

# The Widow of Nain and Her Son

*Sermon at Nathanaels Kirke on 6 October 2019 – by George Thomas*



*“Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out – the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.”*

*Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.*

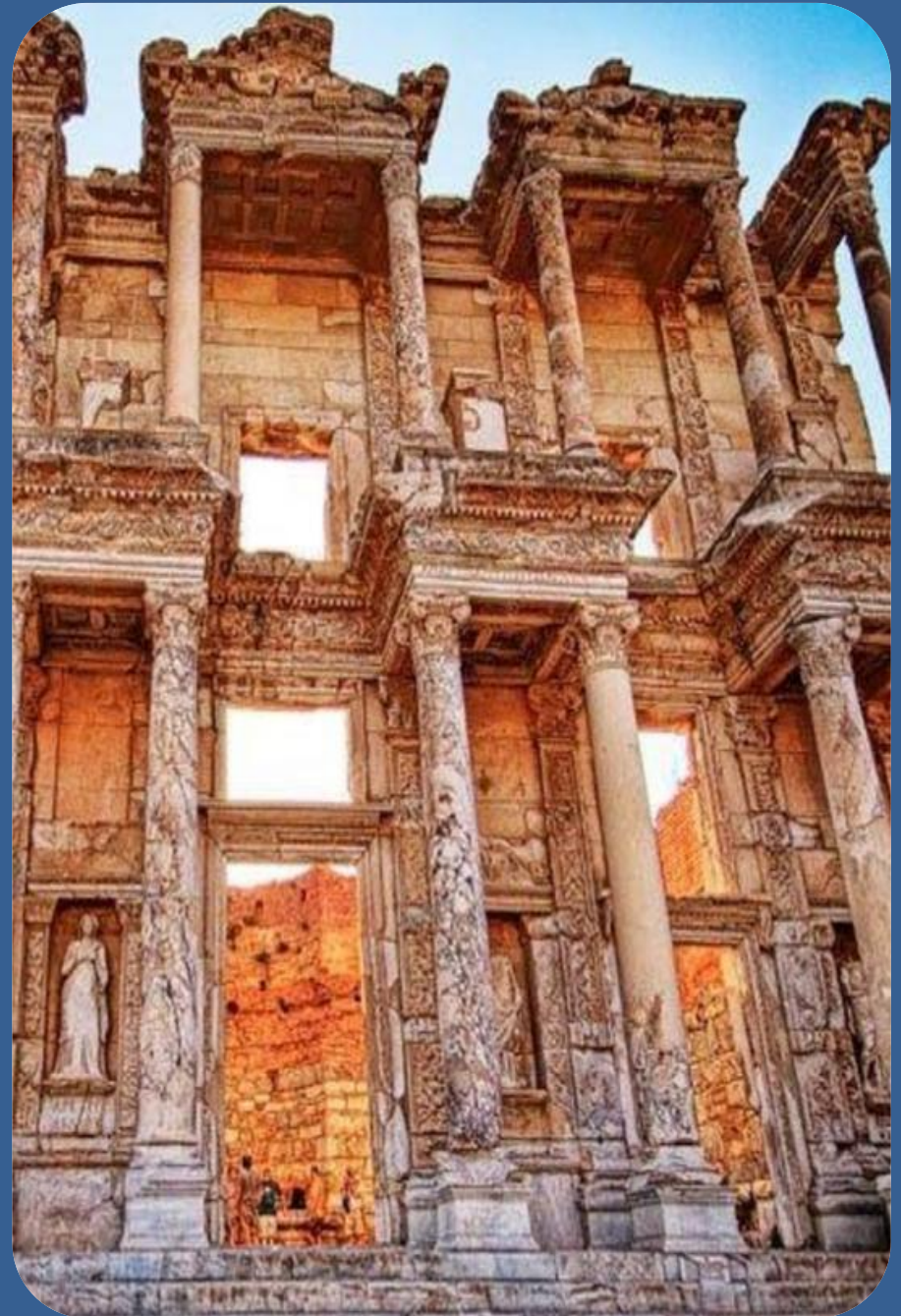
*They were all filled with awe and praised God. “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said. “God has come to help his people.” This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.”*

*– Luke 7:11-17*

Jesus performed many miracles during His earthly ministry. However, some of the most moving scenes among these miracles are where He showed His power over death by raising people to life again.

Throughout the Bible History 10 people had got raised from the dead. One of them was the son of the widow of Zarephath by Prophet Elijah in 1 Kings 17 - which is seen as the model for the miracle in today's Gospel text - since there are several parallels in the details. Jesus Himself raised three people in the New Testament: son of the widow of Nain, daughter of Jairus and Lazarus.

Jesus raised the son of a widow who lived in the city of Nain. Nain was a small city of Galilee, about six miles south of Nazareth. We can surely picture this event and feel the emotion surrounding it - because we have all lost someone to death; not an only son as this woman, but a parent, sibling, other dear relative, or perhaps a close friend.







As fearful as physical death can be, there is something worse, which is spiritual death - to be "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). What is this spiritual death? Like physical death, it is a separation, though not of body but of the soul from God because of sin. It is a problem that all human beings face because "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Thus, while we certainly need to make preparations for the time of physical death, we need to be more concerned about the problem of spiritual death. Physical death ends only this life, but spiritual death has consequences for all eternity.

There are numerous widows of Nain living today as well – amongst us in our own society and communities. They are daily weeping over the death of their sons and daughters – both physical and spiritual death. These dead ones are their only source of help and support - their dreams and aspirations. The helpless weeping of these today's widows of Nain are still heard in our own neighborhoods and communities.

Just as physical death brings about sorrow, there should be sorrow for spiritual death. When we mourn because people are lost to physical death, there is not much else we can do. But when we mourn because of being in a state of spiritual death, it can lead to repentance and unto salvation.

We see a resurrection in verses 14-17 of today's text where Jesus commanded the young man to arise and he sat up. This demonstration of Jesus' power certainly brought great comfort to the grieving mother and it also showed Jesus's compassion, but it had a much greater purpose than that. Notice the reaction of the people - they rightly concluded from this event that a great prophet had arisen.

In similar manner God has made it possible for those who are spiritually dead to undergo a spiritual resurrection (Romans 6:3-5). If those who are dead in sin follow the pattern of Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection by dying to sin and being buried in baptism, they can rise to walk in newness of life. This gives Christians the hope of a future resurrection from the dead that will result in eternal life.





Funerals are always sad occasions, but Jesus turned this one into a time of joy. We need to be prepared for death, not only in making provisions for our own funeral and burial, but also in making provisions for our souls to escape spiritual death and walk in newness of life, so that when our bodies are raised from the dead, we can have eternal life with Christ in heaven.

Certain problems in life make us feel just like this poor widow because similar to death, these problems are beyond our control. However, this miracle shows us that nothing, not even death is beyond the control of Jesus.

The same Jesus who raised this widow's son 2000 years ago is alive and among us even as I speak. Right now may be you are going through a very difficult time in life and actually doubting the presence of God and His love. People of Nain shouted, "God has come to help his people". If God seems to be distant in your life now, remember that he is about to do something bigger and something glorious in your life - through Jesus. Then why not take your problem to Jesus right now?

