

Learning to Love God's No

Luke 7:11-17

There are few things more gut-wrenching losing a family member to death. Often the greater pain is disappointment with God. Jesus encounters a widow and her dead son, and from this miracle we learn ***God may not always do what we ask, but He's already done far more than we'll ever grasp.***

I. There are extraordinary parallels between the widow's son and God's son.

Through these parallels, we see God's compassion for us through the gift of His Son Jesus Christ.

(A). He was an only son. The Greek phrase used to describe this widow's son -- ὁ μονογενῆς υἱός literally "only begotten son"- is the same phrase used of Jesus in John 3:16. It is used only one other time in the New Testament, describing Abraham's son Isaac in Hebrews 11:17 when Abraham offered his "only begotten son" on the altar - a clear type of God offering His son.

(B). He was outside the gate. Both the widow's son and Jesus Christ are dead 'outside the gate' of the city (Hebrews 13:12). The Hebrew Day of Atonement called for two goats to be 'offered' during the ritual; one goat for a blood offering and the other as the scapegoat offering. Israel's sins were laid upon the scape goat and expelled from the camp; the blood offering goat was sacrificed, the blood offered, and the body burned "outside the gate." (Leviticus 16:20-22).

(C). He was raised for others. There are two dead people in this story; the boy and his widowed mother. The boy was physically dead. The mother was emotionally and spiritually dead. Notice that Jesus 'felt compassion *for her*' (v. 13). Jesus raised the dead son for the sake of his mother. So, too, God the Father gave us His only begotten Son for the sake of others. "God so loved us" (John 3:16). "God demonstrates his own love *for us* ... Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

(D). He was offered with a command. When Jesus raised the boy from the dead by the word of His power, He gave him back to his mother with this command (to the mother) - "Do not weep."

II. There is a principle in this miracle of resurrection worth remembering.

The principle is this: *"Do not mourn, for God has raised His Son from the dead and given Him to you!"*

The only anecdote against despair during a trying time--including those occasions when our prayers seemingly go unanswered --is the growing comprehension of what God has already done for us in giving to us His resurrected Son. This is also what Paul teaches in Rom. 8:31-32;37-39 and Eph. 3:4-7.

(A) The greatest riches in my life are vertical, not horizontal. When I receive, comprehend, and enjoy the love of God for me in Christ Jesus, I no longer need or depend on the love of people in this life. So, even if those I love are gone I rest in the love of Him who loves me eternally.

(B). To the degree I lack this comprehension of the riches of God's kindness, favor, and love for me in Christ Jesus I will be tempted to measure God's love and favor through relieving troubles.

III. There are a couple of steps of action I need to take in light of this principle.

The principle is *"Do not mourn, for God has raised His Son from the dead and given Him to you."*

(A). I will spend more time learning about the love of God for me in what He has already done for me through His Son than I will worrying about what God will do for me in the future.

(B). I will seek to come to love God's "No" to my request as much as I love His "Yes."

Nain is a city in Israel that still exists. It's just to the southwest of Mt. Tabor in the Galilee region of Israel. The modernized spelling of Nain has switched to Nein. Nein in German means "No."

If I am praying for God to do something miraculous in my life, but the circumstances play out in such a way that God seems to say "Nein" to my request, I want to remember the widow of Nain and learn to "weep not" because God has already given to me His Son. I want to love Nein.