

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

The Collect.

O LORD, we beseech thee, let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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. 18 And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things. (Luke 7:11-17)

How often have we been at the point of complete and total heartbreak when suddenly our prayers are answered in a far greater way than we could have thought to ask? Love being the one power that is stronger than death (for all love is of God), why are we surprised at the miracles of love that we observe in our own daily lives? Why will a mother sacrifice her last breath of her life for her child? Why do men go off to war against the enemies of their homeland without a sigh or a word of regret in risking their lives to defend it?

Does God yet work such wonderful miracles as we have read about on that day He visited Nain? A young man is dead and within minutes of being buried. Is there hope for such a one? His mother has only this one son. She is a widow who has transferred all of her love and dependence from the deceased father upon this one special child for whom her very life is ransom. But he is now dead and she is left all alone! Though crowds gather about her, none have that familiar and loyal heart that beat in the breast of her deceased son, nor the dedicated love that heart devoted to his mother, for he is dead!

I can only imagine the pain and anguish of that forlorn heart of the woman of Nain that day. She would perform her last duty to a son that she had held dear to her bosom from the day of his birth. As she walked along behind the bier, she was dazed with misery and blinded by hot tears of devastation and wonder." "Can it be that he is truly dead – that I shall no longer hear his voice responding to my calls to supper?" "Is it finally true that I am now left alone against the world since the darling of my heart has departed?" A million questions swirled through her troubled mind as she trudged along a path blurred by the tears of her misery.

And what of the dead son? What are his thoughts? Well, he has no thoughts at all because the dead know nothing at all. *For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall*

die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun. (Eccl 9:4-6)

The world is populated by dead people who parade about as the living, and by the living who have been made alive from death. Do we not remember that we were all dead in trespasses and sin before Christ called our name and made us alive in Him? (Ephesians 2:1) We knew nothing. We had no power at all to save ourselves or to even think of our great need. We were, spiritually, just as the young man lying on a bier at Nain that day. Did that young man know of Christ? did he desire to have Christ come and make him alive? No, he did not think any of these thoughts. Remember, he was dead as dead can be, and so were we before Christ chose us as His own and made the life blood of His eternal love flow through our hearts. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you* (John 15:16)

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.

Now I pose the question that begs our deep thought: who are the dead? **The dead:** Those who reject Christ as Lord and Savior. Those who have no forgiveness for their sins...those for whom there has been no redemption for sins. That includes all the world which dwells in utter darkness.

The dead hear not. Who stopped their ears? Not God. Not even Satan. They themselves have chosen to be dumb to the reality of God. Their spirits lie in the same repose of that of Lazarus in the Tomb at Bethany before the penetrating voice of Christ called his name and commanded him to come forth.

This son of the widow is dead, but death cannot exist in the presence of the Fountain of Life. Jesus knows the importance of a son or daughter to a widow. The boy is all his mother has just as He, Himself, is the only Begotten of the Father.

As the procession proceeds from the gate of the city, there may have been little notice paid to the Master of Life who is approaching. *13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, **Weep not.***

Strange that a Perfect Stranger (and Jesus was both perfect and a stranger to the procession at Nain), should come forward with such a comment – weep not! How could she help weeping over her great loss. Christ speaks today and few listen or know Him.

Jesus never desires our sorrow, but our joy in life. He neither wants us to 'fear' or to 'weep'. ***Fear not, I am with thee always, even unto the end of the world.*** Or "*Hagar, why weepest thou?*" The desire of Christ is always for our extreme joy in Him. And Christ knows there is no real joy, or life, apart from that which He offers. He sends no

one to Hell. The lost, due to their rejection of Him, send themselves to Hell.

14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. When God is at work, we had best stand still and see the marvelous works that His hands perform. Stillness is a vanishing quality in a world bent on technology and pragmatism. As God said to Job in Job 37:14 "*Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God*" Or Psalms 46:10 – "*Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*"

So those who bore the body remained motionless while God worked. And he said, *Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.*

Though the ears of the Rabbi's maiden were closed in the lock of death, the young girl heard the voice of Christ. Though Lazarus lay long dead in a stone cold tomb, the voice of Christ, his Friend, penetrated the bars of death and were heard in newness of life. So with this young man.

And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. With Christ, death is always in the past tense! He **was** dead! No longer was he dead because he had heard and responded to the voice of Christ. He sat up and began to speak. Once you have heard the voice of Christ whisper in your ear a personal message, you cannot fail to speak out. You do not keep it a secret. When you are suddenly made alive in Christ, how is it possible to conceal one's joy?

It may be that you have yet to be made alive, unless you have heard that Voice. When were you dead, and have you been called to life? Have you listened? Did you respond by unashamedly speaking out? We were ALL dead prior to responding in faith to the grace of Christ. All lost. All dead.

Have you considered yourself righteous in your own right? Romans 23:10-12 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.* Romans 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God* ALL? Does that include you and me? Yes, ALL

What is the condemnation to those who sin such as you and I have done? Rom 6: 20 *For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

What remedy is there for all of us who are born under the condemnation of sin? Rom10: 8 *But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

Christ is the great Creator and Giver of Life. Death will not exist in His presence. So we must insure our salvation that we may be present with him. But, how? Know that the wages of sin is death. Admit that we are dreadful sinners and cannot save ourselves through any good works. Repent of our sins and turn away from the desires of the flesh. Receive Christ as you Lord and Savior – not simply Savior, but Lord of your life as well.

How many of us present today have taken a `dry' shower, or a `dry' swim, or walked in a `dry' rain?

Is it possible to get into the water, or to come into contact with a fountain of water, and remain dry?

There is a River of Life which makes all alive who bathe therein and drink from its fountain:

*John 4: 13 Jesus answered and said unto her, **Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life***

When we are IN Christ, all our sins are covered by His blood. When we are IN the River of Life, we are wet with that water of life all over. We are baptized in newness of life. Your eternal destiny depends upon which choice you make at the crossroads of life – will you be fearful and unbelieving? Or will you partake of the Tree of Life and Fountain of Living Waters?

Rev 21:6 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Simple response – John 3:15 ***That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.***

Have you, too, believed unto salvation? 2 Cor 6:2 *(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)*

It will not be tomorrow, or next week, month, or year. The time is NOW! How do you stand, Reader, in regard to your soul?