

Jesus Gave Him To His Mother **Luke 7:11-17**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Martin Luther's great Easter hymn in LSB 458 and in TLH 195 is "*Christ Jesus Lay In Death Strong Bands.*" The melody is kind of strange, at least so I am told. It is the hymn of the day, that is, the hymn chosen by the church to reflect the theme for Easter Sunday. It has the most incredible text for that festival. The second verse is an incredible text as we consider the Gospel lesson for this morning.

It was a strange and dreadful strife
When Life and Death contended.
The victory remained with Life,
The reign of death was ended.
Holy Scripture plainly saith,
That death is swallowed up by death,
Its sting is lost forever
Alleluia!

Jesus has a crowd with him as he approaches the gates of the town of Nain, and another crowd is accompanying a widow as her son is being carried out for burial. Life and death face one another, death in the flesh of the young man, and life in the flesh of the creator of all life – Jesus Christ. At that gate life and death contended, and life was victorious.

It is said by many, that no parent should have to grieve over their children. I get it! I would not like to have to bury either of my boys. But Pauline and I have lost children to death. Nathan & Tim have either a brother or a sister in heaven. Miscarriage was the reason that they are there today. It is not easy for a child to die before a parent. Today we pray for the Sorenson family at the loss of Jordon.

But if we are completely honest, neither is it easy for a child to lose a parent! It hurts. It is not easy for a husband or wife to lose a spouse. Sure, I know a people who have said that at the death of a loved one, said they were glad their loved one's suffering is over. They stated that they were glad they were now at peace. A loved one's pain and suffering hurt us, it tears our hearts out to see our loved ones enduring such things, and death brings that to an end. While we may put on a brave face because we know their suffering is at an end, it is also just as true that we would rather have them back here with us – healthy and whole.

Let's face it, death sucks!

Death was not a part of God's original plan for mankind. Death came about because someone broke the relationship they had with God. Imagine being able to walk down paths of beautifully manicured botanical garden, fruit ripe and hanging there for the taking at every turn. Imagine a garden without weeds of any kind. Imagine being able to walk in that garden and talking with God as the sun prepared to set. Wow!

But someone wasn't happy with that relationship with God, they did not trust God at His word, and just had to eat of that one fruit in the garden they were told not to eat. They had been told that if they ate of it, they would die, they would not longer being in a special relationship with God. But they ate anyway!

You may not want to hear this, but there is not a one of us who deserves to outlive the other – neither parents nor children deserve to live a single day. We were born in broken relationships and we have broken them at every turn. We are to fear and love God so that we do not do certain things (out of fear of God), and do certain things (out of love for God). At every turn we break that relationship with God. We do not love God, nor do we love our neighbor. We do not deserve God's love.

Here in our text is God enfleshed walking into Nain. He sees this woman, who has already lost her husband, going out to bury her only son. The community is gathered in support of her, they are also grieving her loss. Jesus sees her and has compassion on her. Jesus has a merciful heart and it not beyond caring.

Death is the consequence this young man deserved, for he had broken the relationship he had with God, with his friends, and even with his own mother. Each of you here knows exactly what those broken relationships look like, don't you! We have all damaged relationships with parents, spouse, and children – by our selfishness, lying, hurtful words, and in other ways. Broken relationships! Without even looking at other relationships outside of family, it is easy to see that those we supposedly love the most are the ones we continually hurt the worst, don't we? Broken relationships!

Christ comes to restore those relationships that are broken. He is God in human flesh to restore us to right relationship to God, and to restore us to right relationships with one another. Did you see the sign of the cross that I made in the air?

Christ raises the young man, "I say to you, arise!" He restores him to a right relationship with God, giving him back his life. Then he gives him to his mother, restoring him in a right relationship with her. God does see and care about us.

Todd Jer'bek lay in death's strong bands,
A poor and mis'erable sinner,
Christ crucified before God stands,
Todd's sins are fully covered,
Forgiven now he freely stands,
One of God's holy white robed band,
A saint not yet in heaven. Alleluia.

Today Payton Lucille is brought to Zion by her parents, one dead in trespasses and sin. Christ comes to her, water and the word, He gave His life for her on the cross, and in the miracle of baptism, gives His life to her in the forgiveness of sins. And then returns her to her parents.

You my friends are those who were dead in trespasses and sin. Christ comes to you and gives you life, and then He gives you to your holy mother the church.

When cross and trial grieve us, we think all is lost. What do we do then? Do we cry to God with our pain and grief? Do we tell Him how we are hurting? Do we come to Him and express our disappointment and sorrow?

Why don't we? Is it because we think that those with faith do not do such things? Jacob wrestled with God! Abraham battled with God for Sodom & Gomorrah. Jesus cried out from the cross, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

Christ comes into this place, life and death contended. We confess broken relationships – with family, with friends, and most especially with God –we did it saying, "I, a poor, miserable sinner..." Christ told you to arise by the mouth of His pastor, "Your sins are forgiven." You are in a restored relationship with God.

Christ raises us all to life and gives us to our mother, the church, who will care for us, feed us, and nourish us in Word and Sacrament. The church does so at Christ bequest, by bestowing the gifts Christ purchased with His innocent suffering and death upon the cross, and sealed when He rose from the grave.

Forgiven, we are also in right relationships with those around. Living in the forgiveness God gives to us, we are forgiving and loving to others, just as God in Christ forgives and loves us. Amen.