

I've been watching the series *Humans* on television. I quite like science fiction, and I found it interesting that recently they've moved into the philosophical area that these "robots" may be self-conscious, conscious of their mortality and the possible threat to their life and that of human beings. I find it interesting that this should be raised in a modern program because it's a question that comes from the ancient times.

We have this idea of life and death there in that first reading. Death was not God's doing. And death is a big problem for everybody. When we're faced with our own mortality, whether we believe in God or not, a death is always tragic, isn't it? Of all living creatures, and if you think of the thousands of species there are, we are the only ones with consciousness, the only ones with a history. You can't read the history of lions as written by a lion, but you can read about our history and our engagement with the world.

St. Paul sums it up so well, doesn't he, when he says, "If Christ was not risen from the dead, then we, of all people, are the most to be pitied because we have put our faith and hope in the promise of a living God, and an afterlife." However St Paul does go on to say, "But Christ HAS been risen from the dead." Jesus offers no explanation for the mystery of evil and death, but the Book of Wisdom tries to tackle it by saying that evil has somehow that got into the world - free will(?) Jesus doesn't offer an explanation for this, but He tackles evil in a miraculous way, and we have this powerful Gospel account of Jesus raising Jairus' daughter from the dead.

This Gospel fascinates me because of the freshness with which it hits you from the page - it's so obviously an eyewitness account. Jairus, himself, is very interesting; Jairus was a synagogue official. He is important and part of the establishment; he would've been opposed to Jesus. He would have been part of that movement that didn't accept Jesus. His attitude is very true to life, isn't it - when the chips are down we will accept help from any quarter.

Jairus's little daughter has died, and any parent would do anything to have their child back. Jairus, would have been opposed to Jesus' teaching, but is now faced with no choice but to accept help from Jesus. That is so true to life isn't it? Jairus swallows his pride and he falls at the feet of Jesus. All these little details are so true to what would happen in a real life situation. Jairus begs Jesus to come and do something, and when Jesus gets to the house, Jesus uses the same phrase that the early Christians continued, "She's not dead, but asleep." The early Christians always referred to their dead as, "Those who've fallen asleep awaiting the resurrection." So Jesus is clearly allying himself with that understanding of death without explaining why it should happen. Then He said in Hebrew to the child, 'Talitha kum.' That is also interesting because the Gospels were written Greek, and this bit of Hebrew information gives the account additional authenticity.

And then, I love the little extra details, "The little girl got up and at once and began to walk about - she was 12 years old," and "Give her something to eat." This Gospel is clearly saying, okay, we all have to face death and the problem of evil. There's no explanation given about the cause of death, but only Jesus' action which says, God's power can overcome death, and support us through our darkest nights.



