**October 20th 2024 Twenty First Sunday after Trinity**

**Text: Matthew 9:18-26** 0743

**Theme: The Giver of Life.**

Grace, mercy, and peace be given unto you all from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. Dear beloved Christians: We are taught in the Small Catechism, under the second article of the Apostles’ Creed, of the two states of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, His state of humiliation and His state of exaltation. The state of humiliation, which coincided with His earthly life, has often been maligned within the visible church. Many think and teach that the Savior’s state of humiliation consisted in His taking on our human nature, that He was humiliated because He became a man, but that is not quite accurate. The Small Catechism tells us: ***“Christ’s state of humiliation consisted in this, that in His human nature, Christ did not always and not fully use the divine attributes communicated to His human nature.” (Blue Catechism q. #134)*** Therefore Christ’s state of humiliation was such, not because He simply became man, but because in His taking on of a human nature He did not always and fully use the divine attributes which He possessed on account of His divine nature. For example, Christ, being fully God, was omnipresent, meaning that He was everywhere at once, yet during His humiliation He did not always and fully use this divine attribute, and thus we often see Him travelling from place to place on foot or in a boat. Being fully God He could have simply appeared in one place, and then in another, or at many places simultaneously. This is Christ’s state of humiliation, and while it coincides with His becoming man it did not consist in that, but in His refraining from always and fully using His divine attributes.

However there are times during His earthly life that we see glimpses of the divine nature and attributes which He possessed. Though they are not the revelation of His full divinity, they do show to us a small taste of His glory. Many of these instances are seen in the miracles which he performed, especially His miracles of healing. We hear of many reports, from the Gospel writers, of healing those that were diseased with leprosy, the blind, the deaf, the lame, and many possessed with devils. When we read of these miracles, and study them in sermons, we are to see in them a personal application to ourselves. Thus when we read of Jesus healing the blind man we are to come away from that reading with understanding that it has application to each of us personally. It is not only a story of Jesus doing good to someone, and nothing further. Rather it is reported so that we may gain something from it. As a whole what are we to learn from the miracles of Jesus? What was their purpose? We hear Matthew report: *“Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.” (Matt. 11:2-5)* Here Jesus uses His own miracles to show that He is truly the promised Messiah, the One who would save the people from their sins. Yet this is also inherent in the miracles themselves. John the Baptist was to see in the miracles something more than just healing of the body. He was truly to see that Jesus was the giver of life. In the miracle of giving sight to the blind John, and we, are to see the opening of the blind heart to the Gospel. In the miracles of healing the lame John, and we, are to see the giving of our souls the mobility to go out and proclaim the grace and mercy of God. Thus it is with every miracle which Jesus performs. Our text today is a report of two separate miracles of Jesus, coinciding in time, but teaching two very important truths to us. We will see from our text that Jesus is indeed the Giver of life. Our text is found in the ninth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew beginning at verse eighteen.

**Quote text here.**

Let us pray, O most glorious Savior, we thank Thee forevermore that Thou didst humble Thyself and take on the form of a servant and didst subject Thyself to the Law and all the temptations of Satan, and didst perfectly keep the Law in our place so that we might be healed. Help us to learn this day that Thou hast so wonderfully come unto us and didst raise up our dead souls and took away our uncleanness in the healing fountain of Thy blood. We implore thee to preserve among us Thy pure Word and Sacraments that through these we might be kept all our days in the true faith which saves our souls, and at our death may comfort us and guide us through all temptation. Take then our souls, O Lord, to Thee in heaven and at the last day raise up our dead, vile bodies, and fashion them according to Thy glorious body and reunite them with our souls, so that we may forever be with Thee in both body and soul praising and blessing Thy glorious name, world without end. Amen.

Based on our text let us learn first that the Giver of life:

1. **Raises our dead souls.** We read verses twenty through twenty two of our text: **Read verses here.** While our Lord was on His way to heal the daughter of Jairus, a woman which was diseased with an issue of blood comes in the throng of people to receive healing from Jesus. Many Christians have often wondered just what this woman’s ailment was. It is not very clear in our text, nor in the parallel accounts of the other Gospel writers. However, if we turn to the Old Testament we find the answer. We hear: *“If a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even. And every thing that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean: and every thing also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean. And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.” (Lev. 15:19-21)* Here in Leviticus we see instructions for those who have a flow of blood coming from them. At the beginning of the chapter God shows what shall be done by those who are bleeding in general, but here we see that it is specifically women who are spoken of. This is the very thing that the woman in our text suffered from. Not some wound in her flesh, but her menstruation. It was ongoing for twelve straight years and never ceased. Now what is very interesting to note in our text when comparing it to the passage from Leviticus is that while a woman is enduring this issue of blood, according to the Law, she was to be separate from the rest of the people, for she was considered unclean, and anything she touched would be unclean also. She was to remain in her dwelling until it ceased and would then purify herself seven days. Yet this woman, desperate to be cured, was in the throng where Jesus was. Thus she had risked much in order to be healed. She was not in her dwelling, nor was she separated from the people, and lastly she reaches out her hand to touch the hem of Jesus’ garment. What courage and faith it took for her to do this. Yet she also feared what might be done if she were found out. Thus we hear: *“She said, if I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole….And Jesus, immediately knowing that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.” (Mark 5:28-33)* Do you see the fear which this woman had? She had broken many ceremonial laws to come unto Jesus and be healed. Yet beyond that we see Jesus’ response to her: *“Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.” (Mark 5:34)* Jesus does not rebuke her, nor call her unclean and flee from her lest He also be made unclean, but He gently reassures her not only that she is healed of her plague, but that she is made whole by her faith. O how wonderful is the application of this miracle!

By nature all mankind is in the same dreadful state as this woman. All are unclean by virtue of their sin, and it is unlawful to come unto God and touch Him. We are separated from Him for all time, but through the Good News of Christ’s perfect life and death in our place we come and receive healing to our dead souls, our unclean souls. But further we receive life to our once dead souls. This is because by nature we are the children of wrath, conceived and born in sin and spiritually dead. Yet Jesus seeks us out in our frightened state and says that we are made whole by faith in Him. If we notice what Jesus said to the woman as reported by Mark, He makes a distinction between the healing of the plague and the healing of her soul. In that moment Christ not only healed her issue of blood, but more importantly her dead soul was made alive. She had received the first resurrection, for she had faith in Jesus as her Savior from sin, death, and the devil. Each of us receives the very same thing. God comes unto us in our wretched state and through the Word and Sacraments engenders faith in our hearts whereby we are made whole from the plague and disease of sin. This is the sense of Malachi’s words, when he says: *“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” (Mal. 4:2)* It is not a healing of our bodies, but of our souls, a resurrection that is as much a miracle as the healing of this woman’s bodily infirmity. Praise be to God that He has performed this miracle in us! Yet even after this glorious working on our souls, the Giver of life, does still more and:

1. **Raises our dead bodies.** We read verses eighteen, nineteen, and twenty three through twenty six of our text: **Read verses here.** Sort of lost in the midst of the excitement surrounding the healing of this woman is Jairus, who had come and implored Jesus to raise up his daughter from the dead. If we look at the account of this in Mark’s Gospel we find that when Jairus had come initially his daughter was sick and at the point of death, and he asked Jesus to come and heal her. But while on the way Jesus stops to converse and heal this woman, all the while Jairus’ daughter was dying. Imagine the anxious thoughts of this man as he watched the Savior stop and spend precious time on this woman! Yet not one word escapes his lips. He has faith as our text shows that even if his daughter had died, Jesus was still able to raise her up again. Then at the moment in which Jesus declares the woman healed of her sins and her plague, a servant comes from Jairus’ house and says that Jesus is no longer needed, for the girl was dead. Yet Jesus reassures the ruler not to fear, but believe. Do not doubt but hold fast to the faith that you showed when first coming to me, Jesus says. Our Lord graciously invites the man to take hold of the promises given in the Old Testament: *“Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. (Ps. 16:9)* And again the words of Job: *“And though after my skin worms shall destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.” (Job 19:26-27)* These are promises of a second resurrection, one which, for a believer, is a reuniting of body and soul in the bliss and glory of the presence of God. Jesus does not tell Jairus what He planned to do when coming to his house, but regardless of the situation of her bodily health, she would be resurrected at the last day and live forever with the Lord. That is where his hope was to rest. Jesus then demonstrates this in the actual raising up of this girl on earth. She was dead, but is alive again. Truly an incredible miracle

However the lesson and application that we are to take from this is not that we should expect that every life threatening disease or sickness that we have will be healed by God, nor that when one we love dies he will be resurrected before the last day. Rather our Lord would have us witness the giving of life to our bodies on the last day. We do not need to fear death, for it can no longer hold us because of Christ’s victory over sin and the grave which is imputed to us. For one who believes in God and trusts that his sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake, death is nothing more than entrance into eternal life. Even that which we lose at our death, our bodies, will be given back to us in a perfected state. Death does us no harm at all. This is the reason why Jesus tells the mourners in our text, that the girl is not dead, she is only sleeping. Her temporal death was just that, temporary. Even if Jesus had not raised her, she would have been resurrected at the last day, awakened out of her sleep and reunited with her soul. This peaceful sleep of death, however, can only be said of one who dies temporally having been raised to spiritual life, a believer, for any who do not believe and die temporally will go into eternal death, and their bodies will be raised at the last day to join their soul in eternal death, that is not a peaceful sleep in Jesus’ name, but rather a dread filled waiting for judgment.

Thus we have in our text a picture drawn by our gracious God, of two separate incidents which are intertwined to teach us that to be a partaker in the second glorious resurrection we must first be partakers of the first resurrection, as we hear: *“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ.” (Rev. 20:6)* This can only happen by the gracious hand of the Giver of life. Only God can turn our hearts to Him in faith and raise us from spiritual death to spiritual life, making us partakers of the second, glorious resurrection. The Scriptures say: *“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” (Ezek. 36:26)* This is done by God through the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Men are converted and saved through these means. They contain nothing else than the gracious message of Christ having come in humiliation and keeping the Law perfectly in our place, and dying for our sin, imputing to us His righteousness and forgiving our sin. O bless His saving name forever! Amen.