

Luke 7:11-17 (Gospel Lesson, Pentecost 3C – A Sermon by Rev Ron Friedrich)

<sup>11</sup> Soon afterwards Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his followers and a large crowd traveled with him. <sup>12</sup> When he came near the town gate, he saw a funeral. A mother, who was a widow, had lost her only son. A large crowd from the town was with the mother while her son was being carried out. <sup>13</sup> When the Lord saw her, he felt very sorry for her and said, “Don’t cry.” <sup>14</sup> He went up and touched the coffin, and the people who were carrying it stopped. Jesus said, “Young man, I tell you, get up!” <sup>15</sup> And the son sat up and began to talk. Then Jesus gave him back to his mother.

<sup>16</sup> All the people were amazed and began praising God, saying, “A great prophet has come to us! God has come to help his people.”

<sup>17</sup> This news about Jesus spread through all Judea and into all the places around there. (New Century Version)

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Sermon theme: "**Life after life**"

Sermon text:

*Soon afterwards Jesus went to a town called Nain... When he came near the town gate, he saw a funeral. A mother, who was a widow, had lost her only son.*

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Jesus often wanted to help people solve their problems.  
So... who had the problem here?

First, we see the woman, the WIDOW. She had a serious problem.

Her husband was already dead. Now her only son died.

Imagine her grief. People she loved deeply, now gone forever.

Also imagine her future struggles to live.

In that time and culture, families needed their men for support and protection.

The Bible tells many stories about widows and single mothers who struggled with debt and became very poor. [*Example: The widow in the Old Testament lesson today 1 Kings 17:17-24.*]

Remember the Old Testament story about Ruth, a young widow. Ruth found food for herself, and her mother-in-law (also a widow), by going to a farmer's field during harvest time, and picking up grain that fell on the ground.

Many poor widows did that.

The widow in Nain, without her son, also could suffer future financial problems.

And what about her boy? Her dead son? Did he have problem? That's hard to answer.

How old was he?

We don't know.

How did he die? Was he sick? Did he have an accident? We don't know.

Was the soul of that boy in heaven? or hell?

We don't know.

To tell the truth, we sometimes have strange ideas about death. If a person is old and sick for a long time, we say death is a good thing. Death becomes a way for escape from suffering.

If a person is young and healthy, and then gets murdered, death is terrible. Why? A young person who dies will miss all the future pleasures and successes in adult life.

Another thing that most people misunderstand about death: We often assume *[guess]* everyone goes to heaven

Well, maybe not a very evil person, as Hitler.

But most people believe that we, all our friends and family, will go to heaven.

....We wish!

But the Bible is clear.

Our good name,

Our good character,

Our good actions and behavior,

Our wonderful attitude...

None of that can save us.

The Bible is clear that we all deserve hell, every one of us.

Because we all sin much, every day.

God offers us heaven as His free gift.

We receive that gift through faith in Jesus Christ.

All our debt, Jesus paid on the cross.

Jesus paid for our salvation, giving-up His life.

In His death, we get eternal life.

That's His wonderful gift to us.

But if we reject Jesus,

we reject His gift,

we reject heaven,

and we choose life forever separated from God.

Yes, if we reject Jesus,

we choose hell.

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All physical *[body]* life ends in death.  
We will all continue dying, until Jesus comes again.  
We don't know when we will die.  
We don't know how we will die.  
But we do *[really]* know why we die.

God's first plan for us did not include death.  
Adam and Eve brought death with their first sin.  
And because of sin, we still die.

But God did not let death and hell become our final judgment.  
When Jesus accepted that judgment for us, death became the door to heaven.

Now, if we know Jesus,  
we don't need to fear death for ourselves.  
We don't need to fear death for people we love.

We know that Jesus loves us,  
and He will always do what is best.

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Today's story teaches us three important lessons:

First, we see that when we die,  
only our bodies die.  
Our souls continue to live forever.

That soul of the young man -- where was he? We don't know.  
But after Jesus gave life back to the boy's body,

and his soul came back into his body,  
that boy got a deep understanding  
about life in the next world.

Now that boy understood  
it is important to trust God,  
it is important to believe His Word.

Now that boy understood that we can live forever with God,  
or we can live forever without God.

The second thing we learn from this story:  
Jesus is the Lord, the ruler over life and death. Jesus shows us  
that He opens the way to eternal life for anyone who accepts Him.  
Jesus give life again to that boy's body.  
One day Jesus also will give life again to our bodies.

That boy got his same body, and that body later died again.  
But when Jesus comes again, He will change our bodies to  
become perfect bodies that will never die again.

We will never struggle with sin again.  
We will never struggle with sickness again.  
We will never need to experience death again.

The third thing this story teaches us:  
The story teaches us that Jesus helps us  
not only for our life in heaven,  
but Jesus helps us in our life NOW.

Jesus raised the dead boy to life, WHY?  
Jesus raised the boy to help his mother.

That boy could grow to become a man. He could take-care-of his  
mother, then she will not need hunt for food in the farmers' fields.

Jesus loved that widow woman, the same as He loves you.  
Jesus promises to stay with you,  
not only in heaven,  
but also now,  
during times when you have much need.

Jesus knows you must live.  
He knows you must eat.  
He knows you must have clothes.

Jesus told the woman in our story, "Don't cry."  
Jesus tells us, "Don't worry."  
Jesus promises to take care of us.

Does that mean God promises to make us rich?  
No!

Jesus commands us not to desire to be rich with much world's things.

Jesus promises that  
if we trust Him,  
if we are satisfied with the life He gives us,  
and if we work as we can,  
we will never be naked, and we will have enough to eat.

Jesus wants to give us life.  
Life is more than things that belong to this world.  
In this world, life means having peace in your soul.  
Life means having joy knowing your sins are all forgiven.  
Life means finding God's special plan for you,  
each day,  
step by step.  
Life means fellowship with God,

now  
and forever.

Amen