



## Jesus Raising Jairus' Daughter From the Dead

### Explaining the Gospel Reading

#### Luke 8:41-56

*Healing sickness, Christ the Word preached the Good News to the poor. He cured the crippled, ate with publicans and conversed with sinners. With the touch of His hand, He restored life to the departed daughter of Jairus.*

-- (Ninth Ode, Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete)

The call of Matthew (Levi) and Jesus' association with "sinners" (Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32) continues the theme of His outreach to all people. Two healings, which are joined together in the accounts of all three evangelists, make a striking contrast in this regard. Both healings involve females, whose place in Jewish society was decidedly inferior to men. The two seem to have little else in common. A little girl is near death and her father, an important local figure, approaches Jesus urgently, with every expectation that the Lord will respond and cure her at once. We are left with the image of a pure and innocent privileged child, her father's pet, whose death would be a tragedy.

The adult woman whose healing occurs on the way to the little girl's house on the other hand, is an outcast. Her flow of blood renders her impure and untouchable even to her family. She believes in Jesus' power to heal her, but doubts her own worthiness—why should Jesus touch her when no one else will? So she attempts to sneak up and merely touch the fringe of Jesus' garment. Jesus will not perform anonymous magic; He insists on meeting the woman face to face. His words are gentle: "Your faith has made you well." Most strikingly, He puts this woman on equal terms with the innocent little girl by also calling her "daughter" (Matthew 9:22; Mark 5:34; Luke 8:48).

In the midst of doing good, Jesus is ridiculed twice in this account. The first time, it is His own disciples (Mark 5:31; or specifically Peter: Luke 8:45) who find Jesus' question, "Who touched me?" foolish in the midst of a pressing crowd. At the ruler's house, the crowd of mourners already gathered around the now-dead girl mocks Jesus' statement that she was "not dead but sleeping."

The mourners want their mourning rituals, pride themselves on their common sense and probably hope to gain a bit of favor with the ruler by their show of sharing in his grief. But Jesus is right both times. Only one person in the crowd touched Him with faith. Like Lazarus (John 11:11-13), Jairus' daughter is an example. Her return to life foreshadows how Jesus' resurrection will turn death into a temporary sleep.