

Pastor Geoffrey R. Boyle  
Funeral for Mylon Fredrickson  
15 September 2011  
Grace Lutheran Church, Wichita  
Mark 5:35-43

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*

While visiting in Mylon's hospital room, Mylon was referred to as both an ox and a bear.  
The ox spoke of his strength, his hard work, his unrelenting stamina and faithfulness.  
As a bear, and more properly, a teddy bear, he was a big man, but gentle.  
(And now, having met Milton, there's hardly anything twin-ish about out them!)

So for those who know Mylon, an ox or a bear might be a fitting comparison.

But today's readings allow us to compare Mylon also to a little boy and a young, 12 year-old girl.  
The boy in this evening's OT reading was the only son of a poor widow—  
his death meant her death, for she then would have nothing.  
The little girl was the daughter of one of the synagogue rulers, Jairus by name—  
she was, ill and nearing death, so Jairus came to Jesus.  
But Jesus took His time, healed a woman with a bleeding problem first,  
and only later came to Jairus's place, at which point the girl already died.

And so today we have a widow's son, a synagogue ruler's daughter, and Mylon—  
all having breathed their last, their bodies have shut down.

But is that all there is to it?  
Does the story end here?—lifeless, laying in a coffin, finished?  
No, of course not!

In the OT reading the prophet Elijah comes to visit the poor widow.  
She's understandably angry, confused, sad, scared, and on the verge of despair.

And being the man of God, the voice and hands and feet of the Lord Himself,  
Elijah makes his way to the boy's bedroom.  
Sure, the text says that he lays down, maybe on top of him?  
(It sounds a bit like what we know of as CPR.)  
But most importantly, Elijah prayed,  
“**O LORD my God, let this child's life come into him again**” (1 Ki 17:21).  
Then it says, “**And the LORD listened to the voice of Elijah**” (17:22).  
So the boy got up, probably a bit groggy,  
like waking up from a deep sleep and wondering what time of day it is.

So it is that the story of the boy doesn't end with a lifeless body laying on his bed—  
not death, but life—resurrection!

Same with Jairus's daughter in our Gospel reading.

Now we might start off wondering why Jesus waited—  
why didn't He go quickly and heal the girl in her sickness, perform a miracle of healing?  
Why didn't He respect the synagogue ruler's request, and come?

The simple answer is because that's not what He wanted to do!  
 Jesus wanted her good and dead.

And as the Gospel for tonight starts,  
**“While He was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said,  
 ‘Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?’”** (Mk 5:35).

Those making the announcement to Jairus are a bit peeved—  
 they're thinking,  
 “Jairus, you fool!  
 The last few moments of your daughter's life you were gone,  
 you were off talking to this Jesus, who you thought could work a miracle,  
 but He didn't even make the effort to come!”

And seeing Jairus's face fall, his guilt come tumbling upon him, ready to crush him, Jesus says,  
**“Do not fear, only believe”** (Mk 5:36).

So Jesus brings along with Him the usual suspects—Peter, James, and John—  
 and they come to Jairus's house.

There's a commotion: weeping, wailing, the neighbors are distressed, the girls' friends from  
 Hebrew school are beside themselves, the family has come in from all parts of Judea—  
 the poor girl didn't make it.

And then of all things to say,  
 standing in the midst of all these tears, all these cries, and all this commotion, Jesus says,  
**“Why the commotion? The child is not dead but sleeping”** (6:39).

The Gospel says, **“They laughed at Him”** (6:40).  
 That's a pretty quick jump from their wailing and mourning;  
 but if nothing else you can see their ridicule.  
 They already despise Him for not coming quickly to heal and save her.  
 They already consider Him weak and worthless, a failure, and false hope.  
 Perhaps that's why they laugh.

Jesus understands; He can take it.  
 He takes the ridicule, the hatred, the anger, the fear,  
 and He walks upstairs to the little girl's room—Jairus and his wife are there, too.

Then, taking her by the hand, as if helping her up from a fall, Jesus says,  
**“‘Talitha cumi,’ Little girl, get up!”** (6:41).  
 And immediately, apparently less groggy than the boy with Elijah,  
 she gets up and walks downstairs, grabs a bite to eat,  
 and says ‘hi’ to her family and friends and neighbors.

One dead boy raised; one dead girl raised; and now for Mylon.

Now with Mylon it's slightly different; just as it was slightly different for the boy and the girl.  
 With the boy, Elijah, the prophet, prayed to God for healing and life.  
 God listened, heard, and raised the boy.  
 With the girl, Jesus, God in the flesh, doesn't pray, doesn't ask for the Father's help,  
 He just speaks to her, "**Arise.**"

So with Mylon, it's a bit different, too.  
 Mylon's death and resurrection already happened on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1934, at his baptism.

We began this service with the words of St. Paul,  
**"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?  
 We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His"** (Rom 6:3-5).

Mylon's baptism, some 77 years ago, was the seal and guarantee and delivery of his resurrection.  
 It was this promise of resurrection from the dead that Mylon trusted his whole life long.  
 It was the promise that just as the boy was raised the little girl was raised,  
 and more than that, it was the promise that just as Jesus was raised,  
 so also, would Mylon be raised.

For Mylon, everything depended on Jesus.  
 Everything depended on what Jesus said and did.  
 So when Jesus promised that in 3 days He would rebuild this Temple—  
 speaking of His body (Jn 2:21)—  
 Mylon believed that this Christ truly did rise from the dead!

Everything depends on this resurrection.  
 As St. Paul says in our Epistle reading,  
**"And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins...But in fact Christ *has* been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead"** (1 Cor 15:17, 20-21).

That was Mylon's faith, and that's what'll happen to Mylon.  
 When the dead are raised, when the sleeping are awakened, Mylon will rise and live again—  
 just like the little boy and Jairus's daughter and Jesus.

For whatever goes for Jesus, goes for the baptized, and so also for you.

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