

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 7:11-17
October 2nd, 2022
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
All Saints Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Pawleys Island, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

A Dead Man Was Being Carried Out

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Prayer in Pulpit before 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, our Lord. Amen.

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

We have all experienced the grief of death. All of us have mourned over loved ones that we have lost to the consequences of sin—to death. We know how much it pains us when we come face to face with death. Imagine the grief of this poor woman from the city of Nain. St. Luke the Evangelist tells us that she was a widow. She had lost her husband to death already. We are not given the circumstances of his death. But the fact that St. Luke feels the need to tell us this means that she still felt the sting of losing her husband. Still dealing with the grief of her husband's death, we are also told by the Evangelist that her young son had also died. This woman faced the sting of death twice over. She felt the wages of sin twice over.

This woman, however, is not alone in her grief. Even as it often is with us when a loved one dies. We find comfort from one another. We share the burden of death. We share with one another the grief to what our sinfulness, and sin in this world, leads. This widow of Nain, who has twice felt the sting of death—twice felt the wages of sin in this world—is comforted by the considerable crowd with her from the city of Nain. The whole city it appears is comforting this woman in her grief. The process with her to the graveyard to comfort her in her grief.

Such is the same in the Church. The whole Church in Heaven and on Earth accompanies us in our grief over death. The whole company of Heaven gathers together with us as we mourn over our sin. Indeed, we may appear small to the outside world; we are only two or three gathered here in this place. But, the whole company of Heaven, gathers with us in this place at this time. A considerable crowd is gathered here with us as we mourn over our sinfulness. It gathers with us to comfort us poor, miserable sinners, who will one day face the sting of death. On that day we will join all those who have gone before us into Heaven on account of our faith in the works and merits of the Lord + Jesus, the Christ.

While this widow of Nain is being accompanied by a considerable crowd to the graveyard to bury her only-begotten son, she, and the people of Nain, are met by another great crowd approaching the

city gate. At the head of this great crowd is the Lord + Jesus. He is followed by His Apostles and a great crowd who the previous day had witnessed Him heal a man who was not even present. He had healed a Roman centurion's servant. The Centurion did not feel himself worthy of the Lord to enter under his roof, so he made the confession of faith that the Lord needed only to speak the words and his servant would be healed. This Roman centurion knew what authority was. He possessed it himself, He would say, "Go" and his servants would go. He believed the same about the Lord Jesus. He need only speak the word and his servant would be healed. His servant was healed from that very hour.

The crowds following the Lord + Jesus, having witnessed this the day before, get to see an even greater miracle of our Lord. As He approached the city of Nain, He meets this other crowd and sees a dead man being carried out of the city. Two crowds meet each other at the city gate. One crowd is filled with grief over the dead man being carried out; the only-begotten son of a widow. They are a crowd of death. They are the crowd into which we belong on account of our manifold sins and trespasses that we commit every day. This is the crowd in which we will eventually end up. We will be that dead man, or woman, being carried to the graveyard, because we are born in sin. This crowd of death, however, meets a crowd of life.

The other crowd was following the Lord + Jesus. They had seen Him heal a man who had not even been present. They followed the Lord of life. This Man + Jesus was also the Only-Begotten Son of His Father in Heaven. He was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who according to tradition was a widow by this time. The Lord of life, our Lord + Jesus, knows our every grief and sorrow. He knows our grief over death. It causes Him to weep and have compassion on us. This dead man being carried out of the city caused Him to have compassion upon this poor widow from Nain.

We cannot do anything to stop the pain and sting of death. We may be able to stave it off for a few days, weeks, months, or even a few years. But we can do nothing to stop the wages of our sin from being paid. Our Lord + Jesus can, however. He is the Lord of life. He can say to this widow of Nain, "Do not weep" and actually give her a reason to no longer weep. He therefore goes up to the open coffin and touches it. This causes the pallbearers to stop and stand still, for according to Jewish law, anyone who touches a dead person becomes unclean. But our Lord does not become unclean from touching a dead person because He has already raised Him from the dead. Therefore, He can say to this dead man that was being carried out, who is no longer dead, "Young man, I say to you, arise."

The young man sat up and began to speak. We are familiar with the grief of at the death of the loved one. We can only imagine the joy that must have overtaken this crowd of people from Nain at seeing this dead man being raised again to life. Picture the joy of the widow. St. Luke tells us that great fear fell upon all the people and the report of this went into all the surrounding region. "God has visited His people." The Lord God has come to dwell with His people. He bears our flesh and blood. The Lord God is one of us. He is one of us to share in our griefs and our joys. He has come to turn all of our sorrow into joy; to a new song into our mouths. For He has done marvelous things for us.

And that, my dear friends, is why our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, has come down from His throne in Heaven to take upon Himself our flesh, and be our Brother. He has come to do a marvelous thing for us. He has come to destroy death for us. He has compassion upon His creation—upon us poor, miserable sinners, who cry out to Him day and night for Him to have mercy upon us. He has compassion upon us, because in our faith we confess our sins to Him, and cling to Him for forgiveness. He came to win the forgiveness of sins for us. He came to free us from the bonds of death. He came to give us comfort in our grief. He comes to say to us, "Do not weep."

For He has conquered death. He has conquered the consequences of sin. And He has defeated the devil and his power over us. He has offered up His life as a ransom for us on the tree of the holy cross. He gave His life—He died and was buried—so that we might not taste death. Now even though

we may die and sleep the sleep of death, just as our Lord raised this young man from death into life, and just as He raised Himself from death on the third day, He will also raise us from the dead on the Last Day. On that day we will join with the rest of the great and considerable crowd of all the saints and angels in Heaven. We will bear the new and glorious bodies that our Lord + Jesus won for us and gifts to us who cling to Him in faith.

The crowd of death, those who reject the Lord + Jesus, and remain in unbelief, will follow the devil and his angels into the eternal fires of Hell. There the weeping and gnashing of teeth that we experience in this life every time someone of our loved ones dies will last for all of eternity.

The crowd of life, those who cling in faith to the works and merits of the Christ, will no longer have to endure that grief. We, my dear friends, will rejoice for all of eternity. We will live for ever with our Lord and with all of our loved ones who have gone before us in the faith. And our Lord + Jesus will wipe away every tear of joy that falls from our eyes. For the Lord God has visited His people by taking upon Himself our flesh, and perfectly fulfilling the Law of God which we are unable to keep. He paid the wages of our sinfulness in His own Body on the tree of the holy cross; winning for us forgiveness, life and salvation by His death.

He now leads us into the crowd of the Church. He has brought us here to this place to share with one another the burdens we face on account of our manifold transgressions. He has baptized us with the Holy Ghost, and forgiven our sins in the Absolution, and fills our ears with the promise of salvation in Him alone in the preaching of the Gospel, and He feeds us with the very Body and Blood which He offered up on the tree of the cross as a ransom for our sins. All these things we share in this great and considerable crowd of the Church, even if it appears to man to only be two or three people. We know that we are surrounded by a great host of witnesses, all the saints and angels in Heaven are gathered here with us today, rejoicing with us, that death has been defeated; our sins have been forgiven; and we will live forever in Heaven filled with joy that our Lord + Jesus has raised us and all believers from death. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the 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!