

Luke 8:52-56, Luke 7:12-15,
John 11:38-44
May 5, 2019

“Portraits of Grace”

I am privileged to be back with you again this weekend. The opportunity to share God’s truth and encourage His people is inspiring.

And I noticed in the hallways last time I was here up close and personal how Art and the Arts are appreciated here. Portraits by Rembrandt, Van Gogh, and Michelangelo, so impressive! I read on the website these words:

“Since 2004 the mission of Eastminster’s Christianity and the Arts endowment has been to draw in and enlighten people on how the arts can inspire our faith and express our human experiences. Music, dramatic, and other sacred art programs are offered throughout the year for the entire Tri-State Community.”

I have enjoyed art since I was a child and still appreciate how the Lord was so creative and has gifted his creations with those remarkable talents.

I believe our Lord Jesus was an artist in many ways, continually painting portraits of grace throughout the scriptures, and continuing to paint portraits of grace in our lives today.

This morning we look at three portraits of God’s grace that will help us to see more clearly why our Lord made such an impact and why we can

worship and celebrate his works of grace in our lives with such enthusiasm.

As we still can see Easter and the resurrection clearly in our rear view mirrors we must always conclude that the greatest priority of our Lord and scriptures is that God would be glorified and he alone has the power to conquer death.

Luke 8:40-56

⁴⁰ Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. ⁴¹ Just then there came a man named Jairus, a leader of the synagogue. He fell at Jesus' feet and begged him to come to his house, ⁴² for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, who was dying.

⁴⁹ While he was still speaking, someone came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the teacher any longer." ⁵⁰ When Jesus heard this, he replied, "Do not fear. Only believe, and she will be saved."

We look first at the little girl that Jesus raised from the dead.

Luke 8:40-42

⁴⁰ Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. ⁴¹ Just then there came a man named Jairus, a leader of the synagogue. He fell at Jesus' feet and begged him to come to his house, ⁴² for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, who was dying.

This event is unusual from the start because the man who is making the request was a ruler in the synagogue and so many of them had opposed Jesus for the majority of his ministry, not believing that he was the Christ the son of God

Often a person's convictions can be shaken, challenged or even overturned when it means the safety or even the life of one's child.

This man Jairus was shaken challenged

This man Jairus fell at Jesus feet, **humility**, and begged him to come to his house **desperation**.

Critical times in our lives may lead all of us to humble ourselves and become desperate for an answer.

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The story takes a tragic turn because after some delay when Jesus healed a woman, someone from the Jairus house reports that the girl is dead

In critical times doubts of others and doubts of our own can cloud our judgement.

But Jesus quickly alleviates his fears, with his own words. Do Not Fear! And as the book of Matthew chapter 9 reports Jairus had already believed that Jesus could reverse this course when he said - "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live."

⁵¹ When he came to the house, he did not allow anyone to enter with him, except Peter, John, and James, and the child's father and mother. ⁵² They were all weeping and wailing for her; but he said, "Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping." ⁵³ And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴ But he took her by the hand and

called out, “Child, get up!”⁵⁵ Her spirit returned, and she got up at once. Then he directed them to give her something to eat.⁵⁶ Her parents were astounded; but he ordered them to tell no one what had happened.

The professional mourners were there, weeping and wailing loudly. Jesus conquered death and doubt and fear and critics with this simple act of compassion. Child get up.

Jesus was often misunderstood.

We are often misunderstood

But when that happens it should not mean that the lord is not powerful in the midst of our difficulties

In 1975 I drew this drawing, it is titled “Misunderstood.” It was a time in my life - as most teens have - that you are misunderstood, I was struggling with speech, I stuttered so badly that I often would not raise my hand, I was teased because of it and felt worthless.

But as this picture implies someone can be an inspiration and allow you to stand and have purpose, to stand and feel needed, to stand and fall as if there is hope.

This portrait envisioned my mom saying to me it will be all right.

You can make a difference; you can have purpose.

Jesus does that for us as well he says to all of us you have purpose, and you can have hope.

They were all weeping and wailing for her; but he said, “Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping.”⁵³ And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead.⁵⁴ But he took her by the hand and called out, “Child, get up!”⁵⁵ Her spirit returned, and she got up at once. Then he

directed them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶ Her parents were astounded; but he ordered them to tell no one what had happened.

Give her something to eat, so practical.

Child get up - he called her back to life and back to her parents.

He called her back to life,
He called her back to blessing
He called her back to service.

I would envision her life as one where she never forgot this act of compassion. I would envision her attitude as one of compassion.

We now turn to the widow's son.

Luke 7:11-17 (NRSV)

¹¹ Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. ¹² As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town.

Large crowds often just sightseers, often critical, often fickle, rejecting Christ when it cost them commitment.

This was a recent death. The funeral had begun.

This only son of a widow had died. God had a special encouragement for orphans and widows.

¹³ When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." ¹⁴ Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" ¹⁵ The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.

Do not weep, very difficult to say to mourning parents. Only Christ could say this.

He was compassion personified, Do not weep, hope is here
Young man, arise, young man, get up.
He gave him to his mother, restored their future.

¹⁶ Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has risen among us!” and “God has looked favorably on his people!” ¹⁷ This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.

Word spread about his great power, and they glorified God.

We now look at Lazarus.

John 11:1-44 (NRSV)

1Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. **3** So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” **4** But when Jesus heard it, he said, “This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”

Lazarus, a friend of Jesus, Mary and Martha, friends of Jesus
But Mary and Martha needed more faith, renewed faith, resurrection faith.

This is for God’s glory. Can we say that about any event in our lives, even difficult events?

²¹ Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

Martha said, “If you had been here, my brother would not have died.” She was focused on the healing power, not the resurrection power. Jesus responded, “I am the Resurrection and the Life.” Jesus, in other words, was saying the artist, the masterpiece maker is here.

³⁵ Jesus began to weep. ³⁶ So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.”

⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

Jesus wept, so compassionate.

Take away the stone he said; witnesses participated in what he would do. Jesus prayed; he was grateful to His Father.

“Lazarus, come out. Get up.”

Jesus raised these three individuals:

The little girl a few hours after she had died.

The young man many hours, possibly a day after he had died.

Lazarus four days after he had died.

Time is no obstruction for Jesus and whether you see your problems and hours old, or days old or years old he can still be a rescuer for you and me.

Some years ago I bought this book, “Speeches that changed the World “

The book was so compelling because the author and compiler of this book did not just include speeches of those we like, he included speeches of those the world has despised and hated.

He not only included Dignitaries but also dictators.

Peacemakers as well as peace breakers.

We remember these men and women because of what they said , for evil or for good

They changed the course of our nation and our world because of their words.

On this occasion we will focus only on the good.

President Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address – “that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain , that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom and that this government of the people by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth.” – pg. 39

Winston Churchill when battling the Nazis would say - "Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties and so bear ourselves that if the British empire and its commonwealth last for a thousand years men will still say. This was their finest hour." - pg. 96

President John F. Kennedy in his inaugural address would say "And so my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." - pg. 135

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. - in his civil rights speech of 1963 would say "I have a dream, that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed that all men are created equal"
He also said, "I have dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have dream today." – pg. 142

All great men all great speeches, but I want to declare to you that there is a speech missing.

Another great man that did not make it into this volume. Because it only goes up to page 224, my dad John D. Herring Sr.
But since it is my book, I think I can take the liberty to add a page, page 225

My dad was a man of few words, he never wrote a speech that I know of, never was one to bore you with lots of verbiage but I remember one speech a very brief speech.

Now you may not think this speech was very dynamic, or compelling but I remember it, and it taught me lifelong lessons

Here it is page 225 John D Herring Sr. said "GET UP."

When I and my siblings were young He would help us succeed in school by saying Get up.

When I was older and I had my first job he would say get up.

You may say that is not so profound, but many people have failed in life and failed in their family and failed in their future simply because they would not Get up.

Now you may say as well that the speech is not very versatile but I beg to differ

Sometimes we would not get up quickly enough and he would change the end of the speech from a period to an exclamation point.

Now you did not want to wait until he changed the speech to an exclamation point. Get up became Get Up!

But Daddy I don't feel like getting up? But that is not the question that he asked. He did not ask us how we felt he knew what we needed.

When I was married and on my own. I had an alarm clock that would wake me for work, but often I would hear my Dad in my head saying get up.

When my wife was pregnant with our first son, I went to bed at 11:45pm. My wife woke up at 12:10am and said its time. I did not feel like getting up

I heard my dad say Get up with an exclamation point , get up and bless your wife like I blessed your mother , get up and bless that new son , my first grandson like I blessed my children.

One other characteristic of a great speech is that a man heeds his own words , my Daddy was a man who would Get Up, and bless his family , multiple jobs, multiple blessing, all so that he could bless others .

I close with this

I deliberately left off the greatest speaker mentioned in this book Jesus of Nazareth, The Lord Jesus Christ , The author could have mentioned every message Christ ever preached , because all of his words changed the world , his words changed my dad and His words changed us .

An excerpt from Matthew chapter 5

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God “

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God” - page 8

My Dad was pure in heart not because he was a sinless man, but like all of us he needed to be redeemed and he knew where to find redemption in the person of Jesus Christ.

My dad had all this because he believed that the God of the universe so loved the world that he gave his only son that whosoever believed in Him would not perish but have eternal life .

And this God of the universe said to his own son after he had borne our sin and shame on the cross , lying in a borrowed tomb.

God said with an exclamation point – Get Up!

Don't tell me a brief speech can't change the world

And the Lord who got up out of the grave will come back for his people and those who have died in the Lord will come with Him to be united with their earthly bodies and he will say to his redeemed Get Up!

Don't tell me brief speech can't change the world

1 Thessalonians 4:14-17

¹⁴ We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. ¹⁵ According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who

have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

The Lord will assemble all his portraits of grace in heaven, he will give us the privilege of his presence for eternity and the portraits of heaven the portraits of grace will be complete.

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