

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 7:11-17
September 19th, 2021
St. Bartholomew Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Fort Myers, FL
Pastor Jerald Dulas

God Has Visited His People

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in Heaven and Earth is named, we beseech Thee, according to the riches of Thy glory, to strengthen us with might by Thy Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, that so, being rooted and grounded in love, we may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and the length, and the depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One 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.

Our Lord + Jesus Christ the day before the events in today's Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Luke had performed a healing of a man on his deathbed. He had just entered the town where He made His home on this Earth—Capernaum—when elders of the Jews approached Him about healing a servant who was sick and at the point of death of a Roman Centurion. Our Lord + Jesus was persuaded by the Jewish elders to go and heal this man because they believed that his master—the Roman centurion—was worthy of the Lord's help. His Apostles and a large crowd followed Him to this man. However, our Lord never made it there! The Roman centurion had instead sent other servants to tell the Lord + Jesus that He was not to be bothered with traveling all that way, because He could just say the word and the servant would be healed. Such faith was not seen by our Lord even in all of Israel and from that hour the servant was healed.

This is what happened the day *before* the events of the Gospel reading from St. Luke. The Evangelist records that the events of today's Gospel are from the day *after* our Lord was on His way to see the centurion's servant. In other words, this large crowd made up of the Lord + Jesus, His Apostles, and many others were on their way back home to Capernaum when our Lord + Jesus and this large crowd entered the city of Nain. A large crowd which was on its way to restore a servant on his deathbed to health met another large crowd coming out of the city of Nain. Two large crowds meet each other—one going into the city and one coming out. What was the purpose of this large crowd coming out of the city of Nain? It was a funeral procession. They were bringing a young man out of the city to be buried in a grave.

Our Lord + Jesus is at the head of the one crowd. At the head of the other crowd is the grieving widow of Nain. That St. Luke the Evangelist tells us that she is a widow informs us of her condition in life. A widow is a woman who has lost her husband. Her husband had already died. After her husband's death she was left with her only son. We are told that he was a "young man." This is what the Lord + Jesus calls him in the text: "Young man." He was the only family this widow of Nain had left, and now he too was dead. Who does this widow of Nain meet on her way out of the city to bury her only child? She meets the Lord + Jesus, and the large crowd with Him.

Two crowds meet at the city gate. One crowd is a crowd of death, carrying a young man to his grave. The other crowd is a crowd of life, fresh from the restoring to health of the Centurion's servant, and led by the Lord of life, our Lord + Jesus. We know from living in this world that when someone dies, there is no bringing that person back to life. There is no magic pill or cure that will bring someone back from the dead. Even when our Lord + Jesus lived with us on Earth He did not raise very many people from the dead. In fact, our Lord + Jesus only raised three people from the dead (besides Himself): the daughter of Jairus, which was done behind closed doors; Lazarus not too long before His own crucifixion and death; and this young man, the only son of the widow of Nain. This was only the second time that our Lord had raised someone from the dead in His entire three-year ministry on Earth, and as I said, the first—Jairus' daughter—was done behind closed doors. So, when these two large crowds meet—one a crowd of death and the other a crowd of life—being led by a woman grieving over death, and the Lord of life, she has no expectation that the Lord + Jesus would be able to raise her son from death.

In fact, even in the Old Testament the instances of people being raised from the dead are few. Resurrections were not a common thing. Even as it is for us. When someone dies, they are not going to come back from the dead. But our Lord does have compassion on us. He does love us deeply as St. Paul wrote to the Church at Ephesus in our Epistle reading today. Only through faith in the Christ can we begin to understand the height and depth and length of our Lord's love for us, and for all of creation. He loves us so much that He humbled Himself to come down from Heaven—to leave His throne in Heaven—to become man—to be one of us. He loves His creation so much that He became a part of creation, conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He not only loved us enough to be a part of us, but He loved us enough to suffer and die on the tree of the holy cross, so that He might atone for all our sins and the sins of all of mankind, so that all those who believe on Him might have forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation in Him alone.

Therefore, it is no real surprise that our Lord + Jesus on His way home from healing the Centurion soldier's servant, sees this grieving widow and has compassion on her. He says to her, "Do not weep." Now this is not like when we say to someone "do not weep" when they are weeping over the loss of their loved one, for we cannot do anything to change their condition of grief. We can only share in their grief and comfort them in their grief. But this is not so with our Lord + Jesus. This large crowd of death—this grieving crowd over the loss of a young man, the only son of a widow—has met the One Man Who could actually do something to remove the weeping of this widow and this crowd. When our Lord + Jesus says to the widow of Nain, "Do not weep" He is saying that she will no longer have need of weeping for He will remove her grief and give her joy and happiness by restoring her son, her only son, to her alive again.

As it was with the Roman Centurion's servant, who was healed just by the word of the Lord, so too this young man is raised from the dead by the word of our Lord + Jesus: "Young man, I say to you, arise." That is all it takes from our Lord to conquer death; to just say to death that it no longer has any more power and hold over us. Our Lord + Jesus can raise the dead with just His Word. He can do this because He is the Lord of life. He is the Lord of life, because He also suffered and died. He was buried in the grave for three days, and on the third day He rose again from the dead, conquering once and for all sin, death and the grave. He was raised again for our justification, as proof that the atonement that He accomplished on the tree of the holy cross was accepted by the heavenly Father. We are justified by His resurrection, because we can firmly place our trust in His redeeming work and know that we also are justified by the heavenly Father on account of our faith in what our Lord + Jesus did for us.

When our Lord + Jesus spoke, He conquered the death in this man. He gave the young man back to his mother alive again. The Only-Begotten Son of the heavenly Father, gave back the only-begotten son of this widow back to her alive. The Only-Begotten Son of God, raised Himself from the dead, so that all those who believe on Him will enjoy the gifts of the resurrection from the dead. What

we see here in this pericope from the Evangelist St. Luke is a picture of our own resurrection on the Last Day. When our Lord + Jesus comes again on the Last Day to judge both the quick and the dead, He will open all of our graves, and He will say to us “Young man (or woman), I say to you, arise.” And we will be raised from the dead and given new and glorious bodies. Our old lives filled with sin and death will pass away, and we will enjoy eternal bliss in Heaven with the Lord of our life, our Lord + Jesus.

For our Lord God has visited us His people. He has come down from Heaven to conquer sin and death for us. He has done this on account of His great compassion for us. Through faith we can begin to understand the depth and height and length of our Lord’s love and compassion for us. For, we see that He came down from Heaven for us. He has come to visit His people for our sake. He has come to bring us life and bring it to us abundantly and eternally. He is able to heal us by His Word. He is able to give us life by His Word. He is able to forgive us of all of our sins by His Word. This same Word that we receive in this place in all of its truth and purity. This same Word that is attached to a visible element in the Blessed Sacraments.

He declared us free from sin in our Holy Baptisms, when we were washed with water and the Word, and received the Holy Ghost poured out upon us. We will receive upon our lips His holy Body and Blood given to us in bread and wine, when we come to this altar and receive this meal in true faith and fellowship. We are declared free from sin when the pastor pronounces the absolution into our ears, and we are strengthened in the faith created in us by the Holy Ghost when we hear the promises that our Lord has granted us from this pulpit.

We may live in a world surrounded by death. We may live and dwell in the crowd of death in this world. But whenever we come into this sanctuary, we are transported into the crowd of life. Here we meet our Lord in the midst of our grieving over sin and death, and He tells us that we are not dead, but we are alive in Him and in Him alone. He comes to visit His people—He comes to visit us—and point us away from this vale of tears—this world filled with death—to our eternal home in Heaven.

Therefore, my dear friends, rejoice this day! For the Lord + Jesus has come to visit us today, and remind us of His great love for us, and to remind us that in the midst of death, He is the Lord of life—He is the Lord of our life—Who will give us eternal life with Him and all the saints and angels in Heaven for all eternity. Thanks be to our Lord + Jesus for being our Life and Light. 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, our Lord. Amen.

The Votum:

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

Soli Deo Gloria!