



Risen Savior Lutheran Church

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Don't cry. 2 words that come easily to our lips when we see someone in tears. Today's Gospel involves a devastating death. Parents worst nightmare. Death of a child. 'Don't cry' seems inadequate. What intensified this tragedy is, this was her only son, she was a widow. Perhaps like the widow in the OT lesson, she too may be going home to bake her last meal. Few things are more pitiful, desperate in the ancient world as a widow with no sons. She was alone.

Behold, a man who had died was being carried out. There you have it. 10 simple words that tell your future. one day, that's you. No matter how brilliant or helpful all the doctors, advances in medicine. No matter how well you listen to the advice of your mother, eat your vegetables, take your vitamins, take your medicine, exercise- death awaits us. And which of you don't face death everyday.

That funeral, a scene of sadness, hurt, despair. You've shed many tears. You've been tempted to call God a liar and a cheat because you've been robbed of joy; faced loss of loved ones. Despair has knocked on your door and tempted you to doubt God's goodness. Repent.

Jesus saw the widow, had compassion, His heart poured out for her. This is the kind of God and Lord we have, one who is moved to help us in our need. He doesn't offer empty words to the widow, words that the world has to offer, *'oh it will be ok, everything will work out, he still lives in your heart, just think of the good times and memories, he's in a better place. you can be strong and go on.* He simply says to her (and you), **Stop weeping.**

The esv translation **do not weep** is not very helpful. Even Jesus will weep at Lazarus tomb. He's not telling her to not cry. He's simply telling her, **stop weeping then**, because He is there. **Stop crying** I've come to conquer all that saddens you, that makes you feel alone, hurt and helpless. I am here to wipe away every tear.

Young man, I say to you, arise. We miss read miracle if we see them as mainly demonstrations of His power, His divinity. Although true. Miracles are meant as revelations of His character. The word for miracle in Greek is sign. More than signs this man is God. He is gracious. He does not stand idly by.

Jesus raises this child, not just out of pity for his mother – but as a sign of His compassion for you and whole world. Just as Jesus was moved by sorrow of this widow; He ached, He is moved in compassion for you. He knows and feels your griefs even more deeply than you know and feel them. He always knows your sorrows, for He bore them for you on the cross.

The Lord who is Life touches death and death must give way. On that cross – in that death, He touches your death, destroying the power of death forever; there you've assurance you and all your loved ones in Him, too will rise. Death only seems to win. But those who believe in Jesus never die. They live. Scripture says their souls live in heaven with Him now; while their physical bodies fall asleep to wait resurrection on the Last Day. We still need cemeteries, but even there is a confession of faith.

I should admit, I am not completely comfortable when some Christians say, "God is in control." Sure, of course its true, so now what. Christians will say, God is in control, not just to trust Him and be at peace, but in the sense that we can know answers; as if God has some grand plan for our lives in which even the painful moments are but pieces of His grand puzzle. So it's my job to figure out the plan, follow God's leading, rest assured that no matter how battered, bruised, or bleeding I am, God wants me to be that way. Where is the comfort, compassion in that?

We don't believe because God gives us answers to all our questions. We believe Christ is the answer to all that matters. We cling to Him like a lifeline when our hearts are ready to give up, our bodies ache from their wounds, and our spirits lag near despair for the troubles and trials heaped upon the children of God by a world at odds with God's will, an evil enemy working at every turn to release us from the grasp of grace, and our sinful self who wants to give up on God's desire for us and just live for the moment. Luther himself wrestled with depression, weariness, doubts, and fears. Some of us are in good company

here. But the answer lies not in God's grand plan that will make sense of all the wounds -but the wounds that give healing, the death that kills death, the eternal life which is beyond imagination that is yours even now. The hope we have is not answers we understand or see but Christ, crucified, risen, our new life in Him.

I say to you, arise. His compassion, His work to act. Likewise your Savior touches your dead body in Holy Baptism and says, Arise dear child. Share in my death, my resurrection, share in my life. Arise from your doubt and fear in your days. Arise and receive my supper. Arise in my peace in Absolution, what happen at Nain will happen to you for eternity, speak to your body from the grave, Arise, dear child.

Cast your cares on Him, know that you have nothing to fear – know that all will be set right, He makes all things new, you know how the story of your life here will end. In the meantime, trust Him, call upon Him in prayer, take Him at His Word in comfort and joy we have that nothing can take away, Jesus lives, death is no more. A great prophet is still among us. Today, God comes again to visit His people, you and always acts in your life, in compassion for you.