

# JESUS RAISES A DEAD GIRL AND HEALS A SICK WOMAN

## LUKE 8:40-42,49-51

Women in the Bible Series

### OPENING PRAYER

O God, open our hearts and minds to receive your wisdom.  
Amen.

### EXEGESIS (POEM)

Jairus would have done/ Anything/ to get her back  
His Hepzibah,  
His joy, his delight.  
It hurt my heart to see him/ Wasting away with her.  
It hurt me too to see him/ Turn away/ From our other children  
Simon, Samuel, little Rebecca/ And at last/ Even from me.

Understand, I loved my daughter/ Flesh of my flesh.  
Her wasting away/ Melted the flesh from/ My bones as well.  
I was so tired/ With nursing her.  
When she gasped her last/ I wept  
But a stone fell from/ My heart  
And I could see again/ The hope/ Of us healing  
Death eased her pain/  
Gave us the chance to mourn/ and then become a family again.

And then you came.  
'Little girl, get up!'  
I had forgotten/ Through the long months  
Her loud and shrieking laughter.  
She fights with her brothers/ Argues with her father  
And teaches her little sister  
To flout my authority.  
Forgive me if my rejoicing/ Is less than whole-hearted.  
This resurrection brings/ Pain as well as/ Healing.

### REFLECTION

We often think of healing as something that should without question bring joy. The poem above looks at the feelings of Jairus' wife, who does not appear in the story at all. It explores the toll that the illness of one member can take on the whole family.

Meribah dares to express the bitter-sweet feelings that many carers feel towards those they love.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How often do we allow ourselves and others to express the complicated beliefs we have?
- Do we sometimes suppress our honest feelings and bury them under a mountain of platitudes?
- Can we really have a full relationship with Jesus if we are less than honest about who we are and what we believe?

## CLOSING PRAYER

Forgive us, Lord, when we are less than honest with you, when we pretend to be better than we are, when we are proud. Forgive us too for our humanness, for feeling our own pain more keenly than the pain of the person we are caring for. Thank you for loving us and teaching us and using us despite all of this.

Amen.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- Evie Vernon blogs for USPG at <http://blog.weareus.org.uk/wpress/>

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