

The Power Of Death, And The Power Of Jesus Over Death.

Text: Luke 7:11-17

1) The Power Of Death

Suggested Hymns:

2) The Power Of Jesus Over Death

97, 151, 101, 98, 103

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, ***11 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. 12 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.***

13 When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.” 14 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.” 15 So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. 16 Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has risen up among us”; and, “God has visited His people.” 17 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,

The purpose of this Gospel is to show that Jesus is God. He raises a man from the dead, and does that of His own power, saying, ***“Young man, I say to you, arise.”***

Only God can do that, and for the Creator it is an easy thing to restore the dead to life as it is for Him to create, to call into existence, to give life.

No wonder the people who witnessed this astounding miracle were overawed. We are told, ***“16 Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has risen up among us”; and, “God has visited His people.”***

Even the greatest sceptic must be convinced at the sight of such a marvellous deed, and if he is so depraved as not to think of glorifying God, he can at least not dispel the fear which will creep over him and make him feel uneasy.

The people knew as well as we do that no power on earth is superior to the power of death, that death's victims are irrecoverable, that a dead man is dead and will remain dead.

And here comes Jesus of Nazareth, and takes from death his prey, and restores to life and health the poor widow's son, showing thereby that His power is superior even to the power of death, and that death cannot prevail against Him.

Let us consider, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, *The Power Of Death, And The Power Of Jesus Over Death*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. The Power Of Death

The power of death is illustrated in the beginning of our Gospel. *"¹¹ 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. ¹² 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."*

Here we have the power of death. He selects for his victim a young man full of vitality and strength. He seizes him with a firm grasp and wrestles with him. Resistance is useless. He mows down the blooming youth like a reaper cutting down grass. All the young man's vitality and strength are no match for him.

Neither does death mind the mother's tears; and the fact that she is a widow and that this only son is her support does not move him. He transforms the house into a place of wailing and casts the shadows of sorrow and mourning upon a large portion of the inhabitants of a whole city. Such is the power of death.

Death's power is a universal power. It extends over the whole world. His domain is the globe. There is no monarch, no earthly ruler, who can boast of holding so vast an extent of territory as does death. He wields his sceptre everywhere, not only upon the surface of the earth, but also in the very bowels of the earth, in the air, and in the depths of the sea.

In his kingdom the sun never rises and never sets, but shines continually without interruption. In the cold South and in the sunny North, in every climate

zone, he reigns supreme as the destroyer of life. Although man may attain to an old age and certain creatures may live hundreds of years, yet everything that has life must finally succumb to the stern ruler — Death.

Death's power is an indiscriminate power. He treats all alike. He does not distinguish between young and old, men and women, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. Promising children, healthful youths, strong men, fond mothers he does not spare. From all he selects his victims at random and stretches them upon the bier. He visits the stately palaces of the rich and the humble cottages of the poor.

Poor Lazarus dies, and the rich man follows soon after. He has as little mercy with the king in his gorgeous attire as with the beggar in his rags. He smites the man of fame with the same iron rod that puts an end to the lone man's existence who has no reputation. All must finally succumb to the grim monster — Death.

Death's power is a rude power. He rudely severs the tenderest ties and turns the pleasant home into a desolate and forlorn place. He takes the husband from the wife, the wife from the husband, and causes grief and sorrow, for which there is no language.

He snatches out of a fond mother's arms her darling child and lays into an early grave the joy of her days and the hope of fond parents. Oh, who can describe the heart-ache, the sobs and tears, the grief and sorrow which death causes among the living!

There we see Abraham weeping over the corpse of Sarah, his wife, and lamenting her with the true love of a faithful husband.¹ David is prostrated with grief when he is informed of Absalom's death. He weeps and cries, "*O my son Absalom — my son, my son Absalom — if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!*"²

Even Jesus does not hold back His tears at the tomb of His friend Lazarus.³ He weeps. What power of death to cause tears to flow even from the eyes of the Son of God!

Death's power is, finally, an unconquerable power. This grim ruler is invincible. His superior is not upon earth. Sometimes he will let the victim upon whom he has seized linger on and on for years. Physicians will do all they can to

save a man's life. Every precaution is taken to keep death away. But he cannot be kept away forever.

When the time has come which God has appointed, death will strike his final blow, and no power on earth can prevent it. This is clearly revealed in Scripture as we read in Job 14:5, ⁵ *Since his days are determined, The number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.* And in Psalm 31:15, ¹⁵ *My times are in Your hand, [God's hand].* And in Hebrews 9:27, that *it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.*

2. The Power Of Jesus Over Death

Still, my friends, there is a power which is superior to the power of death, and that is the power of Jesus, the Son of God, against whom death cannot prevail.

We read in the second part of our Gospel, ¹³ *When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep."* ¹⁴ *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."* ¹⁵ *So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother."*

What power of Jesus! Even death, the most formidable enemy of man, must crouch and shrink before the Son of God, and upon His command deliver up his prey.

And this is not the only instance that Jesus raised the dead. At Capernaum death had seized the daughter of a Jewish ruler, named Jairus. Her little corpse lay in state, and preparations were already being made for the funeral. Jesus entered, went into the room, took the girl by the hand, and said, *"Little girl, arise!"*⁴ whereupon she opened her eyes and returned from the land of the dead into the land of the living.

At Bethany we find the Lord standing at the tomb of Lazarus, who had been buried several days, so that his sisters did not want Jesus to look into the grave. But Jesus calls into the sepulchre and says, *"Lazarus, come forth!"*⁵ And behold, the dead man appears, bound in his grave-cloths, and is restored to life.

But these bringing back to life of individuals were but preliminary skirmishes and mere foreshadowings of the grand victory by which Jesus finally conquered and overthrew death altogether.

The power of Jesus over death is nowhere shown so conclusively as in the personal combat of Jesus with the prince of terrors. When Jesus was nailed to the cross and was approaching death's dismal prison, He entered into a contest with death.

He sought the enemy upon his own territory. Jesus Himself died. He entered the dark chambers of death. There the fierce battle was fought with death. Death endeavoured with all his strength to hold Jesus in his bonds. But it was in vain. The Lord's Anointed did not see corruption.⁶

On the third day He stripped off the fetters of death and gloriously came forth from the tomb in the body of His resurrection. In this way Jesus triumphed over death and completely vanquished and subdued the last enemy of the fallen human race.

The best news, however, my friends, is this: What Jesus did, He did for us. His entire mission upon this earth was for us. He lived for us; He died for us; He rose from the dead for us. It was for us that He conquered death.

We are all sinners, and because we are sinners we all must die. We read in Romans 5:12, ¹² *Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.* This is summarised clearly in Romans 6:23, ²³ *For the wages of sin is death.*

But since Jesus has conquered death for us, we need not fear death anymore. Death has lost his sting for those who believe in the Saviour Jesus. Jesus has shackled him, so that he can do them no harm. Death is no longer a punishment for God's children.

Death is the separation of the soul from the body. We call this temporal death and this state continues until the day of resurrection. In the mean time the body lies in the grave and returns to dust,⁷ but the soul of the believer is with Jesus in heaven, and the soul of the unbeliever is in hell. After judgement Day both body and soul will be either in heaven or in hell.

For the believer in Jesus Christ death is merely the gate through which we must pass to enter into heaven.

Let us all sincerely believe in Jesus, our Saviour, and upon us all, He will make true His words, as written in John 11:25, ***“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.”*** Amen.

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

¹ Genesis 23:2

² 2 Samuel 18:33

³ John 11:35

⁴ Luke 8:54

⁵ John 11:43

⁶ Acts 13:35

⁷ Gen 3:19