

## Nain And Jesus.

Text: Luke 7:11-17

Suggested Hymns:

409, 543, 98, 290, 92

- 1) Even The Loveliest Place On Earth Is Subject To Death And Mourning.
- 2) Nothing Earthly Gives Real Help And Comfort.
- 3) Only Jesus Offers Life And Light

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 7:11-17, *<sup>11</sup> Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. <sup>12</sup> And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her.*

*<sup>13</sup> When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." <sup>14</sup> Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." <sup>15</sup> So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.*

*<sup>16</sup> Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." <sup>17</sup> And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Jesus is the "Wonderful." Scripture says *"And His name will be called Wonderful."*<sup>1</sup> True to Isaiah's prophecy, Jesus did wonders, many wonders. From the time of His birth to the hour when He died He did countless wonders. We read in John 21:25, *<sup>25</sup> And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.* You will recall that Jesus healed all manner of sickness, cast out demons, removed all manner of

want, and even raised the dead. The water, wind, sea, and the fish in the sea obeyed His voice.

Jesus did wonders as God only could do them. He did them in His own name and by His own power. By them He revealed His glory, the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.<sup>2</sup>

It is for us to see and realise this, that Jesus is altogether wonderful.

Also in today's Gospel, Jesus appears as wonderful, the Wonderful. On the previous day He had healed the servant of the centurion; today He raises the widow's son at Nain. Wonderful.

What Jesus was at that time, that He always is. We learn this from Hebrews 13:8, <sup>8</sup> *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*. Despite the failure of so many people to see His glory, to recognise Him as Lord and God, Jesus is today and always the Light and the Life of the world. May we consider this as we contemplate Nain and Jesus. May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. Even The Loveliest Place On Earth Is Subject To Death And Mourning.**

Nain is a town in southern Galilee situated a few miles southwest of Nazareth. It is located 25 miles from Capernaum. Jesus journeyed there accompanied by His disciples and a large crowd.

Nain means beautiful. It was a beautiful village, lying at the foot of the mountain called the Little Hermon in Galilee, not far from Cana and Nazareth. This mountain enriched the valley around Nain.

One tradition names the Little Hermon as the place where Jesus spoke the Sermon on the Mount. A few miles west Mount Tabor rose 1,600 feet, the Mount of the Transfiguration, as some believe. Truly, a beautiful situation in a fruitful valley. And the people of Nain were largely well-to-do people.

And yet, *a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow*. Yes, also in Nain, death ruled. The dearest were taken. No matter how loved, useful, or necessary, Nain's people also must die. Scripture says in Romans 5:12, <sup>12</sup> *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the*

*world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.*

This is typical of this world. Always and everywhere it is the same. In the country and in the city, among the rich and among the poor, among the mighty and among the weak, everywhere and at all times, death rules. Despite all so called human progress, science, discoveries, skill, and love, there is no place where death does not reign.

May we note the fact! Though there are those who endeavour to avoid the thought of death, may we keep our minds open to the conditions that no one can escape. *Death spread to all men, because all sinned.* Yes, “*the wages of sin,*”<sup>3</sup> death, must be, and are being, paid everywhere, in the palace and in the poorest of places, upon land and sea, in the jungles and in the cities. Who can dispute the fact?

O beautiful earth, God’s wonderful handiwork, God’s gift to the children of men, death, the wages of sin, rules everywhere within its borders.

## **2. Nothing Earthly Gives Real Help And Comfort.**

Nain was lovely, but this could not compensate the widow for the loss of her only son.

The surrounding country, mountains and valleys, were rich in blessings and even in sacred memories; but this could not lift the heavy weight of loneliness and sadness from the widow’s mind and heart. Hermon’s cooling breezes, Tabor’s inspiring vision, conveyed no lasting relief or help.

Let us realise the gravity of this situation. “*A dead man*” is distressful enough; but there are other features that are still more so, which make this one of the saddest of cases. The man who was being carried out was not only his mother’s only son, but the only one she had ever had. We know what sorrow this was for this mother. “*And she was a widow*” adds the third point, which raises the grief to the highest degree.

They had once before carried out a dead man for her — that was her husband. She then had one comfort left, her son. But he was now being carried out also, her last consolation and, since he had grown up, her only support and

provider. No wonder that *“a large crowd”* of the city went with her out to the burial.

Hosts of kind friends and acquaintances surround the widow and extend their sympathy. That is all they can do. But they cannot change the fact of death and its surroundings. The widow must lay her dear one into the grave, give him up, and lose him for this life. So it was with her husband and so it is now with her son. There is no real help or comfort for her in all this earth.

And so for all of us and in all the ages. From the day that saddened the home of our first parents when Abel’s blood cried to heaven for vengeance, down to this age and day, man has discovered no real cure to heal the bereavement death causes or to reconcile us to death’s ravages among our race.

Human sympathy, precious as it is, cannot do it. Human philosophy, no matter of what kind, fails here. There is no real earthly help or comfort.

### **3. Only Jesus Offers Life And Light.**

But here look at Jesus at Nain. He comforts and helps, and He offers life and light. Remember that both Gentiles and women were on the fringes of Jewish society. Here Jesus shows Himself to be the Saviour of all people.

As Jesus approaches the town gate, He is met by a funeral procession. Burials took place outside towns, and graves have been found to the Southeast of Nain. The body of the dead man was being carried in an open coffin.

Jesus approaches the woman with compassion. <sup>13</sup> *When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.”* He, the Son of God, full of grace and truth, in all respects *“tempted as we are,”*<sup>14</sup> feels with the widow in her sorrow.

Jesus at once takes command of the situation. He speaks comfortably to her and says *“Do not weep.”*

Jesus helps, <sup>4</sup> *Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still.* His words ring out clearly, and with the voice of authority and power *He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.”* <sup>15</sup> *So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.*

One does not ordinarily speak such words to a corpse, but Jesus is no ordinary person. In response to this order, the dead man sits up.

It is noteworthy that the word “Lord” is used in this account. It is the Lord whose heart goes out to this widow. Jesus is the Lord and has authority to forgive sins.<sup>5</sup> He is Lord of the Sabbath.<sup>6</sup> And here Jesus shows Himself Lord even of death itself.

Truly, here is life. Here is the Light that shines in darkness, that lights the way out of death to life. Here at beautiful Nain, at the foot of Mount Hermon, and with the view of Mount Tabor, this wonder recalls to us the words of the psalmist, as we read in Psalm 89:12-13, <sup>12</sup> ***The north and the south, You have created them; Tabor and Hermon rejoice in Your name.***

And so it has always been in this world since the day on which God’s love was promised to dying man. Jesus Christ is our Redeemer from sin, death, and the devil. In other words, Jesus is the Life and the Light of the world, and there is none other.

Jesus stands, as it were, at the gates of time and faces every funeral march. He is always full of compassion — the sympathy that inclined Him to ***“not consider it robbery to be equal with God,”***<sup>7</sup> and induced Him to take upon Himself the form of a servant, to be made in the likeness of men, to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Out of that compassion Jesus calls to those who are weighed down by death’s sorrow, yes, to all dying mankind, ***“Do not weep.”*** And speaking thus, He reveals Himself as the Wonderful One, the Victor over death, who has brought life and immortality from the grave, saying in John 11:25, ***“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.”***

Our text continues, <sup>16</sup> ***Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has risen up among us”; and, “God has visited His people.”*** <sup>17</sup> ***And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.***

Fear took hold of all of them suddenly, at that moment. To see a dead man who was on the way to his tomb raised to life by a single command would today strike every one of us with a fear that would make us quake. The people not only had awe and reverence but also fear. He who snatches its prey from the monster death exhibits a power that must make us tremble.

As so often happened when Jesus performed a public miracle, the crowd is filled with praises to God. They call Jesus *“a great prophet.”* They were perhaps comparing him to the great Old Testament prophet Elijah, remembering what Elijah had done.

In 1 Kings 17:17–24 there is an account of how Elijah raised to life a boy who had died. Elijah did this by stretching himself three times over the boy and crying out to the Lord, *“O LORD my God, I pray, let this child’s soul come back to him.”* His prayer was answered, and we read that Elijah *“gave him to his mother.”* Our text uses similar words to describe how Jesus gave the now living son back to his mother.

But the way in which Jesus worked this miracle is altogether greater than in the case of Elijah. By His own word, with no prayer to any higher being, Jesus commanded the young man to get up. Truly, here is the Lord, true God and true man. Even death must bow before him!

There is none other. Look to Jesus as you bury your dead. Look to Jesus as you contemplate your own dying hour. He, and only He, will enable you to triumph and in His wonderful name to declare, <sup>55</sup> *“O Death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?”* <sup>56</sup> *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.*

<sup>57</sup> *But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* <sup>58</sup> *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.* <sup>8</sup> Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 9:6

<sup>2</sup> John 1:14

<sup>3</sup> Romans 6:23

<sup>4</sup> Heb. 4:15

<sup>5</sup> Luke 5:24

<sup>6</sup> Luke 6:5

<sup>7</sup> Philippians 2:6

<sup>8</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:55-58