



### The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

*The Collect.*

**A**Lmighty and merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service; Grant, we beseech thee, that we may so faithfully serve thee in this life, that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly promises; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*11 And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. 12 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. 13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, **Weep not.** 14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, **Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.** 15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. 16 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. 17 And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about. (Luke 7:11-17)*

A diligent and careful reading of Holy Scripture cannot help but fill the heart with love and wonder. When I read the account above of the poor widow whose ONLY child had died, my heart is moved with compassion for her, and even more so when the compassionate voice of Christ speaks, "**Weep not!**" Though Lord, King, and Savior, Christ was also a kind gentleman who desired not to endure the tears of an innocent widow. His heart of love and mercy would not deign to bear witness of such a woman weeping for the forlorn misery of the loss of her only son. Did He not later suffer death for both? That is the measure of His care and love. It is not a CASUAL love, but a COMPASSIONATE and SACRIFICIAL love.

It may be tears to the eyes even of a fellow whose earlier years were devoted to the profession of arms. Please observe the affection and kindness with which Jesus acts. He commanded the woman not to weep for He could not bear to see it. He TOUCHED the bier upon which the dead body lay prepared for the darkness of death. When He touched the bier, all about Him stood still including those who bore it. When God acts, no hand of man can contribute. He called the boy as a Father calls His loving son: "**Young man!**" No other voice could avail to awaken the boy from this dark sleep, but the voice of Christ can penetrate dead tissue and the stony walls of even the tomb: "**I say unto thee, Arise.**" God spoke Creation into being within Seven Days. Christ speaks this young boy back to life with SEVEN Words! Perhaps a marvelous coincidence, or a testimony of Him whose words determine the course of the heavenly bodies in space? The boy did not struggle for a return of his breath, or shake convulsively as his body awoke to newness of life – no, he immediately sat up and talked as if he had never been dead. Those are the wonderful works of Christ!

Perhaps you may be wondering how the above account of Christ relates to Elisha? You may well remember that Elisha also did many miracles which, though short of those prolific wonders of Christ, were nonetheless a foreshadowing of that greater Personage to come called Emmanuel. Remember, in the Mind of God, there is no constraint of time. So we, too, may wonder back in Christ to Shunem where a certain great lady lived thousands of years ago. When we read of the miraculous restoration of her son to her from the prison of death by God (through Elisha), we may shed more tears of joy on her behalf. Love unites hearts across the barriers of time. If we join our hearts with that heart of the woman in her grief, and great faith, we may sense, not only her pain, but also that faith that propelled her to seek the impossible through the good prophet Elisha.

Elisha travelled often by the house of the Shunamite woman. She took note of his demeanor and walk and decided that he was a man of God. So, she prepared a room for him in which he could take rest in his travels. Through inquiries of Gehazi, Elisha's servant, Elisha determined that the Shunamite woman was barren and her husband quite old. *He called for her: And when he had called her, she stood in the door. And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid. And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.* (2 Kings 4:15-17) The child grew into adulthood, but took ill in his father's field and was carried to the arms of his mother where, sadly, he died. With most marginal believers, this would have been the end of a bitter sweet story, but the Shunamite woman was no marginal believer. She was a woman of unwavering faith and trust in God. *So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunammite: Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well. And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me? Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child. And the mother of the child said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and*

*followed her. And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked. And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. (2 Kings 4:25-32)* Well, now, isn't this a sad ending to an otherwise beautiful story? Yes, sad, indeed, if it were the end; but, behold, it is not the end of the story. With the people of God, there is never an END to the story!

*He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out. (2 Kings 4:33-37)* I hope I have not quoted more scripture than you are wont to read, but God tells us His story better than any man can paraphrase. We cannot comprehend the joy of such fulfilled faith until we have personally experienced it as did the Shunamite woman. I have never laid eyes upon this dear woman, but already I love her. I want to be more like her, don't you? Aren't the people of God wonderful and amazing beyond measure? Isn't the One who created such Hearts even more amazing?

We see that Elisha was a Type of Christ in his power from God to call a soul back from the grave. How much like the woman at Nain whose son was restored to life by a loving Christ.

Are there other examples in the life of Elisha that parallels certain events in the life of Christ? Yes, there are many; however, for the sake of brevity, I will mention but three more.

1) Elisha, by the hand of God, healed Naaman, the Captain of the Hosts of Syria, of leprosy. (2 Kings 5). Christ, too, healed the blind, the dumb, the crippled, the lepers, and even the greater leprosy of sin.

2) Elisha had a godless and wicked servant named Gehazi. (2 Kings 5:20-27). Jesus also had such a wicked servant who sought to pad his purse with the blood money of treason against the Lord of Glory – Judas Iscariot!

3) Elisha also turned a mere pot of oil into several overflowing pots of oil. *Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto*

*her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest. (2 Kings 4:1-7)*

How like our Savior at the Marriage at Cana of Galilee! *And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, **Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.** His mother saith unto the servants, **Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.** And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, **Fill the waterpots with water.** And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, **Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.** And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him. John 2:1-11 (KJV)*

Elisha was a type of Christ in so many different ways, yet, the works of Christ completely overshadow those of lesser lights such as Elisha. Christ fed multitudes with alternately few loaves of bread: ***Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?*** (Matt 16:9-10) Elisha was a great prophet whose powers were limited from God. Jesus Christ was a great Lord whose power was the VERY POWER of God. Have you felt this warm and loving power in your own life?