RAISING THE WIDOW’S SON
LUKE 7:11-17

Intro: The miracles of Jesus is a wonderful theme. Miracles denote the power by which these works were performed. Two other words also refer to these great works of power: they were signs in that they pointed the ones who saw them to have faith in Christ, and they caused wonder in those who saw them. The miracle of Christ raising the widow’s son certainly caused all who saw it to wonder or have amazement at the marvelous power of God.

I. BACKGROUND
A. The previous day.
1. Jesus had entered Capernaum.
2. He was asked to heal the Centurion’s servant.
3. Luke 7:1-10 “Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion’s servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it 9When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.”

B. He comes to Nain
1. A small city about 20-25 miles southwest of Capernaum.
2. Many were following Him.
3. We note that Jesus was daily doing good works.
   a. Acts 10:38 “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”
   b. He set the pattern that we should follow of daily sacrifice and good works.
      (1) Heb. 13:15-16 “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”
      (2) Eph. 5:16 “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

C. The witnesses.
1. Those following the Lord.
   a. The Lord had many disciples following.
   b. If these were the only witnesses, we could have reason to question its validity.
   c. Others were following our Lord in addition to His disciples.
2. There were a crowd in the burial procession.
   a. This would include relatives, neighbors, and friends.
   b. Might also include professional mourners and musicians.
c. These would have knowledge that the boy was actually dead.
   (1) There have been many who have tried to fake the ability to raise someone from the dead by having someone play dead.
   (2) The people in the burial procession knew the young man and knew he was dead.
   (3) Since Jesus was just entering the town, He had not seen the lad previously which would prevent any collusion.

3. The 2 crowds met near the gate of Nain.

D. The burial.
1. They were taking the body to the burial place.
   a. It would be outside of the city.
   b. Contact with dead bodies caused ceremonial pollution so it was to be avoided.
   c. Jews buried their dead outside the gates of the city and some distance from them.
   d. The exception was that the house of David was buried in Jerusalem.
      (1) 2 Kings 16:20 “And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.”
      (2) 2 Kings 21:18, 26 “And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead. 26 And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and Josiah his son reigned in his stead.”
2. Jews made public display of their bereavement.
   a. Acts 8:2 “And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.”
   b. The death of a child is an even greater tragedy.
      (1) In this case it was an only son.
      (2) J. W. McGarvey said, “The death of an only child represented to them as to us the extreme of sorrow (Jer. 6:26; Zech. 12:10; Amos 8:10).” (The Four-Fold Gospel, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999).[Online] Logos Library System.)
      (3) The mother was also a widow,
         (a) The child would have comforted her during the time of the loss of her husband.
         (b) She would be dependent upon him for her support; 1 Tim. 5:8 “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel”

II. THE MIRACLE
A. The purpose of miracles is to confirm the word.
1. Mark 16:20 “And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen”
2. Heb. 2:3-4 “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; ‘God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?’”
B. The purpose for this miracle seems to be the showing of pity to this widow.

1. McGarvey said, “But the miracle in this instance was not wrought so much to attest our Lord’s commission, or to show his power, as to do good. As Jesus had no other business in Nain but to do good, we may well believe that he went there for the express purpose of comforting this forlorn mother.” (The Four-Fold Gospel, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999), [Online] Logos Library System.)

2. We observe the compassion of Jesus in several areas.
   a. Meeting physical necessities of life
      (1) Mat. 15:32 “Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.”
      (2) Mark 8:2 “I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:”
   b. Healing the sick
      (1) Mat. 14:14 “And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.”
      (2) Mat. 20:34 “So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.”
      (3) Mark 1:40-41 “And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.”
   c. Comforting the bereaved
      (1) Seen in our text
      (2) John 11:35 “Jesus wept.”
   d. Teaching the truth; Mat. 9:36 “But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.”
   e. While not specifically stated, His desire to save
      (1) Mat. 23:37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”
      (2) Luke 22:31-32 “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”
      (3) John 10:11-18 “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

3. This illustrates
   a. Heb. 4:15 “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”
b. When our Lord was touched with compassion He always acted.

(1) He never walked by on the other side; Luke 10:30-32 “And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.”

(2) The song Does Jesus Care? well expresses the idea with the great answer: “O yes, He cares; I know He cares, His heart is touched with my grief.”

C. Jesus’ statement.

1. Jesus tells her to “Weep not.”

a. This is strange to say to someone who has lost a loved one, especially an only begotten son (this is the Greek μονογενής, monogenes which is properly translated only begotten).

b. It is natural to weep for the loss of a loved one.

(1) Acts 8:2 “And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.”

(2) Mary and Martha lamented at the death of Lazarus.

(a) John 11

(b) Jesus seeing their sorrow also wept; John 11:35 “Jesus wept.”

(3) Jesus is the resurrection and life; John 11:25 “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:”

b. He knew He would raise her son so he could tell her to weep not.

2. People who lose loved ones who are in Christ will sorrow but not like those in the world.

a. 1 The. 4:13-18 “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

b. 1 Cor. 15:54-57 “So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

b. We still sorrow, but we know there is a victory and at the resurrection they will be able to spend eternity with the Holy Three along with all the faithful.

D. Jesus raises the boy.

1. He goes to the bier (coffin).

a. ISBE states: “The so-called ‘bier’ among the ancient Hebrews was simply an open coffin or a flat wooden frame, on which the body of the dead was carried from the house to the grave.” (George B. Eager, “Bier,” International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, ed. James Orr (Albany, OR: Ages Software, Inc., 1999), [Online] Logos Library System.)
b. The body would be wrapped in linen cloths lying on the bed.

2. Jesus touches the bier.
a. Normally touching the bier would cause the person to be ceremonially unclean for seven days; Num. 19.
b. Instead of Jesus being made unclean, He raises the dead.
c. Ceremonial uncleanness was not in itself sinful, for Jesus did not sin; 1 Pet. 2:22 “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.”

3. When Jesus touched the bier those carrying it stopped.
a. Matthew Henry points out: “Hereby he intimated to the bearers that they should not proceed; he had something to say to the dead young man.” (Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Bible, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), [Online] Logos Library System.)
b. McGarvey states that Jesus was known to the people: “Jesus was, no doubt, known to many in Nain, and it is no wonder that those who bore the bier stood still when he touched it.” (The Four-Fold Gospel, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1999), [Online] Logos Library System.)
c. If they knew Jesus’ miracles, they would expect Him to do something on this occasion.

4. He tells the young man to “arise.”
a. For man to tell a dead person to “arise” is folly.
   (1) I could not do such.
   (2) Those who claim to perform miracles today do not try it.
   (3) There would be no power behind the statement; they have no power to raise anyone from the dead.
      (a) The heal psychosomatic illnesses and foster hoaxes upon people.
      (b) Doug Fournier and Brownsville Assembly of God.
         i) A few years ago Doug Fournier and his wife had their new baby girl die at six weeks of age.
         ii) He packed the dead body into a cooler filled with ice, got into his car and drove 350 miles from Gainesville to Pensacola, Florida
         iii) He brought her to the Brownsville Assembly of God.
         iv) Some of the staff prayed for at least two hours to bring her back to life.
            a) They have spoken of raising someone from the dead, yet they could not accomplish it.
            b) There simply was no power to perform such a task.

b. Jesus had the power to raise him.
   (1) Jesus has power or authority over the unseen world as well as the seen world.
      (a) He had to specify the young man as he did Lazarus in John 11:43 “And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.”
      (b) If Jesus had not specified the individual, then all in the graves would have come forth.
5. The young man sits up and begins to speak.
   a. This shows he is alive and well; he is healthy and strong.
   b. Nothing is recorded of what he spoke.
      (1) In near-death experiences today, they tell all sorts of stories about a bring light, floating around a room, talking to God or someone else who tells them to come back.
      (2) This young man was really dead, yet the Scriptures relate nothing to what he said.
      (4) If we desire to know about the afterlife, the only place which reveals such is God’s Word.

6. Jesus delivers the young man to his mother.
   a. Matthew Henry states that “he would not oblige this young man, to whom he had given a new life, to go along with him as his disciple, to minister to him (though he owed him even his own self), much less as a trophy or show to get honour by him, but delivered him to his mother, to attend her as became a dutiful son.” (Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Bible, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), [Online] Logos Library System.)
   b. Today’s shysters.
      (1) Would force the young man to accompany them.
      (2) Make a big play on the emotions of man to bilk more money out of the people.
      (3) Arousce the emotions of others to enable them to perform more so-called miracles.

E. Jesus had instructed the mother to weep not.
   1. Now she has reason not to weep.
   2. In the parable of the prodigal son when the son returned:
      a. Luke 15:23-24 “And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”
      b. Luke 15:32 “It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.”
   3. This is the way it is with all who faithfully respond to the Lord’s invitation.
      a. Mat. 11:28-30 “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
      b. In becoming a Christian we observe morning for sin turned to rejoicing.
      (1) Conversion of the Ethiopian; Acts 8:39 “And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.”
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(2) Conversion of the Philippian jailor; Acts 16:34 “And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.”

c. When a child of God repents there is rejoicing; Luke 15:7 “I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”

III. THE RESULTS OF THE MIRACLE

A. The people feared.

1. It is the Greek φόβος (phobos).
2. Vine says, “First had the meaning of flight, that which is caused by being scared; then, that which may cause flight, (a) fear, dread, terror, always with this significance in the four Gospels.”
3. It is no wonder they feared.
   a. They realized they were in the presence of one who was truly great.
   b. In the presence of one who has control over life and death.

B. He rose but rose to die again.

1. Christ proved He had the power over death and life and was raised to die no more.
2. Col. 1:18 “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”
3. He is the firstfruits, the guarantee that we will also be raised; 1 Cor. 15:20, 23 “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept....23But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming”

C. The people glorified God.

1. Glorified is in the imperfect tense indicating they kept on glorifying God.
2. It is no wonder they gave praise, adoration, and magnified God for this marvelous act of compassion toward this bereaved widow who had lost her only begotten son.

D. The people’s conclusion.

1. A great prophet has risen among them.
   a. God had promised Israel a great prophet.
      (1) Deu. 18:15, 18-19 “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;...19I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. 19And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”
      (2) Expectation was at an all-time high because of 400 years of silence from God.
   b. Thus, the priest and Levites ask John the Baptist if he was the prophet; John 1:21 “What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No”
   c. John pointed to that prophet: Jesus the Christ.
   d. Whether or not they realized that this was that prophet, they knew he was a great prophet.
2. The Lord had visited His people.
   a. Vine says visit means, “primarily, to inspect (a late form of episkopeo, to look upon, care for, exercise oversight), signifies (a) to visit with help.”
   b. God had looked on them, especially this widow, with care.
c. After John was born Zacharias says that God has visited His people; Luke 1:68-69 “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;”

(1) God was visiting His people regarding salvation in sending Christ to die for our sins.

(2) When man obeys God’s Word, he escapes hell and receives eternal salvation.

E. The miracle is spread abroad.

1. Rumour, report (ASV) is the Greek word λόγος (logos) which means word.

2. Those who saw the miracle spread the news of such.

3. How much more should we spread the good news of salvation.

F. It confirmed Jesus as the Son of God.

1. The purpose of miracles was that of confirmation.
   a. Mark 16:20 “And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen”

   b. Heb. 2:3-4 “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; ‘God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?’”

2. This miracle gave evidence of who Jesus was.
   a. John the Baptist sent 2 disciples asking about Jesus; Luke 7:18-23 “And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things. And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.”

   b. Jesus asked His apostles whom they thought He was.
      (1) Mat. 16:18 “And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

      (2) Jesus response; Mat. 16:17 “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven”
         (a) One of the ways the Father revealed that Jesus was His Son through the miracles.
         (b) This miracle showing Jesus compassion was also confirmatory.

IV. Some Practical Applications

A. We are to show compassion on others.

1. Elvis E. Cochrane wrote that compassion “literally means ‘to suffer with’ and signifies the ability to place one’s self into the situation of another and feel as they feel, suffer as they suffer.” (The Epistles Of Peter, Shield Bible Study, (Grand Rapids, Mi: Baker Book House, 1965) p. 47.)

2. We are to show compassion to others.
   a. 1 Pet. 3:8 “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:”
b. 1 John 3:17 “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

3. We must not shut up our bowels of compassion for others.

B. The result of compassion is the doing of good works.

1. Acts 10:38 “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”

2. Jesus calls on us to have good works.
   a. Tit. 2:14 “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”
   b. Eph. 2:10 “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”
   c. Mat. 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”
   d. Tit. 3:8 "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”

Conclusion: We will all be raised from the dead on the last day and stand before the Judge of all the earth to give an account of what we have done in our bodies. If we have been obedient to God’s Word we will be saved, if not then we will be lost. Live so you will have that joyous home in heaven.