

Luke 7:11-17 – The widow's son raised

Jesus was in Galilee, in the north of Israel. He had been staying in Capernaum; now he visited Nain, a town about 8 miles away. There he gave an astonishing and amazing revelation of his power and glory. He revealed that he is the one who raises the dead as he pleases. The Bible says that we are all spiritually dead - “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1); “You must be born again” (John 3:7). The words in this part of Luke are ones we need; they will show us Jesus as he truly is. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life ... do you believe this?” (John 11:24-25). Do we understand it, and do we believe in him?

1. Death strikes (v11-12)

At Nain, there was a funeral. A young man was being carried out to be buried. His mother, who was a widow and had no other sons, was there with many mourners. It was a terrible and sad view. Death cannot be avoided; it must come to all of Adam's children. It is the final enemy (1 Cor. 15:26) and we are powerless against it. For many people, it comes sooner than expected. How many people have left this world already since this year began? Were they all ready for it? This man's mother was left helpless – she had no other sons or husband. She was left to rely on charity and with no family around her in old age. Death leaves us helpless and we have no weapons to defeat it. Have you faced this truth?

2. Jesus sees (v13)

When Jesus saw her, he had compassion. “Compassion” means a deep feeling of sorrow, care and sympathy for a suffering person. It means a desire to help that person to escape from their distress. Jesus is a true friend who has pity on those who are in need. God the Father has compassion on sinners and sent his Son to rescue them from their sins. The Holy Spirit has compassion, and opens the eyes of the lost and brings them to Jesus. True compassion moves us into action. James says that true religion teaches us to visit the orphans and widows in their distress. Do you have true religion? Or do you just walk past?

3. Jesus speaks (v14)

Jesus came to where the body lay – probably on a kind of stretcher (not a full coffin). He said, “Young man, I say to you...” - Jesus knew the authority that was his, as the Son of God, sent by his Father to do his will. Jesus' word does all things. Through his word, the world was created (John 1:1-3). He will summon all people out of the graves to judgment (John 5:28-39).

4. Death dies (v15)

Jesus is Lord over the world – and so the dead man obeyed him and rose. Jesus raises the dead. His word comes with power – what he commands he also gives power to achieve. This was a sign of his work in salvation. We are dead in sins; we cannot love truth, or God. But when we hear the gospel, it can come with power to raise us again. Has that happened to you yet? Have you heard his voice calling you and come to him? The young man was then given to his mother. He had been raised for her sake. He must now serve her. That is also why Jesus saves people – so that they can serve their neighbours and serve him. Did you know that? Have you obeyed his command?

5. The people praise (v16-17)

The people were in “awe” or “fear” (v16). They were amazed at the power and glory of the Lord Jesus, once they saw more of him. Are you? Do you also give glory to God because you have seen the truth about Jesus? They said, “God has visited his people!”. In the Bible, a “visit” from God is when he comes to comfort his people and judge his enemies. It is good news for those who love him and are waiting for him – it is bad news for those who have not repented. Are you ready for the final visit – the return of Jesus Christ? They called Jesus a “great prophet” who had “arisen”. But this was not enough. He is the Son of God, who has come down from heaven; he is the Lord of glory and the only Saviour from sin, death and hell. The news about Jesus spread (v17) – but how many people believed and trusted in him for eternal life, and became disciples? Have you?