

Luke 7 vv. 11-17.

The next day, early in the morning, a large crowd of people leaves Capernaum. In the midst walks the Lord Jesus, surrounded by His disciples. So He is leaving Capernaum to carry out His work in one of the cities of Galilee. Evidently He is accompanied by hundreds of Jews, for in the Bible it says "much people".

The road runs upwards into the mountains, for Capernaum lay on the shore of the lake of Gennesaret and was therefore low-lying.

They have ahead of them a long, tiring journey. Jesus is on the way to Nain, a city which is several hours walking distance from Capernaum.

In the early hours of the morning it ~~was~~^{is} not too warm. Now it is better. ^{As} ~~it~~ it gets later ~~the~~ the sun climbs higher and the heat increases. They walk on hour after hour. Many become tired. The heat becomes even greater.

Many of them will have ~~been~~^{been looking} forward longingly to the end of the journey. Many of them hanker ~~at~~^{for} the moment when they ~~can~~^{can} sit and rest. The journey is so long; Nain is so far away.

At last however, towards midday, they approach the little Galilean city. What a relief! Just a little longer and they will be there. They can already ^{see} in the distance the houses of Nain. Finally they come close to the gate. Just a few moments and they will have reached their destination. But ...

That same morning when Jesus was leaving the gates of Capernaum, there sat in Nain a woman by the death bed of her only child. She was a widow. She lacked the help and support of her husband, for he had been taken from her by death. Happily she had one child, a boy.

She bestows on her only boy all the love of her heart. She had nothing else in the world. He was her support and her comfort. Probably the young lad had earned money to keep them both.

But her child ~~became sick~~^{tell ill} and now this morning he has come to the extremity. She can see that it is the end.

Her heart shudders at the thought of losing her boy. What will have gone on in this sorely tried woman's heart? ...

Oh, she had wanted to keep a tight hold on her child. She had wanted to keep back death. But ... death allows no resistance. Death comes,

irresistably. ...

And so it happens here too with the son of this sorrowful widow. There he lies. Just look! ... His breath catches ... his eyes break ... just one last sigh and ... death has cut short that young life.

Probably the sobbing mother has closed the eyes of her only dear one.

Soon afterwards the sad news spreads through the little city. Many, very many, get ready to bring the dead child to his last resting place. They all know the widow and her son. Now they are showing their last respects.

In our country the dead are usually buried after four days, but in the East that cannot happen because it is so warm. That is why there the dead were buried on the same day. It had to be ^{for}so because of the great heat the dead bodies very soon began to decay.

Look, there they come already with the stretcher or bier. The body is wrapped in grave clothes and laid on the bier. For the last time the young lad is carried from his home. Accompanied by mournful sounds the procession sets forth. In the Bible it says "Much people of the city was with her".

Sobbing deeply and with head bowed low, the bereaved mother follows shakily towards the grave. For her it is the second time that she has made this sad journey. The first time had been when her husband had gone to his last resting place. How long that had been before this time we do not know. The Bible does not tell us. Perhaps it was only a short time before, but it could equally well have been that she had lived for many years a widow.

Yet then she still had her son.

Now, she walks the same way, but now her only child is being borne away. Now she has lost everything. When she returns home shortly there will be no-one to greet her. The chair in which her boy always used to sit will be empty from now on. When she shuts the door at night, her child lies in the dark tomb. She must go on through life alone.

Is it surprising that the poor woman weeps such sorrowful tears? ... Is it surprising that her heart is almost broken by sorrow and suffering? ...

Oh now, of course, her fellow citizens show sympathy, but soon when it is all over they will all go to their own homes and she will be left alone.

What a heavy, heavy path that was for this weeping widow woman. The long procession turns into the street leading to the gate, for the dead were buried

outside the city. Soon the city of Nain is behind them.

Suddenly they all look with surprise along the road, for there, in the distance a large crowd of people is approaching. What can it be? ... What have all those people come to Nain for? ... The attention of all is quite removed from the distressed mother and her dead son and is directed towards those who are approaching. They crane their necks and stare inquisitively. You know who it is don't you?

Look, there the two groups meet. One group on the way to Nain, longing for the journey's end; the other group coming out of Nain, on the way to the cemetery.

The leaders of the group from Capernaum are already passing the funeral procession. They do not know who is being buried there. A funeral? ... Well, that is a daily occurrence. Nothing unusual. They do not realise that a widow is burying her only son. Carry on, the sooner they get into Nain the better.

It does not enter their heads that Jesus will help. Here is a case beyond help. This is finished. If it had been a lame or blind man, a leper, or any other diseased person who was coming, well, then it could still be possible, but here. ... Here it is all over. For good. Here there is no possibility of helping.

The Lord Jesus however stops suddenly. He well knows who is being carried there. He well knows what is going on in the heart of that weeping woman. He knows that the way is almost too heavy for her.

His soul is filled with compassion. In the Bible it says that He had compassion on her.

Look, He walks up the widow and says to her: "Weep not". Do not weep? ... Is it any wonder that this woman cries with sorrow and unspeakable grief? ... Weep not? How can the Lord Jesus say such a thing? Should she not weep in bringing her only loved and dearest one away for ever?

"Weep not!" - Oh, there is not one who understands the Lord Jesus.

It could well be that many of the Galileans who had come with Him became impatient. Why such a delay now? Must they wait even longer? Surely there is nothing to save here? ...

But look, Jesus walks up to the bier and touches it. The pall bearers

stand still, looking on in surprise. What does this stranger want? The sounds of mourning cease and it becomes breathlessly quiet. Then ... is it possible?

Suddenly the voice of the Lord Jesus resounds with authority and commands: "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise."

The eyes of all present are wide open in astonishment. They all hold their breath, because ... Oh, just look. The eyes of the dead ~~man~~^{youth} are open, he sits up, and begins to speak. The dead is alive again. However is it possible?

It is true that centuries before the prophet Elijah had also raised a dead person. That was the son of the widow of Zarephath. But Elijah then had kneeled down and prayed. Then he had stretched himself three times over the child, and only then had the spirit of life returned. The prophet Elisha had also once raised someone from the dead, namely the son of the Shunamite woman. He, however, had kneeled down and humbly pleaded with God to give back the child's life. He had spread himself twice over the lad, and then the boy's flesh had become warm.

Here, however, it is quite different. Here the Lord Jesus does not pray, no, He commands! Why the difference?

Well, Elijah and Elisha were men, and God used them as a means. But here the Son of God is speaking. Jesus does not ask, no, He gives orders. The King of kings commands, and death must give way at once!

What does the Lord Jesus do then? ... Just read what it says: "and He delivered him to his Mother".

There they are embracing each other. Probably the widow cried more than ever, though now they are not tears of grief, but of unbounded joy. Her sadness had been great, but her joy was still greater.

The many Jews had witnessed all this in speechless astonishment. Their hearts are filled with joy and respect. Oh, such a thing has never happened before. They have seen many miracles, but something like this, no, they had never even expected this.

Again and again Jesus had helped whenever He was asked, but here He had helped without being asked. It says in God's Word that they glorified God and cried: "A great prophet is risen up among us; and God hath visited his people

Look at that large doubled multitude. They look on the Lord Jesus with

eyes bright with wonder, but they do not worship Him, they do not acknowledge Him as the Son of God, as the Saviour. Their wonder does not last long.

Read again carefully what they say. "A great prophet is risen up among us". A prophet. They do not say THE prophet! The only Prophet! No! Elijah and Elisha were prophets, great prophets, well then the Lord Jesus is also a prophet. Nothing more. In those words is betrayed a failure to appreciate the Lord Jesus. He is still to these people Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

The funeral~~ly~~ procession, which is now ~~no~~ such thing, returns to the city. They need go no further. We do not know whether Jesus and His disciples with their hundreds of followers also went into the city, nor do we know how long they stayed in Nain. The Bible is silent on this subject.

There, with her son restored to life, the mother enters her home again. Oh what a wonderful day it has been for them.

The people of Nain did not do much more work that day. In every house there was much to say about the great miracle which had taken place. Yes, before long, it is made known in the whole of the surrounding district. Even in Judea, where so many proud Pharisees live, the news goes from mouth to mouth. The Pharisees hear it too, and their hearts become anxious, for they cannot deny that a great wonder has taken place, but to acknowledge Him as the long promised Messiah? ... No, never!

What a wonderful story, isn't it children? Perhaps you are thinking: "Oh, if only we had lived in those days."

Oh, but why? Do you think that you would have been converted more easily in those times? ... No, indeed. It may appear so, but it is not true.

Yes, but in those days you could have gone to Him and asked it of Him, couldn't you? Then you could have stayed close to Him! ... Well, you can still do that now. For Jesus is not dead, but He lives. He hears you, He sees you, He knows what goes on in your hearts, He knows the thoughts of each one of you.

What the Lord Jesus did to the young man of Nain, He must also do for you, if you are to be truly happy. You must be raised from death to LIFE.

Perhaps some of you will ask: "Dead ... are we dead then?" ...

And the answer is "Yes. You are dead. Dead in trespasses and sins. Spiritually dead!"

Each one who is called by God's grace, be he young or old, must be made alive. Alive, through the Spirit's work. Do you believe that?

Oh, it is so difficult, isn't it? ... That is true, but one thing you must always remember and never ... never forget.

Nowadays there are thousands who say that man is not spiritually dead. Oh no, we must believe, we must accept the Lord Jesus ourselves. But that is a lie, for we are neither willing nor able. Of ourselves we will not and cannot accept anything. Why not? Because we are dead in sin.

What next then? ... Is it hopeless? ... No!! That same Jesus, who once raised the young man of Nain from the dead, can also make our dead souls live through His word and Spirit. It says in the Bible: "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live (^{John} ~~Jonah~~ 5 v.25).

How wonderful it would be if Jesus should say to you: "My son, My daughter, I say unto thee arise! Arise from a state of spiritual death and live to the honour of God here on earth, and after death, in eternal glory! "