

**Scripture Reading: Luke 7:1 “1 Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, [Jesus] entered Capernaum. 2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. 3 So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. 4 And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, 5 "for he loves our nation, & has built us a synagogue." 6 Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. 7 Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. 8 For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." 9 When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" 10 And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick. 11 Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. 12 And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. 13 When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." 14 Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." 15 So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. 16 Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." 17 And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.”**

## ***Life Meets Death at Nain***

**I want to begin by saying what a privilege and blessing it is to expound upon the Word of God here in Oregon City! I bring you warm Christian greetings from the Saints in Sacramento and we all want to thank you for all the prayers and encouragement you have given us down through the years. We are especially thankful for the assistance of your Elders and for the willingness of Dennis to continue serving as our pro tem Elder!**

**In Sacramento, we have been taking a long journey through the books of Luke and Acts, two books that make up almost a third of the New Testament! It has been a real blessing to study Luke's orderly account of what God is doing in history! Luke wrote his Gospel and the book of Acts to give Theophilus, and anyone who honestly reads his accounts, a CERTAINTY of about what happened and what it means.**

**The story is told from the first chapter of Luke to the final verses of Acts of how Jesus has come to save His people from their sins, establishing His Church and that now His Kingdom will fill the earth!**

- **Our sins are forgiven**
- **We are now Christ's Bride, the Church**
- **The Spirit of God will use the Church to fill the earth with the Kingdom of Jesus!**

In their Gospels, both Matthew and Luke give us an account of the Centurion who had GREAT faith! But it is only Luke who tells us of the visit that Jesus made to the small city of Nain and it is there where we will focus this morning. The Roman Centurion understood that Jesus needed only to say the word to heal his dying servant...

- Jesus has ALL authority in heaven and on earth

That is in many ways is what this short account of the visit to Nain confirms...

We must NOT overlook the very first detail Luke gives: “The day after...”

- There are no surprises in God’s story of redemption, no accidents or mere coincidences.

The meeting of life and death here at Nain was foreordained to happen and the Holy Spirit included the account in the Gospel of Luke to demonstrate the real authority and power of Jesus.

- In short, He gives us a powerful image of how the coming of Jesus has changed everything!

Let us now carefully consider the text, taking in all of what happened that day at Nain...

These few verses are packed with details... IMPORTANT details! Jesus enters a city: Nain

- Nain a small village that we know almost nothing about and it is never again mentioned in the New Testament

Jesus is followed by His disciples and a large crowd... A procession of life!

Jesus & His followers are approaching the city gate, coming into the city.

At the gate of the city, they meet a crowd that is coming out of that same city, at the same time.

- A funeral procession, not just a sad procession, but one of the saddest we could imagine

A mother has lost her son... her only son – A mother who is also a widow!

- In the agony of this mother and the mourning of the procession we see the great enemy brought forth by the fall of man... Death! “in the day you eat there of you shall surely die”
- Death that will find us all – the final enemy to be defeated!

This widow, as with ALL of Adam’s race, is hopeless and has no power to change her circumstances...

- We see a procession of death.

Jesus comes from the other direction and brings hope: Life meets death at Nain

- This is the story of the Gospel, the Good News

A story of contrasts like those we often see in the Bible: Sheep & goats, the two paths, light and darkness, wisdom or foolishness, life or death... Luke then says: “When the Lord saw her...”

- This is the first time Luke refers to Jesus as “the Lord” a title he will go on to use often.

“When the Lord saw her He had compassion on her” Here we see the truth that we celebrate with the baptism of each new Covenant child or those who are given saving faith and brought to repentance as adults, “we love God because He first loved us.”

- It is Jesus who has compassion and turns death into life

I want us to notice this morning that Jesus then gives two commands:

- To the mother He says, “do not weep”
- To the son He says, “Young man, I say to you arise.”

## **BOTH commands were humanly speaking impossible!**

**But Jesus never gives a command that He does not enable us to obey!**

- **Jesus will now demonstrate that He has authority, even over the final enemy: Death itself...**
- **Jesus speaks the word and the boy is able to obey as he "sat up and began to speak."**
- **The boy rises and the mother's weeping is turned to celebration!**

**Here Jesus speaks to just this one young man...**

- **In the final day He will speak & ALL the dead shall rise!**

**Here we should also be reminded of the glorious picture of the dry bones given in Ezekiel 37...**

**1: "The hand of Jehovah came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of Jehovah, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. 2 Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry.**

- **God wanted to make sure that Ezekiel saw how serious the problem of sin and rebellion was... There were LOTS of LOTS of very dry bones.**

**3 "And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord God, You know."**

- **The prophet was willing to trust and believe God, but from a human perspective there was NO hope for these dry bones.**

**4 Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah! 5 Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. 6 I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am Jehovah."**

- **When we are hesitant to witness or doubt that God can reach a particularly stubborn heart, it is these words that we must remember:**
- **God told Ezekiel to preach to dry bones and he obeyed!**

**' " 7 So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; & the bones came together, bone to bone. 8 Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. 9 Also He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says Jehovah God: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." ' " 10 So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army."**

**This is why we are called to carry out the Great Commission:**

- **We are to disciple the nations and as we do so God will give life to the dry bones in those nations bringing forth a great army as the Kingdom of Jesus fills the earth!**

**We bring Good News to a lost world just as Jesus did to this mother where in verse 15 we read:**

**"And Jesus presented him to his mother."**

- **Jesus gives a mother new life!**
- **Jesus offers us new life!**
- **Jesus offer all the nations new life IF they will kiss the Son!**

**It is appropriated with that great faith that Jesus saw in the Roman Centurion**

- **So what does the encounter of life and death at Nain mean for us today?**

**First and foremost, these truths are demonstrated each week as God renews His covenant with us during the divine worship service.**

- **We are called into His presence and reminded that without God's compassion, we would be dead in our trespasses and sins and on the road to hell.**
- **We are assured that our sins have been forgiven, separated from us as far as the east is from the west... Our death has become His life!**
- **We are instructed from God's Word, God accepts our gifts and prayers...**

**Just as the young man sat up and began to speak!**

- **Then we come to this Table to feast in the very presence of God.**

**Death has been turned into life, and we are presented to Jesus just as the boy was to his mother!**

- **Finally, we are commissioned and blessed... Sent out in a new direction knowing our new life in Christ!**
- **Another important lesson to learn is that we have NO problems that are too big for Jesus!**

**The boy with new life was presented to a widow who lost her only son:**

**Linda and I have often marveled through the years watching people choose to continue suffering while Jesus is offering new life...**

**Can you imagine this widow being upset because Jesus had messed up a perfectly good funeral...**

- **And yet that is sometimes the reaction we see in people when real help is offered by Jesus!**

**We see here that Jesus offers new life and when we consider how it applies in our lives we quickly run out of excuses...**

- **Yet, we often fear to hear, obey or even to present the Good News in its simplicity!**

**Simplicity that comes with impossible commands...**

**Some may be struggling in their marriages: Jesus gives "impossible commands" like he did to the widow and son...**

- **Husbands love you wives**
- **Wives win them without a word**

**-God has blessed our congregations with many covenant children & they will bring many blessings & trials: And we know we are powerless when it comes to their salvation...**

- **They are born dead in their trespasses & sins... dry bones with no life in themselves!**
- **We baptize them in God's name believing that He gives them life!**
- **We then obey His command to raise them in the fear and admonition of the Lord, reminding them often about all that God has done for them!**

**-We often have financial challenges, as individuals, in our church family and even as a nation: We must follow God's simple principles:**

- **We must give God His tithe** *[many consider an "impossible command!]*
- **We must have honest weights & measures** *[which our government thinks is an impossible command!]*

**-Men are drawn to pornography at epidemic levels today...**

- **Paul tells Timothy: "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."**

**- There are many today who abuse drugs or alcohol...**

- **Paul says: "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit"**

**To understand how we are to follow all these 'impossible' commands,**

- **The Lord's Day must be our priority**
- **As a church this means being properly focused on doctrine, fellowship, the sacraments and prayer as we see in Acts 2:46**

**"So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."**

- **If there are things in our lives that distract us from these priorities then we must leave them behind just as the widow and son left that funeral procession to enjoy new life!**

**Finally, there is a lost world that we are commissioned to disciple: We all have lost family members!**

- **We need to bring them to Jesus!**
- **As Charles Spurgeon admonishes in his morning devotion on Mark 9:19:**

**"When they are grown up they may wallow in sin and foam with enmity against God; then when our hearts are breaking we should remember the great Physician's words, 'Bring them unto me.' Never must we cease to pray until they cease to breath. No case is hopeless while Jesus lives!"**

- **Life met death at Nain and death lost!**
- **Death lost and that truth must change how we live our lives:**

**Here is how the Apostle Paul admonished the Saints in Philippi to respond to this great truth:**

**Philippians 3:7 "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 "Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."**

- **Life met death that day in the city of Nain!**

**It teaches us that Jesus brings life to all corners of our lives...**

- **Let us with this rejoicing mother and resurrected son leave our funeral procession behind, proclaiming to a watching world that “God has visited His people!”**
- **Jesus has come and it HAS changed everything...**
- **Let us live as those who believe that it is so!**

### **Communion Meditation:**

**John 5: 21 “For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. 22 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, 23 that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. 24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”**