**Luke 7:11-17**

Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. **12** As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. **13** And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.” 14 Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” 15 And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. 16 Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has arisen among us!” and “God has visited his people!” **17** And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

**“Thank God, Jesus Gets In Your Way!”**

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. A few weeks ago, at one the graduation parties when expectations and celebration was high. You do not expect to get into a discussion outside of some basic chitchat. Not so, when one gentleman I talked casually said, “We are all going to die, so we just need to enjoy whatever life we got at the moment.” Now it was not that this was something new. However, the context of saying it at a graduation party, took me by surprise. More than carefree words about life were also sounds of despair. My response to him had to be more surprising so I said, “Yes, we can make the most of life, but God has given us an even greater answer at the end as well.”

If death is not already hard enough, we also must confess how it likes to play dirty. This is what our first parents witnessed when losing a child to the angry hand of his brother Cain. Again, the judge Jephthah vowed to win a war for Israel, but it would cost him his only daughter. David and Bathsheba also saw life stripped away from their one-week-old son who died from sickness. The theme of losing children in various ways goes throughout Scriptures. Yet, today in our readings there is a glimpse of light in the darkness. What sin takes away, God gives back. This is especially true with the widow at Nain, which was comfort to know who has the last say. Jesus comes, has compassion, and conquerors death to turn our sorrow into praise that celebrates Him.

1. The Law of death is what greets us in this world.
2. Death has the communities of man carrying their victims.

* This is what we see coming out of the town of Nain.
* It was NOT the first time these people participated in a funeral.
* Certainly, the dead man’s mother had already felt the blow of being a widow.
* When death strikes, it can even make mourning feel unnatural as with the loss of a child.
* Put out markers of remembrance, leave warnings for others, how it happened is not that important.
* Solomon in Ecclesiastes points out, “For man does not know his time” (9:12a).

1. Death has an effect that goes deeper than burying the dead.

* Physical death is a separation from life that man sees.
* Despair over the power of death at the present. (reading obituaries)
* Pride over a person’s life does not solve the problem. (celebration of life funerals)
* Spiritual death is an eternal separation that God sees.
* Jesus saw at the gate of Nain more than a dead man. (All were dead because all were sinners widow and community included)
* St. Paul confesses the deadness of humanity saying, “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (Romans 5:12).

1. Death has an outcome that leaves a path of desolation.

* The widow literally was at her wits end.
* She already had grief enough over her son.
* All hope for a future now laid in the grave.
* This is a world where none wins.
* No wonder Luther called it, “A valley of sorrow.”
* We miss the fact how death changes the time we have left in this life.

1. The Law of life is what greets us in Jesus.
2. Jesus comes carrying a community of life in His Name.

* This is what we see coming into the town of Nain.
* It was the first time where One could bear the weight of death for the many.
* Rather than a dead man taking the lead, the Word made flesh was a man.
* This disheartened funeral was the most natural place for Jesus to make Himself known.
* No invite was necessary, since He takes the initiative to draw near to death.
* God comes to us when we are powerless with comfort as the Savior saying, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent” (John 6:29).

1. Jesus has compassion toward the helpless, lonely, broken, and those troubled by conscience.

* The separation felt in life by the widow did not go unnoticed.
* “And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.”
* Jesus embraces our greatest sufferings without hesitation.
* St. Paul says, “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8)
* The separation caused by death was not a big deal.
* “Young man, I say to you, arise.”
* Death looks permanent, but Christ puts it to shame by a single word, “arise.”
* This promise already rests in baptism for He says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live” (John 5:25).

1. Jesus conquerors by leaving the life of any entrusted to His care.

* His program is permanent, “No child left behind.”
* What sin took away from the widow, Jesus gave back in a far better way to know Him.
* The loss of a parent can hold to baptism to say, “I have one child in heaven and one on earth.”
* This news of baptism into Christ is life that goes out into a world of death.
* Drawn into the care of Christ is to be in awe and praise of Him.
* More than a “great prophet” raising the dead, Jesus lives as God for us bringing life and immortality to light.
* God does “visit” this valley of sorrow with compassion kept safe in His Holy Word and Sacrament.
* He still calls sinners out of death to life by faith in Him that has no end.

There is good news already at the gate of life and death. We meet it every Sunday where heaven and earth join around Christ. No need to settle with a philosophy of life based on fear, selfishness, or despair. Jesus comes, has compassion, and conquerors death to turn our sorrow into praise that celebrates Him. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.