

## Life Meets Death

Luke 7 (11~17)

I heard a minister say once... *"We come close to death many times...but touch it only once."* How true that is... Beloved we are but *"a step"* way from death at every moment, yet we often live as though it will never catch us. Many live as though they will stay *"one step"* ahead of death. Our age, our health, nothing...nothing can keep us out of the reach of Death! It is always on our heels, and all it has to do, is reach out and touch us...

Here in this passage, we read of a young man, of whom DEATH had laid hold on... One more casualty of the battle between good and evil, one more victim that fell prey to this enemy that stalks each one of us, the enemy of DEATH.

The difference with this story, the one thing that makes this one any different, is that unlike all the rest of its victims, this one received a second chance at life! Though DEATH had touched this young man, taking from him his very life...here we see LIFE coming up the road to meet him, and to give back what DEATH had taken away! It is a picture of the *"Life giving power of Jesus Christ!"* In Christ, we have the victory over DEATH! Though death may take away my life, from here on this earth, in like manner, through Jesus Christ, I will live again!

(Vs 12) Notice, Luke is very careful in describing the facts surrounding this situation...

<sup>12</sup>*Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.*

The fact anyone dies is bad enough; it's hard enough no matter who it is. But this was her only son, and to make matters even worse, Luke tell us she was a widow, meaning she had no husband to fall back on. Having two children, it would be hard enough to loose even one, but I can't begin to fathom the thought of only having one, and loosing them. And add to that, that you had just lost your spouse prior to this.

Luke mention's these things as an attempt to somewhat describe the agony and suffering this woman was going through. I like what Spurgeon wrote concerning this passage...

**Quoting Spurgeon**... *"She was a widow"*...I question if anybody but a widow understands the full sorrow of that word. We may put ourselves by sympathy into the position of one who has lost her other self, the partner of her life; but the tenderest sympathy cannot fully realize the actual cleavage of bereavement, and the desolation of love's loss. Still, if the SUN of her life was gone, there was a STAR yet shining; she had a boy, a dear boy, who promised her great comfort. He would no doubt supply her necessities, and cheer he loneliness, and in him, her husband would live again... But now, that star is swallowed up in the darkness.

This woman's entire world...everything she lived for...*was gone!* I'm sure, it was extremely hard on her, when her husband passed away, but at the very least, she had her son to fall back on. Life may have dealt her a devastating blow, but all is not lost, at least she still has her son. But now...there's nothing left. Her *whole world*, it's all gone.

The only thing remaining...is this *"body"*, that is wrapped in strips of cloth, lying on a plank, being carried by these men, just in front of her. And as little as that may be, it's all she has, and the sad thing is, she's about to loose that. For they are heading to take the body of this young man she had so loved and poured her life into, to place it into the tomb, and seal the opening forever.

Unless you have experienced this for yourself, we cannot possibly imagine what this woman is going through. We might “try” to put ourselves in her shoes, but it is impossible for us to even begin to grasp the depths of her sorrow and grief.

All those “looking on” that day, could see *the results* of the pain and sorrow she was enduring, by the tears and the cries, the staggering and weakness of the legs...but that’s all they could see, the effects of the pain and sorrow. But Jesus could see the sorrow in her heart. Jesus was able to see on the inside of this woman, and saw all the pain, all the grief and sorrow *that ravished her soul!*

As Jesus approached the funeral procession, he was able to see “the attacks” that these “Spirits of Darkness” were bringing upon this woman’s soul! Grief and sorrow are “spirits” that attack our soul. I believe that these are some of the spirits that Paul was referring to in Ephesians 6. Much like a Captain in the army, would send out his men on a mission, Death sends out these spirits to attack the souls of those left in it’s wake. The spirits of hopelessness, the spirits of sorrow, grief...was ravishing the soul of this woman. They were ripping her apart on the inside! Those walking with her that day, had “no idea” to what all was going on inside this woman. *None, that is, but Jesus...*

**(Vs 13~14)** <sup>13</sup>And **when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.** <sup>14</sup>And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, **Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.**

We learn that this miracle was brought about by “compassion”... It was not by the “Faith” of the woman, as it was with the centurion. Nor by the request of “believers.” This miracle was brought about by pure compassion, the pity of God, shown to a suffering woman.

No doubt, that fact that she was a widow, had much to do with it. For throughout scripture, God speaks much about taking care of the widow and orphans. James tells us... <sup>27</sup>*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.* God is a father to the fatherless, He is a husband to the husbandless... It grieves God to see the helpless suffer... That’s why He instructed the church to take care of widows, who were widows indeed. You notice, the scripture never mentions the Fathers or Husbands who are left alone, reason being, in that day, it was the men who provided for the family, and were physically stronger and could take on more. But here is a woman, whose husband had died, and now her son...there was no one to take care of her. Jesus’ heart is broken...

This was more than just “sympathy”... The word used for compassion here refers to *the literal hurting in the bowels*. Jesus literally hurt for this woman. So much so, that He was “MOVED” with compassion. That is to say, that the “Spirit of Compassion” took over his body, and caused him to act. You know how sometimes we are in similar situations and wish we could DO something, but we don’t know what to do. Well Jesus could do something...and He did!

To help us understand what happened here, I’ll speak of something we can easily relate too, anger. When we get “filled with anger,” we often lose control of our faculties and “act out” without thinking about it. When we get really angry, anger controls the body, the mind and the tongue...are all consumed and controlled by the spirit of anger. In the same way, when Jesus saw the woman, He was filled with compassion. When He saw the “Spirits of Death” attacking this poor, helpless little woman, when He saw how she was suffering, he “hurt for her.” And out of feeling that pain and suffering, it caused Him to move to alleviate the suffering.

**(Vs 13)** It’s almost as though, He tells DEATH...to leave her alone!

<sup>13</sup>And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, **Weep not.** <sup>14</sup>And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, **Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.** <sup>15</sup>And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

What an amazing thing this must have been to witness... Luke goes on to say that the people who did witness it, were filled with “*fear*”...which is only natural, considering what they just witnessed. But notice, the miracle takes place, as a result of Jesus’ compassion on the widow...<sup>13</sup> *And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her...* To alleviate the pain, He tells DEATH to get away from the boy... This miracle was not a show of power, so much, as a manifestation of the tenderness, and pity of our God!

**(Vs 16~17)** We have the response of the people who witnessed the event...

<sup>16</sup>*And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.* <sup>17</sup>*And this rumor of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about.*

Which in turn, they started declaring that Jesus was no ordinary man, but must be a “*Great Prophet.*” Alluding to the fact that they believed that after over 400 years of silence, the God had come to His people once again, doing so by sending His prophet. Problem with that was, He was no mere prophet...

This miracle bears a striking resemblance to the miracles of the Prophets Elijah and Elisha... Each one of those men, performed a similar miracle, with each one healing and restoring life to two different widow’s sons. The account of Elijah is recorded in 1Kings 17, and Elisha’s is found in 2Kings 4. It appears that the people may have associated Jesus with Elijah or Elisha, given that they referred to Him as a “*great prophet,*” and declaring that God had visited His people. In Matthew 16, when Jesus asked His disciples who that people were saying He was...one of the answers was Elijah.

**(Vs 17)** Luke says... “*This rumor of him spread throughout the land...*”

What rumor? That a “*great prophet*” has come upon us... After 400 years of silence, God has spoken unto us once again!

When you combine that ***rumor***, with the prophecies of Malachi...it helps make sense of what transpires next. Immediately after this, **upon hearing the rumors**, John sends two disciples to Jesus to ask Him whether or not He is the one, or should he look for another. If ***the rumor was***, that a great prophet had come, similar to Elijah, John would naturally wonder if Jesus was the “*Elijah*” prophesied in Malachi.

(Malachi 4) <sup>5</sup>*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:*

If Jesus was the “Elijah” as it appears the people were proclaiming Him to be, a great prophet, then it would only stand to reason in John’s mind, that “*there is another*”...right? John proclaimed Jesus to be the Messiah, ***but if the rumors*** he was hearing all around the region, that He is a great prophet, like Elijah, **than there is another**...the MESSIAH!

All of this coincides with the rest of this chapter...where Jesus clears up the matter. He declares that John was the “*messenger*” and the “*Elijah*” that was to come... Teaching that, if John indeed was the Elijah that was to come, then the one that comes after him was WHO? ...***right, the Lord Himself!***