

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 7:11-17
September 27th, 2020
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas

I Say to You, Arise

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 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.

The Gospel reading for today begins with the words, "Now it happened, the day after...." Now when we hear something like this, it should cause us to ask, "Well, what happened the day *before*?" The first ten verses of chapter seven of the Gospel of the Evangelist St. Luke tell us the narrative of the Centurion whose beloved and devout servant was at the point of death. The Centurion sends elders of the Jews to our Lord + Jesus who request say on behalf of the Centurion that he is not worthy that the Lord should come under his roof, but speak the word only and his servant would be healed. The Centurion based this on the authority that he believed the Lord + Jesus to have over life and death. Just like he had authority to say to his servants, "Go" and they would go, or "Come" and they would come, or "Do this" and the servant would do it. On account of the faith of the Centurion in the Lord + Jesus, the servant was healed from the sickness of which it was expected that he would die.

"The day after" these events the crowds are still following our Lord + Jesus from Capernaum. He enters into a city of Nain, and there this crowd being led by the Lord + Jesus meets another crowd carrying the body of a young man from Nain. The Lord + Jesus is going to raise this man from the dead, as we heard a few moments ago. What that means is that the day *before* the Lord + Jesus raised a man from near death, and the day *after* He is going to raise a young man who has already died and is being carried to the grave in his casket.

Nobody likes to talk about the death that we all die until it is too late. Even when it happens, we hate to talk about it. We do not like to consider the fact that we will all die, even when the evidence lies in the casket before us. Which is why I believe people, including Christians, turn to cremation. With their fancy little urns there is no body to look; no need to look death square in the mouth and see that this is the fate for which we are all destined. Cremation is just one more way for us to escape the harsh reality of what sin in our world and life has done to us and will do to us.

This was not the case for the widow of Nain. She had to follow the casket of her only son to the

grave. She had already made this trek once before. She is after all called a “widow.” Her husband’s death is only reflected upon in the fact that the Evangelist St. Luke calls her a “widow.” She has already lost her husband, and now she has lost her only son. No other son is coming from her womb, because she is a widow. The point that the Evangelist St. Luke is making is that she is now all alone. She has no husband. She has no son. No other son is coming from her womb. She is all alone.

This usually meant in the Jewish culture of that time that she would have no means to support herself. She would have to rely upon the generosity and compassion of her relatives and friends. But any support that they would provide would not make up for the loss of her husband and only son. They cannot provide comfort for her in the only way in which her husband and son could do. She was all alone even though she is accompanied by a crowd.

These two crowds meet. The one with our Lord + Jesus at the head, and the one with the widow of Nain leading her son’s casket to the grave. The crowd with our Lord + Jesus had the day before borne witness to the healing that our Lord did for the Centurion’s servant. In that case though, they did not get to see the servant healed of his sickness. Today they see the young man in the casket. They see the death of this man. Whereas yesterday they had only heard of the servant being on his deathbed, today they see the consequences of sin in this world as they see the young man dead in his coffin.

What does our Lord + Jesus do? He has compassion on the woman. He comforts her with the words, “Do not weep.” He touches the coffin and the pallbearers stop their march to the tomb. Then He says to the young man, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” What does the young man do? He sits up and begins to speak. What this signifies is that not only is he alive, but he is also alert. He is not just merely breathing again. He is fully cognizant and is able to talk. He is fully aware of his surroundings. In other words, he is fully alive. Just like the day before when our Lord + Jesus spoke the words and the servant of the Centurion was healed of his deathbed sickness, today the young man, the only son of the widow of Nain, is fully raised from death.

In this pericope from the Evangelist St. Luke we see two things. First, we see the death that awaits us all. We do not like to think about our death, nor talk about it. But it is something that we should all be prepared to happen. When we see the death of our friends and family, of those in the world around us, it should serve for us as a reminder that on account of sin we too will find ourselves in the grave. The death of the young man, the only son of the widow of Nain, should serve as a reminder to us that death will happen to us on account of sin in us and in the world.

However, the second thing that we see in this narrative from the Evangelist St. Luke is that our Lord + Jesus has authority over life and death. He had authority over the servant of the Centurion to restore him to health, and He has authority over death to raise this young man from death and restore him to his widowed mother. Death may happen to everyone in this world, but our Lord + Jesus, the Christ has the power and authority to say to us, “I say to you, arise.” He can raise us from the dead. Indeed, on the Last Day He will raise up us and all believers in Him from the dead so that we may inherit an eternal life in His Kingdom which has no end.

We do not need to wait to rejoice in this reality, however. For, on account of our Holy Baptisms we have already been raised from the death from which inborn sin has corrupted us. Indeed, each day that we live in sin—which is every day—we are dead in our trespasses and sins. However, everyday we make the sign of the holy cross and remember our Holy Baptisms, we remember that the Old Adam in us with all of his sinful thoughts, words and deeds that drag us down into the grave has already been drowned and killed by the Blood of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ on the tree of the holy cross. This is why we make the sign of the holy cross whenever we remember the Name placed upon us in Holy Baptism; the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. For the Only-Begotten Son of the heavenly Father came down from Heaven and offered up His life as a ransom for ours on the holy

cross, in order that we might have eternal life with Him. He died so that we might live. And in our Holy Baptism we are raised to life on account of His death. His cross—His death—means our life. This is why we make the sign of the holy cross often, to remember that we are no longer dead in our sins and trespasses, but we are alive in Christ + Jesus.

Therefore, my dear friends, do not be afraid to look at death. Death comes for us all. Indeed, we live each day dead in our sins and iniquities. However, do not weep, for our loving and compassion Lord + Jesus Christ has had compassion on us by entering into our graves by His own death, so that He might restore us to life, and give us an eternal life with Him in Heaven. He has said to us in Holy Baptism, “I say to you, arise” and He says this to us each new day as we daily drown the Old Adam in us by daily contrition and repentance, so that a new creation may rise and stand before Him by the power of the Holy Ghost working through the means of grace.

Having spoken into our ears the life-giving words of the holy Gospel—the sweet message that our sins have been atoned for by the Blood He shed on the holy cross—we stand and live before Him covered in His righteousness. We can now give speak and give Him praise and thanks for raising us from the loneliness of the death of sin, into an eternal heavenly family. We are no longer widows and orphans, but we have a heavenly family in Heaven with our heavenly Father and our Brother, the Lord + Jesus Christ. For, “God has visited His people” in the Person of the Son of God, our Lord + Jesus, and has raised us up from the grave through our Holy Baptism to lead us into eternal life with Him and all the saints, and with St. Michael and all the angels in Heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty and Most Merciful God, Who hast appointed us to endure sufferings and death with our Lord Jesus Christ before we enter with Him into eternal glory: grant us grace at all times to subject ourselves to Thy holy will, and to continue steadfast in the true faith unto the end of our lives, and at all times to find peace and joy in the blessed hope of the resurrection of the dead, and of the glory of the world to come; 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!