

# “ARISE”

Luke 7:11-17

In our Gospel reading, we hear of, what I believe is the most significant of Jesus' miracles (especially early in His ministry). The feeding of the 5000, the healing miracles, the calming of the storm, and walking on water are all great miracles and they signal that a prophet is among the people, and they point toward Jesus being a prophet of God and possibly the Messiah.

But raising the dead is *the* miracle. This is the one that everyone should be talking about. This is the entire reason that God sent His Son into the world. Death must be conquered. God must say, “Arise.”

The circumstances at the little town of Nain provide a perfect opportunity for Christ to reveal His true nature. A great crowd has been following Him, and they meet up with the crowd gathered for the funeral of a young man. Therefore, there were many people around and this event has a great impact on the rest of Jesus' Galilean ministry.

Now, if you keep reading in Luke's Gospel, immediately after this miracle takes place, a couple of John the Baptists disciples come to Jesus and ask, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we look for another?”

Jesus could have said, “Were you not listening when John said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.’ Or when My Father in heaven thundered down His voice and said, ‘This is My

Son whom I love. With Him I am well pleased.”? What Jesus does tell them is to report back what they have seen and heard, “the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised.” Jesus is referring to the writings of Isaiah and what he said would happen when the Messiah came. And all these things happened because the Messiah had come. Death must be conquered. God must say “Arise.”

Luke records that the Lord saw this widow, whose only son was dead, and He had compassion on her. That word compassion is a not-so-pretty word in the Greek: *esplagxnisthae*. You would think that a beautiful concept such as compassion would have an equally beautiful word. That word *esplagxnisthae* expresses compassion in a harsh, graphic way, yet does so in the same way as Hebrew, Aramaic and even as we do in English. *esplagxnisthae* literally means the complete outpouring of your inner parts. The English word “spleen” comes from this word. Compassion turns you inside out and exposes the inner workings of your being.

Compassion denotes the outpouring of mercy. In English, we commonly express this as “pouring out your heart for someone.” True compassion comes at a price. If there is no cost to you, you have not shown compassion. You pour out your spleen. This word is used of the Good Samaritan and the Father of the Prodigal Son. The true nature of God is revealed in the pouring out of mercy. And that mercy will come at a very high price.

You might ask, “What did it cost Jesus to raise this young man from the dead? After all, Jesus didn’t even have to deviate from

His path.” He is walking along and runs into this funeral procession. But we look closer at the text. This young man was an only-begotten son. Another only-begotten Son would die and be raised from the dead. We see a foreshadowing of the ultimate outpouring of mercy upon the world. It will come at a great cost, and it is fitting that an ugly-sounding word would represent this act of compassion.

Raising this dead, only-begotten son is *the* miracle that demonstrates that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophetic hope and that with Him the messiah has come. Death must be conquered. God must say, “Arise.”

He is the final prophet who will fulfill the words of Isaiah. There is no need to look for another. The Messiah, the only-begotten Son of God is more than just a preacher and teacher. He is more than just a healer and miracle worker. He will be crucified, He will die, and God the Father will say to Him, “Arise.”

The widow’s son at Nain foreshadows Christ’s death and resurrection, and our death and resurrection. Like at Nain, when you die, there will be a funeral; there will be weeping and mourning; there will be friends, loved ones, and neighbors saddened by the loss. And Christ, who conquered death, will say to you, “Arise.” Amen.