



The Gospel According to Luke

Wk. 32 "Raising the Dead, a Divine Encounter"

By Pastor Jody May

Luke 7:11-17 ESV

Jesus Raises a Widow's Son

¹¹ Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. ¹² As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. ¹³ And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." ¹⁴ Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." ¹⁵ And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. ¹⁶ Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" ¹⁷ And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

Let me open with a statement this morning that whether you are a Christian, a seeker of Truth from another faith, or an atheist, we all can agree with this one point. **Nobody has ever seen God!** And because of that no one knows how to recognize Him by looks or actions, that's why there has been a string of TV movies that all portray God differently. Whether it's Morgan Freeman in *Evan/Bruce Almighty* (shares glory), or George Burns in *Oh God* (moody), or Alanis Morissette in *Dogma* (as a woman), or Graham Chapman in *The Holy Grail* (diminutive/dismissive), or more recently Steve Buscemi in *Miracle Workers* (unsatisfied with Creation). No one from Hollywood gets God right but there was one person that portrayed Him so well that He received God's stamp of approval.

John 14:8-9 ESV

⁸ Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." ⁹ **Jesus** said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me **has seen the Father.**

The **approval of God** we will celebrate in 3 weeks, it's called the **Resurrection!** What the people in Hollywood and all the Lost World miss is that if you want to see what God looks like, in the heart/emotions, in His drive, in His mannerisms, what He thought was important, what caught His attention, and even personal habits then you are to gaze at one being because this is the only way



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you will ever be able to know Him. In this passage today you are to witness the Truth of who Jesus was **in order to see God.**

He has healed, He has cast out demons, He has forgiven sins, He has a great charisma about Him for people follow Him and He's only invited 12 along, and He has used the title "Son of Man" connecting Him to God (Daniel) and man and in doing so made declares He's divine (authority derived from self) and you have seen that now some others along with the demons believe He has the authority to do whatever He wants, that's Divine Authority. **There is only one thing left He can do, that is to demonstrate His power over death itself, for only God can breathe life into an unliving thing.** Church here's my prayer for you this morning and what I want you to tackle with: **Jesus IS the Living God.** When you take this in it will force you to disagree with Hollywood, cults, and most of the world for not to believe that He is God is to surrender your claim to Salvation. Before moving to this evidence this morning let me give you this famous quote from CS Lewis that all pastors must use at some point in their preaching career. It's like the definitive clause we all have to use or you don't make the grade.

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him [that is, Christ]: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse.... You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." – **C.S. Lewis *Mere Christianity***

So, this morning we are going to witness the Divine actions of Jesus, Him acting as God for He is God, and in doing so may our affections grow for Jesus, for you will see He is worthy of your praise!

1. Knowing things and making things happen as The Divine.

¹¹ Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him.

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Wk. 32 "Raising the Dead, a Divine Encounter"

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only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her.

Have you ever noticed in the scripture there's no mention of Jesus of having the staff meeting on Monday morning after preaching in the synagogues, no meeting with His staff, no review of the budget, no going through the goals and comparing attendance & healing numbers? No, Jesus basically wakes up tells the guys He's moving out, they let the masses know and they roll. Of course, Jesus is communicating with the one that matters, we see Him pull away for prayer all the time, but **there is no one setting an agenda for Him, no one is trying to keep Him corralled to a Metrix they think is important. Jesus sets His agenda moves with purpose and without permission because He is setting and keeping His Divine appointments.**

In this account Jesus, right after He heals the Centurion's servant, goes on the move. He goes to a town called Nain, a little town that you can actually go and still see I am told with just a few more people than we have in our church today, not big at all. Nain is 20 miles away from Capernaum but only 4 miles away from Nazareth. There isn't any hotels between where Jesus was and where He was going, so He made a choice to take all the masses with Him, on a full day's journey, to get to Nain; hundreds if not thousands marching all day, most likely not stopping for rest or for food, to get them there before the end of the day.

When they get to Nain, **if you can imagine being there with Him**, you wonder why the rush? You discover as you are coming into town there is a funeral procession coming out. You know it's a funeral because there are several people carrying a Bier, like a traveling couch, and you see out in front an elderly woman, crying and wailing, and you begin to piece together some things. First, it is getting late in the day so you realize that either this person has died over night or early in the afternoon because you would not keep this body longer than a day in the town because of decomposition. You also realize that there is no husband or other man standing with her, and you realize that you have walked in on a very desperate and tragic scene. You are witnessing the funeral of an only son to a woman who was already a widow. Not only that but because you caught them on the outside of town every disciple was able to see the very real grief of the scene and every town goer was able to take note of the arrival of Jesus the miracle worker.

What timing the master has? Here was an opportunity missed you may think because you had just left Capernaum where Jesus only had to say the word to heal a Gentiles servant. This young man in front of you would have surely been healed, being a son, and an only Jewish son of a widow.



The Gospel According to Luke

Wk. 32 "Raising the Dead, a Divine Encounter"

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Doesn't this sort of sound familiar to us? Haven't we ever questioned why didn't Jesus show up sooner at some bad event and fix it?

One of the calling cards of God's Divine Will, one of the distinctives in the message of the Gospel, **is that God's timing always seems too late for us, but God can never be too late for He is Divine, so He shows up exactly when He plans to.** He always shows up at the right moment when grief or desperation is at its' highest, when there are witnesses, and there is only a need that He can answer.

Right now, this morning **you may have concerns about your future**, and you may have even prayed to the Lord this week for an answer. He didn't show up it seems, there was no deliverance, no rescue, no alleviation of anxiety. Yet, there are some of you that have been praying for some needs and it seemed that God was ignoring your requests, but you have finally gotten an answer. Jobs were given, tense social relationships got better, health improved, you got something better than what you were asking for. Could it be a Divine God, The Son of Man, the Messiah is working in your life but waited for a better opportunity, to give you some people to witness to, to reveal His glory so they would know He was God, or is that only coincidence?

Because Jesus was victorious on the cross, He was rewarded absolute authority by the Father so in reuniting with His divine nature He could be everywhere at one time ensuring that those the Father gave to Him He would never loose. Knowing things and making things happen is what Jesus does for He is Divine and therefore nothing is by coincidence. **So, if He let's bad things happen, if we are hurt by this life, does that mean He's an uncaring God?**

2. Caring for others as a Divine Creator

¹³ And when the Lord saw her, he had **compassion** on her and said to her, "Do not weep."

Jesus walks in on this, and His first words out of His mouth, if you didn't know Him, **sound rude**. "Do not Weep" – Please be quiet woman, you're making a spectacle but that's not the case at all, but it may **sound a little ridiculous**. I didn't say this earlier but, in that time, if a woman was without husband or son to care for her then she was going to have to try and make it on her own. A woman that has not rights like a man, can't work as a man, this may well be her death sentence as well. She has every right to weep, so what does Jesus mean not to weep? As a matter of fact,



The Gospel According to Luke

Wk. 32 "Raising the Dead, a Divine Encounter"

By Pastor Jody May

when a prophet in the OT wanted to display ultimate sadness in their writings, they would use this scenario as a metaphor to describe the sadness of Israel's fall from grace:

Jeremiah 6:26 – *"O daughter of my people, put on sackcloth And roll in ashes; Mourn as for an only son, A lamentation most bitter. For suddenly the destroyer Will come upon us."*

It is the most bitter of pains, it is the end of a line, end of a lineage, the name will be forgotten, it will show that God had lost favor with that line.

But in the text, we see here a much different scene. Jesus speaks to her because of **"splanchnizomai"**; **to feel deep emotional pain in the bowels of one's being**. It's the word used when Jesus sees the crowd hungry and He wants to feed them, it's the word when He sees the people hurting and heals them, both instances because they have no shepherd to do for them, no one to take care of them just like this widow. It is the word that Jesus uses to describe the love of the Father for the prodigal son as He runs to Him. It is the description of pain that Jesus felt, the divine right and connection with His people, His creation, when He sees they have no one to care for them.

Jesus stops the funeral in front of everyone to deal with this woman and in response to what He felt.

¹⁴ Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still.

Jesus touched the bier: Jesus has no fear of a dead body for any God-fearing and law-abiding Jew would have never risked touching that opened face coffin because of defilement from the dead. Death doesn't diminish His power, His goodness, His glory, His Righteousness, His Holiness, for His divinity is what defines others, He says what's clean and He says who is dead.

And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." ¹⁵ And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.

Jesus by the Word of His mouth, the power of creation itself, breaths life into this man a second time. Just a couple of quick observations about this.

1st off, the young man immediately got up and began to speak. Even if the skeptic wanted to say that he had just been really ill, there is no way that a man without air just gets up and starts talking. Even coma patients can't speak when they come to, there is a time for rehabilitation.



The Gospel According to Luke

Wk. 32 "Raising the Dead, a Divine Encounter"

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This man never went through rehab, counseled with an OT, or even had something to drink or eat, He rose up and began speaking. Cognitive functions had been restored and he had been returned to the care of His mother as a gift.

2nd I need to point out that **faith was not a requirement for healing**. There is teaching out in the modern church world that says in order for God to work there must first be faith that God can do it. That is a lie, **we do not enable God to work based on our power of faith, that belief is true of every other deity worship on this planet but our God is never dependent on us for He is divine and authority and desire to do a thing begins and ends with Him**. Does Jesus respond, **not depend**, with miraculous work for faith sometimes in the scripture, yes He does, but that is not the standard for miraculous practices. This woman had put no stock in Jesus for Him to do this, He merely did it because He wanted to, **it was His divine right to do it**.

I will say this about faith this morning. Some of us have a hard time believing that Jesus cares for us because He allows bad things to happen to us. Family, we live in a fallen world that causes us pain, but please understand Jesus chooses to know your pain, He came to us because of it, and He understands that **to rescue family He needs to wait for the right moments to produce belief in the hearts of us and others**.

What was the lowest day in the life of this woman in the blink of an eye became the greatest day of her life! Not only did she get her son back, but she met the Living Son of God, her Messiah! Are you content to endure a little pain for the present family if it means that you will get a further and larger revelation of Jesus in the future, to know Him fully as your Savior?

3. The Concerns of not Recognizing Jesus' Divinity.

¹⁶ Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" ¹⁷ And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

As radical as an experience this was it is still bittersweet at most. The scripture points out the confession of the people after the miracle: "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" They did not mean that Jesus was God but that He was used by God for He's like a prophet.



The Gospel According to Luke

Wk. 32 "Raising the Dead, a Divine Encounter"

By Pastor Jody May

They knew of two Old Testament prophets, one named Elijah, and one named Elisha, remember? Both of those prophets who were believed to be among the greatest of prophets, both of them raised people from the dead, right? Elijah, 1 Kings 17, Elijah was used by God to raise the widow's son from the dead. Remember he was lying on his body and he went through all kinds of things, praying and asking God and 1 Kings 17:22 says that God did it. Elijah couldn't do it. He tried, you remember, he breathed and he gave him, you know, CPR, trying to bring this kid back. Finally God answered his prayer. First Kings 17 tells that wonderful story. Then came Elisha after Elijah and in 2 Kings 4 he had a similar experience in which God used him to raise someone from the dead. But you remember, he couldn't do it either and he kept going back. You remember the story, back and forth and back and forth and, you know, he's going through what is assumed to be prayers and asking God, "Please do this, and please do this," and he was eventually allowed to see God raise the dead.¹

But Jesus has no difficulty in raising the dead, because he was divine. Listen, Jesus had developed a reputation because Jesus visited 3 funerals and every time, He did the same thing happened - He raised people from the dead! It was at the last one that you see people finally getting it, and this time it was a woman as well. In John 11 Martha laments that Jesus had not come earlier, He explains to her that He is the Alpha and Omega, He is life, and Martha says I know this Lord, I know you are the Christ come into this world, he then proceeded to bring a man dead in the tomb for four days, decomposing. And this is the same power that Jesus uses to rise from the grave, a Divine will.

What keeps us from responding in faith for Salvation to a Jesus that can raise people from the dead, that has the divine sovereignty/authority to do it, that moves the physical world to align events to reveal Himself, what keeps us from falling on our knees and worshipping Him?

Let us repent and run to Him not away from Him when we want to hide in our sin.
Let us repent and run to Him not away from Him when we want to weep and feel only self-pity.
Let us repent and run to Him not away when we doubt His divinity by praying and resting with trust in His sovereignty.

¹ <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/42-93/jesus-power-over-death>



The Gospel According to Luke

Wk. 32 "Raising the Dead, a Divine Encounter"

By Pastor Jody May

This is the Gospel for all of us today, Jesus is Divine, He is God, He hates the effect of sin in our lives that leads us to death, He rose again showing He is fully God and with the keys of Hades in His hands we look forward to that great picture in Revelation where every person will experience a physical resurrection again (1 Thes. 4 & Rev 20)! This is the story of Jesus that gets better and we all one day will get to participate in it!

PRAYER

COMMUNION

BENEDICTION

Go in the name of the Father that has bestowed on Jesus the authority to rescue us from death.

Go in the name of the Son that moves with deliberate divine power in our lives because he loves us.

Go in the name and power of the HS that reveals Jesus in our lives so we may share Him with others.