

Message #29**Luke 7:11-17**

We are in a part of Dr. Luke's writing in which he researched and wrote about two major healing miracles performed by Jesus Christ in Galilee that were designed to prove that He had the total power to forgive sin and grant life.

What Luke records now is an amazing, miraculous episode from the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. In this story, Luke shows that Jesus Christ has the power and authority to grant life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. That is the point of this text.

THE RAISING OF A WIDOW'S DEAD SON PROVES JESUS CHRIST HAS THE POWER TO GIVE LIFE.

There are three people that Jesus physically raised from the dead that we know of from Scripture. He did not raise every dead person and those He did raise from the dead He did to demonstrate the power of His Word. Two of the three raised from the dead are mentioned by Dr. Luke. As a medical doctor, he would have been very interested in this.

- 1) Jesus raised Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:41, 49).
- 2) Jesus raised Lazarus (John 11:44).
- 3) Jesus raised the widow's son (Luke 7:11).

Verse 11 informs us that shortly after He had healed the centurion's servant, He went to a city called Nain. This city is only mentioned here in the Bible, which again shows us the meticulous research of Dr. Luke. He not only wanted to know about the miracle itself, but he wanted to know exactly where it happened.

Many believe this city is the city known today as Nein, which is a village of about 200 residents. This city is located about 20 miles Southwest from Capernaum, about 6 miles Southeast of Nazareth. So just the logistics of traveling from Capernaum to Nain would take a couple of days.

As you can imagine, Jesus was being followed by His disciples and a large crowd. The things He was teaching and doing no one had ever done. He is teaching about mercy and forgiveness and not rigid Pharisaical law-keeping and He is performing spectacular miracles. The crowd following Him was massive.

We need to observe that there is a difference between being His disciple and being part of the large crowd. We could say that the centurion certainly believed in Jesus Christ, but he was not one of the disciples.

According to **verse 12**, Jesus approached the city of Nain and it had a gate entrance. There has been some debate as to whether or not the gate was just an entrance gate announcing you were coming into the city; much like a city sign that says you are now entering a city. It is doubtful that this city has a wall around it. In fact, in excavations of the area, no wall has ever been found. So it was probably a gate that was like a city or state boundary marker.

According to **verse 12**, as Jesus approached the entrance to the city, He ran into a funeral procession. Now it was typical to bury a person on or near the same day the person died. The cemetery was typically located outside the city and as Jesus approached the city this dead man was being carried out of the city to be buried.

Now there are six facts we learn from **verses 12-13** about this:

Fact #1 - The man was a dead young man. **7:12a, 14** Greek word “young” means he was a young man, not very old (G. Abbott Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 300). People die at all different ages and none of it is in our control.

Fact #2 - The dead man was being carried out of the city for burial, as G. Abbott Smith said he was “a corpse for burial” (*Ibid.*, p.139). **7:12b**

Fact #3 - The man was the only son of his mother - she did not have any other children. **7:12c**

Fact #4 - The mother was a widow - she did not have any husband. **7:12d**
Now this widow woman had no one to look out for her or care for her. She has no family and is now all alone and orphaned.

Fact #5 - There was a large crowd from the city in this funeral procession. **7:12e**
Apparently the woman was well-respected and many people from town turned out for the procession.

Fact #6 - The widow woman was crying. **7:13** Greek word “weep” is one that means she was loudly weeping due to emotional sorrow and pain (*Ibid.*, p. 247).

This was a hurting woman. This woman was emotionally grieving and her heart was broken.

Jesus sees the heart tears and He is in the business of healing broken hearts.

According to **verse 13**, when the Lord saw her “He felt compassion for her.”

It is important to point out that Luke here as the writer identifies Jesus as the Lord. This is Dr. Luke’s own assessment of who Jesus Christ actually is. He has recorded the fact that others testified of it, but this is his own comment. This is the Lord. Jesus is the Sovereign God and Lord over everything. That is what Luke knows and believes about Jesus Christ.

Luke stresses that Jesus Christ is the Lord who came to this city and this is the Lord that came to this funeral. This is no ordinary man; this is the God/man. In fact, Luke will often use this proper noun “Lord” for Jesus Christ in this gospel (Luke 7:19; 10:1, 39, 41; 11:39; 12:42a; 13:15; 17:5, 6; 18:6; 19:8a; 22:61, 61).

Luke says that the “Lord felt compassion for her.” That word “compassion” means that Jesus was deeply and emotionally moved in His heart with tender pity for this woman (*Ibid.*, p. 414).

This is a wonderful thing to see about Jesus Christ. Remember there were people dogging Him who wanted to kill Him. He was here on a mission. His mission was to die on a cross so that He could take care of the sin problem, so sinners like us could have a relationship with the Holy God (Luke 5:24). But even though He was under the pressure of all of this, His heart hurt for this woman.

Sometimes we can be under pressure to the point that we forget there are other hurting people around us. Jesus did not. He was compassionate to these people.

According to **verse 13**, Jesus came to the widow woman and said, “Do not weep.” The Greek is written in such a way that it means “stop crying.”

Now put this in its context. What we have here is a widow woman who has no husband and her only son is dead and she is on her way to bury him and she is crying and Jesus walks up to her and says, “stop crying.” None of us has ever done this at a memorial service nor should we ever do this.

I have personally been involved in hundreds of memorial services and I have seen tears shed and not once would I ever dare say to the family member stop crying. Crying at a funeral is normal, natural and legitimate. Shedding tears is expected. A funeral is not happy hour.

It somewhat bothers me when people say about a funeral this is a celebration. I get the fact theologically. But it is also a real loss for the family and there is a hurting family who is sad. Funerals are not happy, clappy occasions and Jesus got that.

What you expect to hear at a funeral is something like this: I am so sorry for your loss. I want you to know my heart aches. We are praying for you and love you. That is what you expect to hear. **What is not expected is for someone to come to you and say, “Stop crying.”** But that is exactly what Jesus did.

Now if you are going to do that at a funeral, you must be the Lord and you must be God because only God would be in a position to walk up to a grieving mother who is a widow and say stop crying.

According to **verse 14**, Jesus came up and touched the coffin. You may be interested to know that the Greek word for “coffin” is *soros* (*Ibid.*, p. 411). So when you think of the noun *Soros*, think of a coffin and dead body.

Now the coffin was typically a shallow plank coffin, in which the dead body was placed. The body was covered with some sort of wrapping or shroud. These were not elaborate caskets like we have today. This was more like a coffin you would see in the old west.

Now Jesus came up and touched the coffin and that caused the bearers to stop the procession.

Then, according to **verse 14**, Jesus said to the corpse, “Young man, I say to you arise.”

The man was a “young man,” a man who was in the prime of his youth. Jesus said to him “arise.”

So let’s put this in this historical context. Keep in mind Dr. Luke has researched this very carefully. Jesus Christ has just taken three very unusual actions:

(Action #1) - Jesus Christ has just walked up to a mother of a dead son in the middle of a funeral procession and told a heart-broken mother to stop crying.

(Action #2) - Jesus Christ has just put his hands on the coffin and stopped an entire funeral procession.

(Action #3) - Jesus Christ has just commanded a dead corpse to arise.

Ladies and Gentlemen, **either Jesus Christ is the Lord God, or He is crazy.**

Well we get our answer in **verse 15**. **The young man who was dead in a coffin sat up and started talking.**

This young man was dead but in one moment of time the Word of Jesus Christ brought him to life.

There are three realities Dr. Luke brings out:

Reality #1 - The dead man sat up. **7:15a**

The Greek makes an interesting point - the dead man sat up. In stark contrast to being a dead man who doesn’t move, he is now alive and sits up.

Reality #2 - The man sat up and started to speak. **7:15b**

It would have been interesting to hear what he had to say. He sat up and just started speaking.

Reality #3 - Jesus gave the young man back to his mother. **7:15c**

Jesus Christ specifically gave this son back to his mother. God determines what child will be given to each mother. Those who support abortion will face an angry God one day.

I was listening to a new conference not long ago and some obnoxious reporter was asking John Bolton if he had listened to the tape of the murder or assassination of some ambassador. Mr. Bolton said, "No, I don't know the Arabic language, so there is no point." Well the reporter kept pushing well if you listened, you could perhaps feel the emotion. I wish I would have been in that room conducting that press conference. See, I know that that reporter supports abortion. What I would have said would be this - have you ever taken the time to watch an abortion in which a baby's brains are removed and it is sliced to shreds? Maybe you could learn something. But whether or not you learn anything, you can know this - God gave that baby to a mother and if you destroy it, you will answer to Him.

Now the truth is there have been many grandmothers and mothers who have seen Jesus Christ do something similar. There have been many grandmothers and mothers who have seen Jesus Christ do a very similar thing. They have seen Jesus Christ give spiritual life to their sons and daughters or grandsons and granddaughters when they were spiritually dead.

Although Jesus is not physically here right now, raising sons and daughters who physically die, He is spiritually giving spiritual life to them so they can go to be with Him when they die.

The Word of God is still doing the same thing it did when Jesus Christ was here on earth physically. The only difference is that now it is spiritual. God gives spiritual life to those spiritually dead.

Many a mother and grandmother has seen God raise up a child who was deep in sin and give them a new life. Monica saw that with her son, Augustine. Many a mother and grandmother has seen the same thing.

Jesus Christ still has the power to take those dead in trespasses and sins and raise them up and give them new life.

This was a very remarkable and impacting moment. Now in **verses 16-17**, there were three impacts that this made on the people.

Impact #1 - The people were gripped with fear. **7:16a**

This caused the people to have a great fear and reverence for the power of God. These people stood in awe of what they had just seen God do.

Impact #2 - The people glorified God. **7:16b**

They started saying that a great prophet of God is here. They were glorifying God by the appearance of what they thought was a miracle-working prophet. God has visited His people with this great prophet.

Now remember that Luke has identified Jesus as the Lord. These people see Him as a prophet.

Impact #3 - Jesus' reputation spread. **7:17**

His reputation is spreading that He is a great prophet of God.

But do you see this? **His reputation is not spreading that He is God and that He is the Messiah and that He is the Savior of the world.**

Not any of these people are saying this is the Lord and we need to believe in Him to have our sins forgiven.

Dr. Richard Lenski said, "It is a pity that they rise no higher in their estimate than that Jesus is 'a great prophet.' They fail to see who he really was...a tremendous miracle worker so ineffective the effect."

It is a tragedy that Israel didn't recognize this was her Messiah. It is a tragedy that Israel did not realize that this was the Lord. It is a tragedy that she did not believe in Him. Even today most Jews admit Jesus was a great prophet, but very few see Him as the centurion did, as the Lord God.

This passage certainly has some applications we may make:

- 1) Jesus Christ does have compassion for those who are emotionally hurting due to loss.**
- 2) Jesus Christ does have the power to help and comfort those who are in distress.**
- 3) Jesus Christ has the power to save those who are dead in trespasses and sins.**
- 4) Jesus Christ is the Lord God and if you believe in Him, you will not perish but have Everlasting life.**