

LUKE 8: 41-56

41. And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

42. For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

43. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44. Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchd.

45. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

46. And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

47. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him and how she was healed immediately.

48. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

49. While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

50. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

51. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.

53. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

54. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.

55. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

56. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

There is a very important lesson contained in this reading which we should discuss. It is the Church's teaching on the resurrection of the dead, a discussion of which is especially relevant in our day and age. Contemporary society has become so degraded spiritually that interest and belief in life after death is at an all-time low. People have become so absorbed in their enjoyment of their life on earth that they have no interest in thinking about or preparing for what will

happen to them after they die. This attitude has led to a rapid deterioration in the respect for the sanctity of life as people convince themselves that there is no afterlife. Therefore, if a life is too painful, inconvenient, or lacking in meaning or satisfaction, it can be terminated at any time. There are no consequences for abortions, suicides, and euthanasia if there is no afterlife.

The tragedy here is that denying the existence of the afterlife has no effect on its reality. Without any doubt there is life after death! Our Savior confirmed this truth by His words when He stated "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." (John: 11-26). He demonstrated His power over death by resurrecting the dead, as we see Him doing in this Gospel passage. He shared this power with the apostles. In His name, they also resurrected the dead, which we see them doing on numerous occasions. Finally, in an act that serves as greatest proof of His power over the death, He resurrected Himself after His death on the cross.

The resurrections done by our Lord and the apostles had two purposes. They were acts of compassion for the families of the deceased. They were also a foreshadowing of the general resurrection of all the dead which will occur at the end of our world. All people will resurrect. But not all people will resurrect into an eternal life of blessedness -only those who believe in the Savior and live their earthly life preparing for this resurrection and the Dread Judgment which will follow. The people who do not have faith in the Savior and choose to live accordingly will also resurrect. But their eternity will be an afterlife separated from God which is a life of intense suffering. It is a life in Hell.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, how blessed are we who believe in Jesus Christ! How even more blessed are we who are Orthodox, which means that we possess the only one true faith. But what we must never forget is that our faith will save us only if it is a living faith, an active faith. We are warned in Scripture through the words; "faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:14). How do we make our faith a living faith? By living according to the commandments given to us by our Savior. Yes, it is not an easy thing to do. The world around us is a very tempting place. It entices us through our proclivity to sin, beckoning us to pursue a completely different lifestyle. But, this lifestyle is deadly. As the Savior reminds us: "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, but loses his own soul" (Matthew 16:26). We have our Savior. We have the gift of His Divine Grace. By this we can overcome any temptation that the world presents to us. May we use this gift wisely! If we do, the Lord will move into our hearts while we are still on earth and together with Him, we can complete our travel through this world and arrive safely at the heavenly gates of His eternal Kingdom.

With Much Love in Christ,

Archpriest Serge Kotar