

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday  
St. Luke 7:11-17  
September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
St. Michael and All Angels Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Augusta, GA  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## He That Was Dead Sat Up

*In Nomine Iesu!*

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

### **Sermon Text:**

“And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, ‘Weep not.’ And He came nigh and touched the bier: and the bearers stood still. And He said, ‘Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.’ And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He gave him to his mother.”

### **Prayer in Pulpit before 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.

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

My dear friends, it is most certain that we are born dead. We are born dead in our sins and trespasses. A dead person can do nothing to contribute to his salvation. We can do nothing to contribute to our salvation. Being dead, we cannot ask for ourselves to be alive again; we cannot pray ourselves alive again; we cannot will ourselves alive again. Dead people can do none of these things. Therefore, all the billboards in the world that beg people to just pray for salvation have to be thrown out. They cannot choose to be alive again. The dead remain dead and can do nothing to contribute to their salvation. Nor can we bring back the dead from their death. We cannot ask, pray, will, nor choose for them to be alive again. No matter how much we may wish it to be true.

Such was the case for the poor widow of Nain. She could not bring her young son back from the dead. Just like she was unable to bring her dead husband back from the dead. Nor could this young son now lying in the bier—the casket—bring himself back from the dead. From the world’s perspective all was lost. Death is the end. The world mourns at the death of the dead because they have no hope. Nothing they can do can bring someone back from the dead. Much of the world rejects the idea of an afterlife. Or, the world preaches the false doctrine that everybody goes to Heaven. Only the really bad people go to Hell, Hitler, and Manson, and Telemarketers. So, the world has either no hope, or a false hope.

Even in our grief over the loss of a loved one, it is hard for us to cling to the hope of the resurrection of the dead. We can only see the death, the casket, the grave. Eternal life is not something we have experienced. It is only something which we hear preached about and spoken about in the holy Scriptures. We can only cling to the resurrection of the dead through faith. For since we cannot bring

the dead back to life, we can only hope and trust in the grace and love of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ.

The poor widow of Nain probably did not even have this small comfort. She had no expectations that anyone could bring her young son back from the dead. The Lord + Jesus in His earthly ministry only raised three people from the dead. This young son of the widow of Nain was one of them. Only the daughter of Jairus and Lazarus were raised from the dead by our Lord. Lazarus was raised from the dead just before the events of Holy Week, and the daughter of Jairus was done in front of only a few people, who were told not to say anything about it to anyone. So, from the widow of Nain's perspective she would have no expectation that the Lord could raise her young son from the dead. Nor would she be able to hope that He would raise her son from the dead.

This is what death does: it levels all hope in us; it crushes us with despair and grief. For we know that we can do nothing to change it. We cannot bring a dead person back to life. A dead person cannot bring himself back to life. All hope is lost and abandoned. Grief is what fills. It certainly fills the world which has no hope of a resurrection with despair and sorrow.

But we are not the only ones who mourn in grief at the death of a loved one. Our Lord + Jesus also weeps with grief at death. This was certainly the case with His friend Lazarus, where we are told simply by the Apostle and Evangelist St. John that "Jesus wept." St. Luke, the Evangelist, tell us in today's Gospel reading that our Lord had compassion on the widow. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Church at Ephesus, our Epistle reading for the day, exclaims the love and compassion of the Lord God. We cannot know its height, depth, and width. That is how vast our Lord's love for us is. It is beyond our comprehension. He loves us with a love we can never fully know or understand.

Our deaths pain Him so. Death was not part of His plan. His plan was for His creation to live eternally in peace in the Garden of Eden that He created for us. We were to be surrounded by the animals of the world, living in peace with them, and being provided abundantly with all the food and resources we would ever need for our lives. But Satan entered into the serpent and deceived our first parents into thinking they could control the world themselves; they were deceived into thinking they could be like God, knowing good and evil. To know evil is to also know death. For they had only known good, but with the knowledge of evil—with the knowledge of their being both good and evil—they also came to know death. Death became a part of mankind's daily life. And since then, we have known the grief of death; the hopelessness of death; the penalty of sin that leads to death.

Since our first parents fall into sin, all of their offspring are born spiritually dead. We have been born dead in our sins and trespasses. We can in no wise save ourselves from death. And so, we have found ourselves many times in the situation that this widow of Nain found herself with her young son. We have found ourselves accompanying the biers—the caskets—of our loved ones to the place of burial.

But this widow of Nain, who was followed by a large group of mourners, is met by another large group of people being led by the Lord + Jesus. She did not know at that moment what a great cause it was for her to meet the Lord + Jesus as she is on the way to the place of burial. She was not witness to any resurrection from the dead done by the Lord. She was not aware of the Lord's love and compassion. She did not know that our Lord weeps at our death as much, if not more, than we do. Satan led mankind into death with his lies and deception. Our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, comes to us—comes down from Heaven to us—in order to rescue us from the power of the devil; from the enslavement of death that sin led us into. He loves us enough to destroy what sin and death had done to us by the deception of the devil.

Therefore, He has compassion on the widow of Nain, even though she did not expect it; even though she could do nothing to bring her young son back to life. By sheer grace, without any work or

expectation from man, our Lord + Jesus touched the bier—the casket—so that the bearers would stand still. And He said to the dead person, “Young man, I say unto thee, Arise,” and he that was dead sat up and began to speak. This is the power that the Lord + Jesus—the Lord God—has over death. He can bring back to life again with just a word.

This is how He brings us, who were born dead in our sins and trespasses, back to life again. He brings us out of death into life by His holy Word. The Word was spoken as water was poured on our heads. The Word that was spoken is the same Word with which we begin every Divine Service—In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. This was the Name that was placed upon us. We have the Lord’s Name placed upon us, and by it we have been brought out of death into life. Now that we are alive, we can ask and petition and pray for life and forgiveness. Now that we are alive again in Christ + Jesus we can rejoice in our Lord’s holy Word. We can rejoice in the resurrection of the dead.

For we who were born dead in our sins and trespasses have been brought to life again by the Word of God. This Word of God continues to be spoken into our ears throughout our life in the Church. We hear the preaching of the Gospel; we hear the Absolution of our sins; we hear that in bread and wine we receive our Lord’s true and substantial Body and Blood given and shed for the remission of our sins; and we hear the comfort and consolation that death no longer has any power over us from each other as we comfort and strengthen one another in our grief when our loved ones pass away. We can comfort one another with the hope of the resurrection from the dead; that we will indeed see all those who have died in the faith again in Heaven. For we also will die, and our bodies will be buried in the grave, but our souls will enter into an eternal paradise—like the paradise of the Garden of Eden which our Lord God created for us—and we will be with our Lord and all the saints and angels for all eternity.

Our sorrow in this life will be turned into everlasting joy. Just like this grieving widow, who had no hope or expectation of seeing her son raised from the dead but was now able to rejoice at her son being restored to her, we also will rejoice forevermore over our Lord’s conquering of death. We may not always be able to see it when we stand at the gravesite and see the casket of our loved one, but we have the testimony of the Apostles who saw the open and empty tomb of our Lord + Jesus. They saw Him suffer, die, and be buried. They also saw Him on the third day raised again from the dead. We now have cause to rejoice, for our Lord reveals that He has power over death to raise us again into life.

We who were born dead; born dead in our sins and trespasses, have already been brought to life again by the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, which are God’s Word wrapped up in visible means. If He can create faith and life in us by these means, cannot He not also raise up our bodies from the dead on the Last Day? Yes, my dear friends, He most certainly can! For our Lord + Jesus has compassion for us poor, miserable sinners. He has compassion upon all of us who were led into sin and death by the deception of the devil. He desires that we may not remain trapped in death, but that we would be alive again to live with Him for all eternity. Therefore, He comes to us and says to us, “I say unto thee, Arise” and we who were dead sit up and speak of the love and compassion that our Lord + Jesus has shown to us.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us not weep and mourn as the world, which has no hope, weeps and mourns. For our Lord + Jesus has raised us up from the death of sin to faith and life in Him, and He will bring us all out of death into life eternal with Him and all the saints and angels. Praise be to our Lord and Savior, + Jesus, the Christ, for He has given us life and salvation. Amen. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the 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!*