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Jesus Raises the Widow's Son

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Jesus Raises the Widow's Son

Abstract

"Death is real. The brokenness that death represents is real. The pain, and anguish, and sorrow we feel is real. But thanks be to God that death is not the end!"

Posting about Jesus' victory over death from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/jesus-raises-the-widows-son/>

Keywords

In All Things, Jesus, miracles, healing, victory

Disciplines

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

Jesus Raises the Widow's Son

 [inallthings.org/jesus-raises-the-widows-son/](https://allthings.org/jesus-raises-the-widows-son/)

Dave Mulder

“Soon afterward, 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

I have sometimes heard people say things like, “Death is just a part of life.” And, this sentiment is true enough in a sense—loved ones do die, after all. Death was the sure punishment for Adam and Eve’s disobedience in the Garden¹. However, I wonder sometimes if being so matter of fact about death is just our way of dealing with the hard reality of the brokenness that death represents.

Considering the reality of death in our fallen world, C. S. Lewis once wrote, “It is hard to have patience with people who say ‘There is no death’ or ‘Death doesn’t matter.’ There is death. And whatever matters. And whatever happens has consequences, and it and they are irrevocable and irreversible. You might as well say that birth doesn’t matter².” Death reminds us that things in this world are not as they were meant to be. And it is in this context, I think, that we need to think about today’s passage.

Imagine the situation of the woman in this story: she is a widow; she has already been through the heartbreak of the death her husband. She has experienced the very real grieving that comes from the death of one deeply loved. There is brokenness in death, a very real sense that “this is not how things are supposed to be.”

And then? Her son—her only son, the passage tells us—also slips away from her in death. Without her husband, at least she had a son to care for her, support her, provide for her. We are not told the details in this story, but it is enough to know that he too has been taken from her through death. Broken, broken, brokenness.

Can you picture her anguish as she follows after those carrying her son’s lifeless body out of the city? Can you hear the weeping and wailing of the mourners, and her voice perhaps loudest of all?

Jesus sees her, sees her pain. He understands the brokenness, understand her sorrow, and his heart breaks for her as well.

And his words? “Don’t cry.”

Can you imagine her, in the midst of her grief, in the midst of the brokenness, hearing those words?

“Don’t cry.”

Almost as if to say, “Death is just a part of life,” right?

Wrong.

Jesus reaches out his hand to stop the funeral procession. And his words? Power: “Young man, get up!” Fluttering eyelids, twitching fingers, shifting of limbs, and amazingly—miraculously!—the young man is returned to his mother. Can you imagine the reaction? The brokenness of this fallen world, as so clearly evidenced by this death, is being

healed! No wonder this shout rises from the crowd: "God has come to help his people!"

Death is real. The brokenness that death represents is real. The pain, and anguish, and sorrow we feel is real. But thanks be to God that death is not the end! Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, has conquered death, and is bringing healing for the brokenness in creation and in us. While we feel the pain of death on this side of glory, the day is coming when we too can join in the song:

"Death has been swallowed up in victory.

Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting³ ?"

Footnotes

1. Genesis 2:16, 17: "The Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.'" And Genesis 3:19, after Adam and Eve's sin: "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." ↩
2. From Lewis, C. S. (1961). *A Grief Observed*. New York: Harper Collins. ↩
3. 1 Corinthians 15:54-55 ↩