

Dear Friends,

Many thanks to all those who have sent cheques to the treasurer to cover offerings over the period of the shutdown. We are also very grateful to those who have moved over to giving electronically by standing order or bank transfer. If anyone else wishes to contact the treasurer about these matters then that would be very helpful.

I was reading recently the story of Jairus and his daughter from Mark 5. Jairus was obviously a very influential and prominent man, a pillar of the community, an official of the local synagogue. Most of the Jewish leaders took an instant dislike to Jesus, they didn't have any time for him. But Jairus was different.

Jairus asked Jesus for help. He can't have found that easy: he was an important man, he wouldn't be used to asking people like Jesus for help. Most of us don't find it easy to ask for help, I know I don't. Very often we try to manage on our own, we try to struggle on, we don't like to bother other people, we don't like to be a nuisance. There's something about us that makes many of us want to be independent, to manage on our own.

When we are in need of help then we shouldn't be afraid to ask for it. At times when we do face a major difficulty or problem in life, if we're honest, we do expect to receive help and support, especially from our fellow-Christians. But no-one can help us if they don't know of the need. There have been those who have complained loudly of not receiving the help they expected from the church, but if no-one is aware of the need there is little we can do. Jairus was aware of his need, he plucked up his courage, he overcame his pride, and he asked Jesus for his help.

I also think that this incident helped Jairus to put everything into perspective. Jairus had it all, he had achieved prosperity and success, but in the face of what then happened to his daughter none of that mattered. Jairus discovered something much deeper than all these things, something of lasting, of permanent importance. He discovered a faith that set him free from so many of the things that would have concerned him and weighed him down. He put his faith in Jesus and that freed him from his anxiety. He trusted in Jesus and discovered to his amazement what God could do.

We don't know just what happened to this girl, we don't know whether she was actually dead or just very seriously ill. That doesn't really matter. Jairus had confidence in God, he put his trust in God. He found the trust that gave him a sense of purpose and a sense of peace. We know that things aren't always as straightforward as that in our experience. But this story of Jairus does give us a very impressive example of faith in Jesus.

With best wishes,

Mark