more can be done. It's over! For those reporting the news to Jairus, death had the final word and no one else was going to be able to help. Now, this question, posed by the ones bearing such sad news, is something we can relate to in our relationship with God. Even with the hindsight of knowing who Jesus is, true God and true Man, don't we have things that lead us to believe we should stop troubling Jesus with our problems and concerns?

There are some among us who have had ailments for many years like the woman from our text finding little improvement and solutions through the years. As the years build up, we may convince ourselves that God has bigger problems to deal with than ours right now – let's not bother Him more. Others among us have dealt with loved ones dying, asking time and time again for healing from the Lord. And as we watch the healing He brings to others, we can lead ourselves to believe that our circumstance isn't as critical to our God.

Several of us have lost loved ones and now as death's separation sinks in it's easy to think that God is as helpless as we feel. And I know that many other things as well can convince us that we should

stop bothering God – things like our sins, our feeble prayer life, our doubts, our inconsistent engagement with His Word, our inability to give as we would like, etc. – all these things and more, Satan can use to convince us that we aren't worthy of God's time anymore. And sadly, we believe Satan, who couldn't be more wrong!

Hear again what Jesus said to that dead girl's father, in the midst of this devastating news, Jesus speaks, **“Do not fear, only believe.”** Christ's words to this grieving father were able in that moment to reassure him that he shouldn't stop bothering Jesus. Even though death had come, Jesus still cared for him, his wife and their daughter. Even though death had come, Jesus' time to show compassion wasn't up! Even though death had come, Jesus wasn't helpless like those who had to share this tragic news with Jairus!

Moments later, Jesus would deepen their belief. As He raised this little girl from the dead, He was anchoring their faith in Him, the Lord of Life. When Jesus revealed His power over death itself in that very moment, He rooted their faith in His authority not death's authority. And witnessing this little girl's immediate recovering with no delay, the girl's parents, Peter, James and John saw firsthand that Jesus was even the Lord over time not the other way around.

A couple of years later, Jesus would also die upon a cross. And as He was buried in a tomb, even His closest followers were convinced that time had run out. Time was up for their hope! But then with another resurrection, His own resurrection, Jesus cemented Himself as the Lord of life forever. He demonstrated His power over death in the most intimate way! He revealed firsthand to His creation that He is the Lord of eternity!

And it's His own death and resurrection that deepen our faith today. It's Jesus' death and resurrection that ultimately stood behind the words Jesus spoke to that helpless father. And it's His death and resurrection that stand behind the same words He speaks to us in our helpless state today, **“Do not fear, only believe!”** Right now, He is anchoring our faith in the truth that He remains the Lord of life, the Lord of eternity, the very one with authority over death and the grave.

He speaks to reassure us that we aren't a bother to Him. Even now in the midst of so many others He has to care for, He comes to us personally. His compassion flows from the name He places upon us. For in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we are individually claimed for His family. And before we get up the gumption to try and seek His personal touch, He comes and places Himself into our very hands and lives in, with and under bread and wine, His very precious Body and Blood. Through the lips of His pastors, He doesn't call us annoying nuisances, but rather for the sake of His suffering, death and resurrection He declares us His forgiven and loved children.

Building on this foundation of care and compassion, our Lord continues to encourage and strengthen our trust in Him filling us with His words of hope and promise. He reminds us that just as it was in the past so it remains now, His steadfast love never ceases and His mercies never come to end. He is faithful and He is our portion and hope. He will continue to have compassion. And as the Lord of eternity, time isn't slipping away for Him. He isn't driven by this relentless sense of being on the clock. No, our times are in His hands.

Connected to Christ's eternal care and compassion and renewed by our Lord's control of time, our daily lives are impacted as well. Claimed by the Lord of eternity, our sense of time shifts. Day by day, our Lord shows us that we aren't driven by the clock but by His mercy, grace and forgiveness. Time isn't slipping away from us because as people claimed for eternity with Him, it's only beginning! And this side of heaven, He seeks to show us how best to use our gift of time for His glory as He reveals to us what really matters in this life and the life He promises us is to come. We're on God's time now and may His time bring us comfort, peace and hope. Amen.

In Christ,

Pastor Dan