

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday  
St. Luke 7:11-17  
October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## He Had Compassion on Her

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

Lord God, heavenly Father, Who didst send Thy Son to be made flesh, that by His death He might atone for our sins and deliver us from eternal death: We pray Thee, confirm in our hearts the hope that our Lord Jesus Christ, Who with but a word raised the widow's son, in like manner will raise us on the Last Day, and grant us eternal life: through Thy same beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

With the words of the antiphon to the Introit we have the theme of the day. This is always the case, but today it is doubly so. For the first words that we sing in the Liturgy proper (the Confiteor was not part of the ancient Liturgy, it was the private prayers of the clergy before the service, but was added later), so at the beginning of the Liturgy we sing, "Be merciful to me, O Lord." Today's Gospel reading (and all the Propers) are about our Lord's mercy.

What is mercy? Well, as I have said numerous times, mercy is not being treated the way that we deserve to be treated. How do we deserve to be treated? Too often we think we deserve to be treated kindly, affectionately with good things. We think we deserve good health, a good spouse, a good house, a nice car, money in the bank, and the like. But we do not deserve any of these things. What do us poor, miserable sinners deserve? We deserve God's eternal wrath and displeasure. We deserve none of the good things that we have. Yet, we have the audacity to complain about the little that we do have. You, me, the whole world, constantly complains about what they do not have. I need a better job. I need a better spouse; a better home; more obedient children, and so on. We fail to consider that we are deserving of none of the things that we have, and we have them all by the grace of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ.

We deserve the Lord Triune God's eternal wrath and displeasure. But that is not how He treats us. He treats us with mercy. He gives us good things. All the good things that we need to support this body and life. Especially does He have mercy on us to provide us with all the spiritual things that we need for the sustenance of our soul; He gives us faith by His Holy Ghost, so that we may cling to His good gifts of forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation.

Our pride and hubris for neglecting to recognize our Lord's mercy upon us, is met today with the widow of Nain. Consider this woman. Of all the people that have a complaint to offer the Lord for His lack of mercy, she is most deserving. Consider her situation. She is doubly cursed. Her husband is not mentioned in the text, but we know that he is no longer living, because she is called a "widow," someone who has lost their husband. Therefore, she is already grieving from the death of her husband, and now

she loses her only son as well. We can tell from how the Lord + Jesus addresses her son, that he was a “young man.” He died in the prime of his life. Many people today say that when a young person dies it is a tragedy. Any death is a tragedy, because it is contrary to God’s will.

This is why one of the things that makes me cringe at funerals is when someone says, “It was part of God’s will, or plan.” Nothing could be further from the truth. It is not God’s will that we suffer and die. God’s will is to show mercy, and give us all good things, as we will sing later in the hymn, “The Will of God Is Always Best.” Our Lord + Jesus wants to be merciful to us. He wants to have compassion on us, just as He did this widow of Nain.

Our Lord + Jesus had just come from Capernaum where He healed the servant of the Roman Centurion, and a large crowd followed Him. This large crowd met another large crowd; the crowd that was bearing the widow of Nain’s son in his bier to the grave. Now, our Lord + Jesus only raised three people from the dead, besides Himself, while He lived on Earth: Jairus’ daughter, Lazarus, and this widow of Nain’s son. So, in spite of all of His healing miracles, it is unlikely that this widow would expect our Lord + Jesus to raise her son from the dead. But our Lord hates death more than we do, and it breaks His heart to see the pain that it causes us. So, St. Luke the Evangelist records for us that our Lord + Jesus had compassion on this woman. Compassion in the Scriptures means that it was felt in the very depth of His heart. He desired in the very depth of His heart to have compassion on this woman who had lost her husband and her only son, and was now alone in this world.

We know how it goes with someone who has lost someone dear to them. This woman lost the two people most dear to her. Certainly, her friends and family were there for her at this time. The large crowds attest to that. But after time passes and the busyness of life consumes us, we have the tendency to forget the pain that those who have lost someone feels. It is just the way that it is because we are not only forgetful creatures, but we are also self-centered creatures. For this we need to repent often. But our Lord + Jesus never forgets us in our pain and loss. He is ready and willing to have mercy upon us, just as He has mercy upon this widow of Nain.

He stops the crowd and tells the woman to not weep. What a wonderful thing to say to someone at a funeral on the way to the gravesite, when our tears run most abundantly, “Do not weep.” Why should we not weep in this moment when our hearts are breaking? Why should this woman not weep when she has lost her husband and her only son? Our Lord knows what He is about to do. Our Lord + Jesus knows that He will raise this young man from the dead. The same is true of all of us at a funeral of someone who has died in the faith. We know that he or she will be raised from the dead on the Last Day. It is not the Lord’s will that this person should die, but it is the Lord’s will that all men believe on Him and come to salvation, so that on the Last Day they will be raised from the dead with all of us who believe already.

So, our Lord + Jesus has compassion on this woman and touches the open casket, which was forbidden to do by the Jews because anyone who touched a dead body was considered unclean. But what our Lord + Jesus touches is no longer dead, but alive, so He says to the young man, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” He who had been dead, sat up alive and began to speak. This is how it will be on the Last Day. All those we love who have died in the faith will be raised from the dead, and will sing the eternal Liturgy of the Lamb in His Kingdom for all eternity with all the angels and archangels, and the whole company of Heaven.

We get a foretaste of this glorious picture of Heaven every time we celebrate the Mass. We hear those words every time in the Proper Preface before Holy Communion, “with angels and archangels and all the company of Heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name, evermore praising Thee and saying, ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, Heaven and Earth are full of Thy glory.’” We are brought to the gates of Heaven to celebrate with the whole company of Heaven a foretaste of the eternal feast

we will enjoy in Heaven. All of our loved ones who have died in the faith join with us as we eat and drink our Lord's true Body and Blood given in bread and wine. Our Lord shows us mercy by giving us this blessed meal. For in it He strengthens our faith in Him and grants us to have love for each other all through the work of the Holy Ghost Who creates and sustains faith in us through these means.

This Holy Supper is not only giving us a picture of Heaven, but it takes us back to the tree of the holy cross, where our Lord offered up Himself for us in His greatest act of mercy and compassion on us. In the holy cross we see our Lord's will for us. It is not His will that we suffer and die. It is His will that He suffer and die for us. We were and are unable to save ourselves through our good works. We are daily burdened with our own sins, and we see death all around us. Our loved ones die and are buried. This is not God's will. Our Lord's will is that He would come down from Heaven, take upon Himself our flesh, purify it and cleanse it through His perfect obedience to the will and Law of God, and then He would endure the punishment that we deserve for our breaking of the Law of God. He endured the wrath and displeasure of the Lord God that we deserve. Our Lord's wrath was poured out upon Himself, and then our Lord + Jesus, having fulfilled all things, gave up His life for us. He died and was buried, just like all of us.

But our Lord + Jesus did not stay in the grave. He burst open the sealed tomb, and in doing so burst open all of our graves. We confess it daily in the Apostles' Creed and we confess it corporately in the Nicene Creed when we gather together around our Lord's altar. We who die believing on our Lord + Jesus will be raised again on the Last Day. We will be given new and glorious bodies. This is our Lord's will for us. He desires to have compassion on us. Even as we sang in the Introit: "You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol." Sheol is the Hebrew word for the grave. Our Lord + Jesus in His mercy and compassion, has freed our souls from the power of the grave, and we will live with Him and all the saints and angels for all eternity.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us remember daily that we deserve none of the things that we have, but our Lord + Jesus grants them all to us through His compassion. Let us not complain about what we do not have, for deserve none of it. We deserve death, and it comes to us all on account of our innate sinful nature. But let us also remember daily that in our Holy Baptism we have already died and been buried in the grave of those holy waters. So that we can arise as new creations every day. Everyday we rise from the dead; the death of sin. We daily arise and live before the throne of our Lord + Jesus as new creations who will one day obtain a heavenly crown and a new and glorious body.

Do not weep, my dear friends, when our loved ones die. Rather rejoice that they have been called out of this valley of tears to their eternal home in Heaven. We will miss them while we are separated by the grave, but we will be reunited with them in Heaven. Indeed, we are reunited with them every time we come to this altar to receive our Lord's Body and Blood given in bread and wine, for we join together at this altar with the whole company of Heaven, and sing the songs that we will sing with our loved ones in Heaven for all eternity. This is our Lord's will for us: that we may be with Him in Heaven for all eternity, and in His compassion for us, He came down from Heaven to secure our place in there by His suffering and death for us. Let us always give thanks that our Lord's will is always best. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### **Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty and Everlasting God, the Consolation of the sorrowful and the Strength of the weak, may the prayers of them that in any tribulation or distress cry unto Thee graciously come before Thee, so that in all their necessities they may mark and receive Thy manifold help and comfort; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*