



3rd Sunday after Pentecost
June 30, 2019
Luke 7:11-17

“Christ’s Compassion”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! In the name of Jesus, dear friends in Christ,

When was the last time that you cried, I mean, really cried? There’s only one time growing up that I remember my dad crying. I was a senior in high school and my grandpa died very suddenly of what was probably a heart attack. No warning, no nursing home, no hospital, he was fine one moment and he passed away the next. It was very sudden. I remember at the committal service less than a week after he died, my dad placing his hand on the coffin and crying. The last time I really cried was on the way to the hospital the end of last year when we didn’t know what was going to happen to our infant newborn son Silas. I didn’t know if he was going to live or die. What about you? When was the last time that you cried?

The reason we have sorrow, the reason we cry, the reason we weep, the reason we experience loss and pain is all because of sin. Because of sin and the consequences of sin and the effects of sin, we cry. So, what do you do with your tears? What do you do with your sorrow? There are typically two responses in our world to emotions, sorrow, sadness. The first is to vent them, to broadcast your tears everywhere, to walk around always spilling your emotions everywhere. The second is to bottle them, stuff them up, hide them, keep them all bundled up inside of you and make it look like you have almost no emotions. But neither of those ways are the proper way to deal with emotions, to deal with our sorrow.

There’s a neat passage in Psalm 126 that says: **“Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.”** Isn’t that interesting? It’s comparing tears to farming. It’s picturing your tears like seed. Back in these days when you’d plant a field everyone knew that if you took our seed and sat on it, didn’t do anything with it, you wouldn’t get a harvest. But at the same time if you took your bag of seed to the middle of the field and just dumped it all out, you wouldn’t get a harvest either. But if you planted it, then you’d get a harvest. So, what should you do with your tears? Don’t suppress them, don’t express them, plant them, sew them.

Where do you plant them? You plant them in Jesus. Why? Why would we do that? I want to walk through this text with you and focus on the three reasons why we bring our tears to Jesus. First, He sees our sorrow, second, He feels our sorrow, and lastly, He removes our sorrow.

The first thing we see here is that Jesus sees our sorrow. We’re told, **“Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him.”** Ironically, Jesus goes to this town called Nain, which means “pleasant” or “lovely” but what’s going on at this town is not pleasant or lovely. **“As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out – the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. A large crowd from the town was with her.”** What an awful and pathetic sight! Not only is this dead person a young man, but notice that he is the only son of his mother. He was the only child she ever had and now he’s dead. And not only that, but this isn’t the first time that the townspeople had to carry out a man for this woman, she was a widow. And in this day, a woman’s security came from her husband who would be the worker for the family and if your husband died, your only other source of real security came from your sons, but here, not only had her husband died, but now her only son died. So her grief is compounded. Not only losing her beloved son at a young age and the grief and pain of losing a loved one, but socially and physically she would be devastated. This is about the saddest funeral that would have happened.

Do you know what it’s like to be there? Crushed, devastated. Why God? Why this? Why now? Do you know what it’s like to have the tears flow at loss. In some form or fashion, we’ve all been there, we’ve all lost someone or something.

But notice who is there. Notice who comes. Jesus sees. Jesus knows. Jesus is never unaware of our sadness or our sorrows. He sees. He knows.

But Jesus doesn't just see our sorrow, he feels it. **"When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, 'Don't cry.'"** His heart went out to her. The word that's used here is used a number of times about Jesus. It literally means to be moved on the inside. In means to have so much compassion and care for someone that you actually join in their hurt. Isn't that amazing? We have a Lord who doesn't sit far above the heavens on a throne somewhere unconcerned about the daily affairs of this world. No, our God became one of us to walk in this world to feel what we feel. The book of Hebrews says that Jesus became like us in every way and yet was without sin. We have a God who knows what it feels like to lose a loved one, lose a friendship. We have a God who knows what it's like to cry. The book of Isaiah says that Jesus was a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering. We're told that Jesus cried at the tomb of his friend Lazarus. The book of Hebrews also tells us, **"During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death."** We think of him in the Garden of Gethsemane praying and sweating like drops of blood.

Jesus doesn't just see our sorrow, he feels it. His heart went out to this woman. What burdens and sorrows we have weighing on us are ones that Jesus doesn't just see, doesn't just know, but He feels them. And He tells the woman, **"Don't cry."** Notice that Jesus didn't act first, He spoke first, then he would act. Why could he say that? Because he was about to remove the very thing that was causing her grief and sorrow.

And that's the last point: He removes our sorrows. **"Then he went up and touched the bier, and those carrying it 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."** Can you imagine that? Jesus walked up to the bier, the thing that they were using to carry this dead man out of the city, Jesus touches it, the people stop, and Jesus says something outrageous: "Young man, I say to you, get up." He's talking to a dead person! And the dead man gets up and starts talking and Jesus gives him back to his mother. She didn't earn it, she didn't deserve it, it's all grace, isn't it? She didn't ask for it, Jesus found her, Jesus bestowed his grace on her and removed her sorrow.

I don't know about you, but there's a small part of me that reads this and thinks, "But I didn't get my loved one back. Jesus didn't raise my loved one back." But as awesome and as wonderful as this miracle is, this young man was raised to die again. His was a resurrection backward, a resurrection back into this life. What is infinitely better is not a resurrection backward into his life, but a resurrection forward. And Jesus raising this young man shows us that He has the power to give us such a resurrection forward.

But there is only one way that Jesus could come to give us a resurrection forward and to remove our sorrow. Notice that when Jesus walked up to the bier he touched it. There were strict laws in the OT about touching something that had died-you would become unclean. God was teaching that death is a curse. Death itself is the curse of sin. Dust you are and to dust you will return. If you eat from the tree you will surely die. The wages of sin is death. All death hurts because death is the consequence of sin. But what did God do? This woman had unwillingly given up her son to death, God, however, also gave His one and only Son. Jesus came to be given the curse of death. He came to face death and all of death's fury on the cross and have no one to come to him and say, "Don't cry." His death on the cross was a punishment, it was a judgment for sin. Why so? For you. For me. Now, every believer who dies in the Lord, their death is not a punishment, but a sleep.

Here Jesus demonstrates his power over the death of others. On Easter Sunday Jesus demonstrated His power over His own death – He rose from the dead, He defeated death itself. Because Jesus did that, He has ultimately removed our sorrows. Why so? Because for each of us we look forward to a resurrection forward. We know that all our believing loved ones who have died are so, so much better off where they are now and are also looking for a resurrection forward. A

resurrection to new life, a resurrection where God will wipe every tear from our eyes, a resurrection where there will be no more mourning, crying or pain for the old order of things will have passed away. A resurrection forward to a new life in heaven where everything sad is going to become untrue. The boy was resurrected back into a sad world, we look forward to a resurrection into a world of only joy.

I don't know what sorrows you are feeling right now or what sorrows are going to come into your life shortly, but know that your Savior sees them, feels them, and removes them. Plant your tears, plant your tears by bringing them to the only one who can fully understand them and fully remove them. **“Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.”**
“Weeping may remain for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.”