

## Hope Explored – How Can I know Hope?

Jesus Heals Jairus' Daughter - Luke 8:40–42, 49-56

In our gathering yesterday we introduced the theme of hope, and explored it through the dramatized story of Jesus healing the daughter of Jairus, a Synagogue Leader. Through the story we saw that Jesus:

- is mighty
- gives hope, even (especially) in adversity
- is Emmanuel, God with us

Our hope in Jesus is not blind faith, but is built on what we've read about Him, and our own personal experiences of Him. As we know Jesus to be faithful and trustworthy, our hope builds over time.

We see the Synagogue leader, Jairus, put his hope and faith in Jesus, presumably based on nothing more than his reputation, yet desperately hoping that Jesus can heal his dying daughter. Then his world falls apart when he hears that he's too late, as his daughter is already dead.

Then Jesus responds with that familiar phrase "do not be afraid" and says to Jairus that his daughter will be healed. In the Christmas story, the phrase "do not be afraid" is used repeatedly as the arrival of Emmanuel is announced – God with us. For Jairus in that moment, though he didn't realise it, the name Emmanuel couldn't have been more fitting.

Is it a reasonable/pastorally sensitive thing to say "don't be afraid" to someone whose daughter is dying?

Do you think Jairus realised the significance of the phrase "do not be afraid"?

Jairus had already placed his hope and trust in Jesus being able to heal his daughter. Then she died. But that wasn't enough to stop Jesus.

This is a rollercoaster of a story, especially for Jairus. And it's a story of faith & hope in Jesus. But it leaves us with difficult unanswered questions:

Why doesn't Jesus heal everyone we call out to Him about in prayer and desperation?

**"Real hope is not a vague optimism but a joyful confidence and expectation for the future, based on true events in the past, which changes everything about your present."**

Emmanuel – God with us – do not be afraid

Our hope is in Jesus - the hope that was coming, described by Isaiah as "mighty God" (Isaiah 9)

**"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. [...] For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:2, 6**

Jesus wasn't just described that way before He was born, but He acted in a mighty way - raising the girl from death, calming the storm earlier in the chapter, healing the sick, etc.

**“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess,  
for he who promised is faithful.” - Hebrews 10:23**

At the end of our Gathering on Sunday we were told about the testimony of a Ukrainian Christian, Timor, who, at the start of the invasion of Ukraine witnessed destruction, devastation and horror in Mariupol. After he left his home town, talking to another man who had fled, that man said in desperation *“I didn't see God there”*. Timor says he was tempted to ask where God was. At one point Russian soldiers had their guns to his back and said *“we have no time to deal with you, it's easier to shoot you”* and he felt his time had come. But he was miraculously spared. But he wasn't spared from further horror. He attempted to save 1500 from the basement of a building which had been shelled; when he returned home, he came under fire, and found the body of a family friend but it was too dangerous to bury him.

*Timor says: “someone may have thought that it was hard to find God there, too. But I saw Him. He was there. He wept near each deceased person, as He once wept where Lazarus had been buried. I saw God in Mariupol, so I decided to stay there for as long as possible to help those in need. Many days have passed since then, and I am still alive. Today I am joining with many Ukrainians celebrating the birth of Emmanuel”*

### **Emmanuel – God with us!**

As you reflect on the hope we have in Jesus, God with us, Emmanuel, please take the time to listen to the programme from which Timor's testimony was taken. It is a service of Ukrainian Christmas worship called [“The Indestructibility of Hope”](#) broadcast on BBC Radio 4 on Sunday, which for Ukrainians is what we could call “Boxing Day”.

It opens with these beautiful words:

*“At Christmas the Almighty, everlasting, uncreated God became a mortal baby born to an unwed teenage girl in a soiled, warped space in the middle of an oppressed province, occupied by an idol-worshipping, blood-thirsty empire. God became man; unrevealed became unrecognised. Almighty God offered Himself for the love of mortals and became vulnerable.”*

And speaks so powerfully about God with us in the midst of our difficulties:

*“Even at Christmas God becomes vulnerable. But there is ultimate victory & justice for the oppressed secured in eternity. The Son of man will reign over the world in everlasting glory. But here captured in space, time and the history of mankind, love for the world makes God vulnerable, and through bringing us indestructible joy, He Himself is opening His heart to suffering but chooses not to avert His gaze.”*

If you are short of time, listen from 25:55 to the end.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001gwtj>