

Turning off the engines

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There is a resurrection in generosity, in opening your hand and unclenching your fist. The daughter of Jarius knew this when Jesus allowed her father to convince him to come over. Jesus went out of his way, and the result was a healing.

Resurrection often results when the tables turn and the poverty of the rich is exposed so that the wealth of the poor can be shown. Jarius's wealth was his persistence. He overcame a part of his own grief; he kept on keeping on.

This week's texts are great stewardship texts. Why not use them that way? We can ask for money more than once a year! We also can encourage generosity as often as possible. These texts are about people who love something or someone so much that they don't bother to count the cost.

The consequences of generosity are clear: it enriches us. "The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little." Little David becomes strong enough to handle great giants. Our biggest giant is often anxiety. When we turn off the engines of our anxiety, we find ourselves powered by a greater fuel.

One night a friend sailed her boat into its berth so quietly that I was awed by the silence. She turned off the engine at just the right moment, so that the boat didn't even glide through the water—it just got home. It was as if angels picked up the whole rig and moved it into its narrow space.

I knew that night how I wanted to die. I'd thought before about how to die a beautiful death, but I'd never had any answers. A moonlit sailboat outing on a Miami night didn't seem like a chance to prepare for death. But there I was broadened from a narrow space, edited out of a whole lot of serious, damning self-consciousness. Generosity often comes by surprise after the engines are turned off.

For things to really change inside us and around us, we have to turn off the engines of anxiety and turn on those of peace and persistence. Stewardship is not the only result: giants may be killed, our daughters raised from the dead.