

8.13.23 – Pentecost 11

“Life Restored”

The United Baptist Church, Annandale, VA

2 Kings 4:27-37 (NIV)

²⁷ When she reached the man of God at the mountain, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi came over to push her away, but the man of God said, “Leave her alone! She is in bitter distress, but the Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me why.”

²⁸ “Did I ask you for a son, my lord?” she said. “Didn’t I tell you, ‘Don’t raise my hopes’?”

²⁹ Elisha said to Gehazi, “Tuck your cloak into your belt, take my staff in your hand and run. Don’t greet anyone you meet, and if anyone greets you, do not answer. Lay my staff on the boy’s face.”

³⁰ But the child’s mother said, “As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you.” So he got up and followed her.

³¹ Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the boy’s face, but there was no sound or response. So Gehazi went back to meet Elisha and told him, “The boy has not awakened.”

³² When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. ³³ He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the Lord. ³⁴ Then he got on the bed and lay on the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. As he stretched himself out on him, the boy’s body grew warm. ³⁵ Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out on him once more. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

³⁶ Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, “Call the Shunammite.” And he did. When she came, he said, “Take your son.” ³⁷ She came in, fell at his feet and bowed to the ground. Then she took her son and went out.

Leader: These are Miraculous Words of God! All: Thanks be to God!

Mark 5:21-24, 35-43 (NIV)

Jesus Raises a Dead Girl

²¹ When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” ²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him

³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

³⁶ Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but

asleep.”⁴⁰ But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him and went in where the child was.⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha koum!*” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”).⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished.⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Leader: These Words of Healing and Faith Are of God! All: Thanks be to God!

Please pray with me:

Dear Jesus, we praise you for your healing hands and spirit. We do not yet know all the lessons you have given us during times of healing and recovery, but we trust your goodness and mercy. Help us to believe your strength and power demonstrated in these passages through your prophet, Elisha, and your Son, Jesus our Messiah. Instruct us as we continue our discipleship journey with healing stories of your grace and love. May your voice be the one heard today as you speak through mine. Amen.

I hate to remind us all, but summer is almost over! Thank you to the Young at Hearts group, especially Phyllis, who brought back delicious seasonal Sunhigh yellow peaches and preserves since I wasn’t quite ready for a long day trip. And thank you to Martha for her garden goodies to help me stay healthy nutritionally and to your continued prayers, notes, and calls. I am gaining strength each week on the equipment, increasing the intensity each day. Please use my example to absorb every Parish nurse article, exercise often, stay hydrated, and invest in fresh fruits and vegetables, being a good steward to the bodies God has given each of us.

Today, our two readings are about life restored from death. In the Greek, the word “restore” means ‘to make whole’ or ‘to heal.’ Yahweh, of course, in the Old Testament is considered the healer either directly, through materials, or through prophets like Elijah and Elisha. We rarely discuss Old Testament healings like this, but there are quite a few if you start researching. Yahweh healed the barrenness of several women like Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and today’s Shunammite woman. In the New

Testament, most of us know the Jesus miracle of raising Jairus' daughter, Talitha.

Let's start with the prophet Elisha and the Shunammite woman. Shunem or Shunaam (Hebrew: שֻׁנֵם Šūnēm) was a small village in the possession of the [Tribe of Issachar](#), one of the Twelve Tribes. It was located near the Jezreel Valley, a fertile plain also called Megiddo, where Armageddon is supposed to occur. For location context, it is where the Philistines camped when they fought Saul and we saw it on our first Israel stop, Mount Carmel. God's victory with water and fire over the pagan god Baal on top of Mount Carmel was performed by the great prophet Elijah, Elisha's teacher.

Because of her faith and inability to bear a child, Elisha had promised the unnamed, wealthy, and married-to-an-older man Shunammite woman a son. She had experienced firsthand Elisha's Godly power and miracle, because as he often stopped at her home on his way toward Mount Moreh and the Jordan River, he offered her that prophecy of a son. They indeed had him, and so, **when** her young son, working in the fields with his father, died of what is thought to have been a brain aneurysm, she ran with him in her arms (some translations say) back to Mount Carmel to find Elisha to beg him for her son's healing. As you heard in the Scripture, Elisha sent his servant with his staff ahead laying it on the boy, but to no avail. Praying, Elisha gently threw himself onto the boy, laying hands and body upon him, mouth to mouth almost like a modern CPR; and her son's life was restored, so that he could live a long healthy life serving God.

Now in the second passage of healing, Jesus was busy. He had just healed a demoniac man and sent the demons into a herd of pigs over a cliff. He had arrived at the Jewish side of Lake Gennesaret, also called the Sea of Galilee. Another stop in Israel was at the same location; we sat in a 5th century (rebuilt) ruin of the original synagogue at Capernaum. Now, imagine, a leader of the synagogue, Jairus, fell at Jesus' feet and pleaded with him to heal his daughter's illness by laying hands on her, since they were believers. By the time they arrived at his home, she had died, and the house was filled with mourners wailing at this loss. It was not uncommon for 12-year-old teens to die young, because they often married at that age and had children too early.

Peter, James, and John the brother of James had gone with Jesus. They were at significant events like the Transfiguration and witnesses in Gethsemane; this is another important event they witnessed as the only resuscitation story in Mark's gospel. Jesus made all the other people leave the room after they scoffed at him for saying she was not dead, but only asleep. Jesus was reminding them that they could awaken into eternal life through him because he would eventually have victory over death. Some commentators hint that this was the "Messianic Secret" Jesus wanted kept that Mark reveals for us. The bottom line is that Jesus did not accept her sleep of death as the last word. He touched her and spoke authority to restore her to life! "Talitha koum!" In Aramaic, it means "Little Lamb arise!" It was an affectionate title and command for a child, perhaps reminding them that she was still a child of God, even though maturing.

This is another example of Jesus rebelling against temple rules of purity and cleanliness: like Elisha, Jesus touched this dead girl's body

which brought her back to life. That was forbidden and would have been shocking to bystanders, but Christ touched and commanded her anyway because **his** authority superseded any Levitical or temple authority.

In these ancient times, family business was private even though the community was small. All things needed to seem normal even if there was a crisis, so after her restoration, Jesus commanded the disciples and her father to get her something to eat and invite her back into community. Then after this miracle, the community was also invited to embrace her as she continued to live among them and give her father joy.

Jesus' compassion was supernatural and paternal because of Jairus' love, faith, and humility. The Shunammite woman demonstrated faith, humility, and maternal love and gratitude for her son's healing. Christ's own Father, God, would raise him from the dead after the cross, even after letting him suffer the sleep of death. What can we learn from these two restorations? Many lessons, but the main one is that we too can be restored to eternal life through Christ and our relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, but we must participate in building up that relationship. For the disciples, Peter, James, and John, this healing of Jairus' daughter may have been a foreshadowing of what was to come. What will **you** do with this reminder? Strengthen your faith and gratitude? Draw closer to Scripture and Jesus in prayer? Lean more on his power and might, even in crisis? I hope so! I will. Amen. //

Will you pray with me? Merciful God, we thank you for our health and fellowship in this place and beyond these walls. We thank you for the supernatural healing that is available through salvation and eternal life. Lord, we thank you and praise your healing power. Keep those we know

and love safe, strong, healthy, and highly motivated to continue serving others in building your Kingdom here on earth. In your name, we pray, **Amen.**