

Matthew 9:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,

Analysis

Jesus arrives at Jairus's house amid mourning: 'he saw the minstrels and the people making a noise' (ιδων τους αυλητας και τον οχλον θορυβουμενον). 'Minstrels' (αυλητας) were professional flute players hired for funerals. Jewish custom required even poorest families to hire at least two flute players and a wailing woman for funerals. 'Making a noise' (θορυβουμενον) describes the loud, chaotic lamentation—wailing, shouting, instrument playing—that characterized Jewish mourning. This scene contrasts Jesus' calm authority with human despair's chaos. The professional mourners' presence confirms the child is dead; this is official mourning, not vigil for the sick. Jesus enters this scene of death and despair as the Resurrection and the Life, bringing calm and hope where grief reigns.

Historical Context

Jewish funeral customs required immediate burial (within 24 hours) and intense public mourning. Professional mourners intensified grief expression. The loud lamentation expressed belief that death is final tragedy. Flutes, considered mournful instruments, were standard at funerals. Wealthy families hired many mourners to demonstrate the deceased's importance. This public, chaotic mourning contrasts with later Christian funeral hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Early Christians maintained some mourning customs but with resurrection hope transforming grief.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' calm presence in the midst of death's chaos provide hope?
2. What is the difference between grief without hope and grief with resurrection confidence?
3. How should Christian funerals differ from pagan mourning while still honoring genuine grief?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἐλθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἄρχοντος
And came when Jesus into house the ruler's
G2532 G2064 G3588 G2424 G1519 G3614 G3588 G758

καὶ οἶδων τοὺς αὐλητὰς καὶ τὸν ὄχλον θορυβούμενον
And saw the minstrels And the people making a noise
G2532 G1492 G3588 G834 G3588 G3793 G2350

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 35:25 (Parallel theme): And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations.