

Sympathizing Jesus Overcomes Death

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Date: 30 September 2007

Preacher: Ed Baci

[0:00] Luke chapter 7 and I'll read verses 11 through 17. 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 coffin, 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. 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. And in the kindness of God, it spread to Bremen, Indiana. We have it in our Bibles that we might learn something more of our wonderful Savior tonight.

[1:24] Once again, let me say what a delight it has been to be among you, to get to know some of you, and to see what God is doing in Bremen.

And I have a wonderful report to take back to the people of Hicksville to tell them about the happy saints that are here.

And truly, you are blessed with pastors that love you and saints that enjoy fellowship together and the preaching of God's word week to week to your souls.

A new building. So many things for which to give thanks. And we rejoice with you. And I do indeed thank you for your gracious hospitality and the welcome that you've given me.

We are going to look together at this passage tonight, Luke chapter 7, praying that it too might be a blessing to all of us as we look together in God's word and think together about the great, wonderful truths that are found there about our Lord Jesus Christ, his great love to us, his compassion, his great power.

[2:39] May we worship him together. May we be encouraged by him. He is here among us. And I love the promise of the Lord Jesus where two or three are gathered together in my name.

There am I in their midst. Some people like to take that passage and say, well, it's in the context of church discipline, and it only means he's there when we're in church discipline.

No, it's a general principle that Jesus is giving to us, applying to church discipline. But every time we're together, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst.

And we come to church because Jesus is here. We are all together. But if Jesus weren't here, there wouldn't be much point in coming, would there be?

But Jesus is here. That's what makes the church special. And that's what makes it different from any other organization, any other meeting. What happens here in the sanctuary in Bremen is more important than what happens in the Congress of the United States.

[3:42] Jesus is here in a very special way. And so we're glad to be together with him. We've prayerfully sung that the Spirit of God would help us tonight.

And just before presenting the Word of God to you, I would like to pray again for that help, that divine aid. Let us pray. Gracious Father, we thank you tonight for the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and for the aid of your Spirit.

We thank you that any time we seek to serve you, we are not alone in that service, but we are aided supernaturally by your Spirit.

We thank you whenever we approach your Word together. We don't have to understand it unaided, but the Holy Spirit helps us in our understanding. Fall fresh on me, O Holy Spirit of God, and upon all your people tonight, that we might truly hear your Word with profit to our souls, that we might

rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, that we might be encouraged together by his great love for us.

And for all of this, we will thank you. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. This passage deals with the problem of death.

[5 : 13] And death is the one problem of human existence that man cannot solve. He's tried to solve it over the centuries, but he cannot solve the problem of death.

Jesus can solve it. Death touches all of us, and we all have to die someday. You who are very young here this evening, and you who are older, every one of us is going to die someday. We all have to die, and we all have to watch our loved ones taken from us in death before we ourselves must go. So death touches all of us.

And this passage tonight shows us that Jesus Christ overcomes death. This passage shows us that Jesus has authority over death.

It tells us that he can bring the dead to life again. And what he did to that young man from the Galatian town of Nain, he will do for every one of us in the last day.

[6 : 18] This story is a picture of what Jesus is going to do for you and for me on that great day. And this narrative has a very interesting movement to it.

There are two crowds walking. Look at verse 11. Soon afterwards, Jesus went to a town called Nain, his disciples, and a large crowd went along with him.

There's the crowd with Jesus in the midst. And then verse 12. 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. Two crowds walking. Two crowds very diverse, very different from each other.

And we see these crowds then. One crowd is coming down from the north, approaching the town of Nain. And Jesus is at the center of that crowd.

[7 : 23] He had been teaching and healing in the northern city of Capernaum. And now he was thronged by his disciples and other followers and enthusiasts. And he was approaching the city of Nain.

Now that crowd with Jesus at the center was a happy crowd. They had witnessed many of the miracles of Jesus. And they had heard his marvelous teaching.

And they were in great expectation as to what he would do next and what they would see and what they would hear. And this great expectation, this great anticipation filled them.

And they were a happy crowd as they walked together to the city of Nain. And on they walked. Meanwhile, in the town there was another crowd that was slowly gathering.

And this crowd was quite different. The experience of that crowd and the demeanor of the crowd was very different from the crowd with Jesus at the center.

[8 : 23] This crowd had formed around a grieving woman, a widow. And this woman's son had died, his only son. And how grieved she was.

It's one thing to lose a husband, surely. And then to lose the only son. Around the coffin of that young man, this crowd had gathered.

The coffin was nothing elaborate. It was more like a bed than a box. It was a couch. And on that couch, on that bed, was the body of this young man.

Now every funeral procession is a very somber sight. They remind us that each of us will have a last day upon this earth.

They remind us that that day is coming for you and for me. And such funeral crowds demonstrate the sorrow that comes to all of us who live in this world where sin has taken hold.

[9 : 29] And sometimes these funeral processions pass under my window in my study. And I look out. And I look up from my desk. And I see a line of cars.

And they're close together. And the lights are on. And they're moving a little slowly. More slowly than cars usually move on that road under my study window. And they're all following behind a hearse.

And there's a cemetery about a mile up the road. And that's where they are headed. And I look out the window. And I pause. And I wonder. I wonder about the one who died. Was he young? Was he old? Was he or she expected to die? Was it sudden? Was it tragic? Was it like the funeral of this young man?

But there were these two crowds then. And they briefly converge at the opening of the gate of the city. Two crowds very different from each other.

[10 : 32] Now Jesus is in the happy crowd. And he's content to be among the joyful and the happy. Jesus would go to weddings. And Jesus would go to feasts.

And Jesus loves to be around happy people. And he would make us happy. This man of sorrows. He knows our sorrows so well that he also knows how to make us happy.

And there he was amidst this throng of happy people coming down from Capernaum. But he goes to that other crowd. He goes to that crowd where grief has overcome them.

And Jesus steps out of the crowd that surrounded him. And he approaches that crowd coming out of the city. He speaks to the woman. Words of compassion. And then he approaches the coffin.

And the crowd from Nain was continuing to move with that coffin. And he came to the woman and said his words to her. Meanwhile, the coffin continued its progress.

[11 : 34] But Jesus comes to the coffin. He lays his hand upon it in order to stop the motion. And when he does, everyone stops. Both crowds of people halt for a moment.

And every eye is fixed on Jesus. And we need to have our eyes fixed on Jesus. And what I'd like to do for the remaining moments this evening is to fix our eyes on Jesus.

And think of him. Think of him in this hour of tragedy. This hour of grief. This hour of sadness. What do we learn about Jesus Christ as he steps out of that happy crowd?

And he approaches this woman. And he touches the coffin. And he raises this boy from the dead. The first thing we notice is the compassion of Jesus.

He's compassionate as he approaches the woman and says to her. His heart going out to her. He says, weep not. Don't cry. The compassion of Jesus.

[12 : 38] Understand first of all that it is a divine compassion. Jesus is God. And Jesus reveals God to us.

All that Jesus is, God is. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily. Jesus has compassion then because God has compassion.

Compassion is not, first of all, a human quality. It is a divine quality. And the only reason that we have any kind of compassion at all is because God has a heart of compassion.

We're made in the image of God. Therefore, we can have compassion. Not like his infinite compassion, but we're made in his image.

And even by common grace, human beings can extend compassion to one another. But think about the compassion of God. And there is that verse in Lamentations chapter 3.

[13 : 40] Because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed. For his compassions never fail. It is a compassionate God that Jesus reveals to us. And we must not think of God as constantly wearing a frown.

We must not think of God as being unsympathetic to a weakness. Or unsympathetic to our failures. Or our struggles. Or our sorrows. God is compassionate. And this is the God that Jesus reveals to us.

And this is the God that Jesus is. How different from the vision of God that we sometimes have. We sometimes think of God as wearing a frown.

We sometimes think of God as always displeased with us. But no, he's got compassion towards us. He is compassionate. But he's not soft. He's not a weak God.

He's not a doting grandfather. He doesn't overlook sin. But he is compassionate. And he deals with sin. He deals with the effects of sin. And he takes our guilt.

[14 : 44] And he pours the blood of Jesus on it. And he cleanses us. And he takes our guilt. And he gives us a pardon. And he clothes us in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And he gives us the Holy Spirit so that we can live a holy life.

God, in his great compassion, deals with our sins. Now, the gods that men form in their minds, these gods are not compassionate.

Think of the God of the deists. What is compassionate about a God who is far away? A God who winds up the universe like a clock and then lets it run.

The God of the deists is not a compassionate God. Or the God of the Romans and the Greeks. These gods were human-like in the worst way.

They were rivaling one another. They were jealous towards one another, these Roman gods. They used humans for their own selfish ends. No compassion there.

[15 : 46] Men do not think up a compassionate God. The closer they can come to a God of compassion is the conception of God as a doting grandfather.

A God who is easy on sin. A God who lets you do anything. A God who lets you get away with everything. But that is not compassion. You parents know that that is not compassion. But God has genuine compassion. So that the compassion of Jesus Christ as he approaches that crowd, that grieving crowd, that name is divine compassion. But also, it is human compassion. Because Jesus is a real man. Jesus is a divine man, but he's a man.

And he's like you and me. He's thoroughly human. And Jesus has real human emotions. And we see him weeping. And we see him getting angry.

[16 : 50] And we see him with every human emotion that you and I have. He's absolutely, thoroughly human. And because his humanity is perfect, his compassion is perfect.

And it was true and selfish, selfless and tender and deep. Jesus had a mother. And Jesus knew that one day soon, she would lose a son.

Jesus had a human father. And his father had probably died by now. Mary was alone by the time Jesus got to the cross.

Jesus knew what widowhood was like. So he enters into all our sorrows. He enters into all our humanity. All the tragedy of the human experience, Jesus enters into it.

And there he was then. In the midst of this crowd of grieving people. He's content to be with the happy crowd.

[17 : 58] And he's with us when we're happy. We had a good time this afternoon. I was in two particular homes of yours.

And we had a good time talking about things. And we had a good time laughing later on. And there were jokes. Jesus loves to be in the happy crowd. And Jesus wants you to be happy.

He wants you to enjoy life. The Bible tells us that God has given us all things richly to enjoy. And God doesn't take away pleasures from us. And religion was never intended to take away our pleasures.

As I heard Jeff Thomas say. And it's so true. But Jesus goes to the crowd that is mourning this man of sorrows.

He has compassion towards us today. And it's real compassion. It's human compassion. It's divine compassion. Jesus is the great sympathizer. And you can go to him when you need consolation.

[19 : 00] And he can console you as no one else can. He can give you real sympathy. Because he's a real person. And he can give you perfect sympathy. Because he is a divine person.

I'd like to take you to a moment to Psalm 31. And verse 7. David was always seeking mercy from God. He was always either being chased by his enemies.

Or he was conscious of his sin. And of his weakness. And David was always crying out for mercy. And here in Psalm 31 and verse 7. He says, I will be glad and rejoice in your love.

For you saw my affliction. And knew the anguish of my soul. This Savior knows the anguish of our soul.

He himself experienced it all. He lost a friend in Lazarus. And he wept. He lost his father. And surely he wept.

[20 : 01] He sees the city of Jerusalem. And its rejection of him. And he weeps. There's Jesus. This man who has divine compassion. Who has human compassion.

This Jesus who is the great sympathizer. And he sympathizes with you. He knows you in your adversities. He knows you in your anguish. When your soul is in anguish.

He knows you. And you can go to him when you need consolation. And notice his words to this grieving woman.

Back in Luke. He says to her, Don't cry. He says to her, Do not weep. And he speaks to her. And as he speaks to her, His heart goes out to her.

And he speaks that she might know That he really has a concern for her In her sorrow. Now his miraculous power Would be unleashed. But not only to show forth his glory.

[20 : 59] But also to bring her joy. And to bring her real comfort. He says, Do not weep. Don't cry. Now you and I could never use such words.

You could never go to a grieving woman Who had lost her son And say to her, Don't cry. Those words would be hollow. And they would be cruel coming from us.

How dare you say, Don't cry to anyone who is weeping. How dare you say, Don't cry to anyone Who is in agony of soul. Because of some great loss. Because of some great sorrow. Because of some great tragedy. Because of some great disappointment. But for Jesus, These words have true comfort. And they're full of hope. And only Jesus can really say to us, Don't cry. Only Jesus can really say to us, Do not weep. Because only he can do something About our sorrows. Only he can do something About our disappointments. Only he can do something About our discouragements. So he can say to us, Do not weep.

[21:59] And he says it because He knows what he's able to do. And he knows what he's going to do. And he's come to dry all tears. And one day, He's going to do just that.

All tears will be dried. So here's the compassion of Jesus. And he's compassionate to you This evening.

And he sympathizes with you In your weakness. And he even sympathizes with you Because of your sins. He remembers that we are dust. He knows our frame. And he sympathizes with us In our sins so much That he made a way For us to be forgiven.

And he shed his blood That that blood would cleanse us. And we don't have to carry Our guilt around. We just go to Jesus. And we're cleansed.

He's so sympathetic towards us. The compassion of Jesus. But then there's the power Of Jesus. Look at verses 14 and 15.

[23:01] Then he went up And touched the coffin 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. The power of Jesus. Notice, first of all, Jesus speaks to the dead. That seems an odd thing to do, Doesn't it?

He speaks to the dead. And it's rare, But sometimes we do that. I remember my first funeral.

I had only been in the pastorate For a couple of weeks And there was a funeral. And I remember being so unsure of myself. And how do I console these two sisters Who had lost their brother?

As much like Mary and Martha and Lazarus, There were these two older sisters Who lived with their brother. And they depended on him for everything. And they loved him. And he was taken from them.

[24:07] And here I was, This very young pastor. How do I console? And what do I do? And I called my former pastor. And I said, What do I do?

And how do I conduct a funeral? And all those things. And he helped me. But I got to that funeral. And there were these two sisters. And what did they do? They broke down.

And they wept. And they went to the coffin. And they grabbed hold of their dead brother. They grabbed hold of the corpse. And they said, Oh, don't leave us. Come back to us. And it was a very pathetic sight.

Very difficult funeral For the first one I ever had to officiate at. And what do I do? These grieving women Grabbing the corpse.

Speaking to them. Come back to us. Come back to us. But of course, There was no response Because a dead man cannot respond. What I want you to understand is Jesus wasn't doing that.

[25:08] Jesus was not speaking to a corpse. He was speaking to the man.

Jesus spoke. Young man. I say to you.

Get up. Jesus was not speaking to a corpse. He was speaking to the man. And what does this tell us about death?

It reminds us that Death is the separation of the soul From the body. It is not the destruction of life. Death is not the destruction of life.

It's merely the separation of the soul from the body. When a person dies, His soul leaves the body to go somewhere else. The soul remains alive.

[26:06] And that is why Jesus could speak to this dead man. His soul was living someplace. As one commentator put it, Consciousness is not a function of the brain.

And it's really not. Because here is this young man Being spoken to. He was somewhere else. His soul was somewhere else. And Jesus could speak to him.

So what does this tell us about Jesus? Jesus can speak to departed souls. His voice can penetrate through to the other world.

And on that other side, This man could hear his voice. Jesus wasn't speaking to a corpse at all. He was speaking to a real man Whose soul had departed and gone elsewhere.

A living soul. A soul. And this man in that other world. Could hear the voice of Jesus.

Consciousness is not a function of the brain.

[27:10] It's a function of the soul. And how wonderful this is. Somewhere, specifically in heaven, Departed souls continue to live.

And departed souls can hear the voice of Jesus. And death does not end all. There is life beyond the grave. Every person has a soul that will live on after death.

And Jesus can do what no human can do. He can speak to those departed souls. Isn't that wonderful? It's wonderful to know that consciousness is not a function of the brain.

And that our souls can live on in another world. But it's also wonderful to know that Jesus can speak to departed souls. Understand, this was not necromancy.

Jesus is not like magicians or sorcerers. He's not like clairvoyants. They claim to be able to conjure up the spirits of the dead.

[28:06] And they're probably many times in contact with demons. And these demons can give impressive imitations of the dead. But only Jesus can penetrate through into the realm where souls actually live.

Only Jesus can speak to departed souls. And of course, we know that since Jesus has gone back to heaven, Departed souls go there to be with him.

Paul said, absent from the body, Present with the Lord. Jesus at that moment was speaking to the young man whose soul had departed. Was there in heaven and Jesus was still on earth.

But nowadays, when our souls depart the body, We go to be with Jesus. And there's not this communication from earth to heaven. There's communication in heaven.

Jesus speaking to those who are there. Even now. So Jesus speaks to the man. And then Jesus raises the man from the dead.

[29:16] We read in verse 15, The dead man sat up and began to talk. And Jesus gave him back to his mother. Jesus raises the dead. So the dead man sits up.

And Jesus' word has power and authority. And Jesus' word to this dead man. Makes something happen. He sits up. Even to dead men and women. There's this power of Jesus.

He speaks to Lazarus. Lazarus comes forth. And Lazarus walks out of the grave. The dead man sits up. The dead man speaks.

It says, The dead man sat up and began to talk. And of course, Speech is a sign of life. There was someone else who had died.

And Jesus said, After she was raised, Give her something to eat. Eating is a sign of life. And then Lazarus came forth. And they untied his grave clothes.

[30:20] Here's a little different touch. Every time Jesus raises someone from the dead. But here's a true sign of life. That the man was speaking. And the voice of Jesus then is answered by the voice of this living man.

And Jesus, Having spoken to the young man, The young man speaks back. We wonder, What did this man say to Jesus? What were his first words?

Wouldn't you like to know? What were the first words of this young man as he came back from the dead? Would he say, Blessed be God who has given me life.

Would he say, Thank you, Lord. I don't know what he said. It's interesting to ponder. But he spoke. But there's the power of Jesus.

He can speak to those who have gone on into the other world. And he can raise the dead. We've seen the compassion of Jesus.

[31:22] We've seen the power of Jesus. I want you to look at something else. What I'm going to call the closure of Jesus. Closure. Now there's a psychological word.

And it signifies that everything humanly possible has been done that needs to be done. There's a death.

There's a body. There's a funeral. There's this grieving person coming to grasp the reality of the situation. We call that closure.

But that's a psychological term. And it's a psychological experience. What Jesus gives is nothing merely psychological. Jesus gives true closure.

He presents the boy to his mother. Notice that. The end of verse 15. The dead man sat up and began to talk.

[32:21] And Jesus gave him back to his mother. Notice this. The mother does not come forward to embrace her son. Jesus speaks to the man.

He comes back to life. He sits up. He speaks. And there's the mother looking on. She stays where she is. Everything is so well ordered.

Jesus is in command of every detail of the situation. He controls every movement. And it says.

Jesus gave him back to his mother.

She doesn't come to get him. He gives him to her. He's in control, you see. He makes closure.

The boy was actually Jesus' possession. But Jesus gives him back to his mother. Jesus gives him back. Understand this.

[33:22] Jesus is interested in reuniting loved ones. He gives the boy to his mother. He brings about reunion. He brings closure.

And someday there's going to be true closure for every one of us, who have loved ones in Jesus who have gone before. True closure. It can't happen on this side.

We're comforted by Jesus. There's a real comfort, a real sympathy. We can cope with the situation because of the presence of Jesus. We grieve and we never forget those whom we lose.

But Jesus, in his great compassion, can do what no one else can do. He gives us a sympathy that brings us through. But he doesn't bring closure until the last day.

And on that day, his voice will raise the dead. And all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come forth. And those who belong to him will be raised to glory. And all who belong to him will be reunited to one another.

[34:30] And that's what Paul is speaking of in 1 Thessalonians 4. He says this. The Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Notice the phrase, caught up together with them.

There's the closure. We're all together. Those who have died, we're all raised together to be with him. That's why Paul says, therefore, encourage each other with these words.

The encouragement is that the day of closure is coming. So we can rejoice today in all that Jesus is and all that Jesus is able to do.

He will raise us all. He will reunite us all. Now, there's a wonderful spiritual application to this.

[35:44] Jesus is able to raise the dead. Jesus can speak to the dead. Jesus can do that to those who are spiritually dead.

And maybe there's someone in your family who's spiritually dead. Jesus can speak to that soul.

One of your friends may be spiritually dead. Jesus can speak to that soul.

Jesus can raise them. And here is this wonderful Savior then. There are the bereaved among us, and Jesus can comfort them. There are those who have died, and Jesus will raise them.

And there are those who have been parted one from another, and Jesus will reunite them. What a Savior. He meets us in every one of our tragic conditions.

He meets us when we're sad. He meets us when we're grieved. He meets us when we've lost loved ones. He meets us. He's with us when we're happy.

[36:51] He's with us when we're sad. And Jesus makes the difference. This great Savior. This great sympathizer. And I commend him to you tonight as the one who can best sympathize with you.

the one who can best comfort you. The one who can bring closure. The one who can reunite. The one who can raise the dead. This Jesus Christ, our Savior, who is everything to us.

We thank God for such a Savior, such a friend of sinners. Let us pray. Thank you. Gracious Father, how thankful we are tonight for our Savior.

No one loves like him. No one can sympathize like him. No one can bring comfort like he brings comfort. No one can know our souls in adversity like he knows them.

We thank you that he trod where we tread. We thank you that he stepped into the crowd of mourners. We thank you that he's there at the graveside.

[37:58] He's everywhere where your people need him. This great sympathizer. This one who loves us. This one who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. This one who brings us forgiveness.

This one who gives us mercy. This one who strengthens us when we are weak. This one who encourages us when we are down. This one who lifts us out of depression. This one who shows us there's a reason for our discouragements.

This Savior who loves us. We thank you tonight that there's no one in the universe like Jesus and he is our Savior. He is your eternal beloved son and you have given him to us and you have given us to him.

We bless your name tonight and we give you great praise and great thanks. Encourage your people we pray. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you brother for setting Christ before us. Please take our greetings back to your people there at Hicksville. Tell them that we will be praying for them.

[39 : 07] How fitting has it been that on this probably the last sermon to be preached in this room that we should have Christ set before us in his glory all day today this morning and again this evening let's sing 143 majestic sweetness sits enthroned upon the Savior's brow majesty and sweetness are met in him Lord Jesus we do not have a thousand hearts to give but we have one heart and we give it afresh to you this evening come and take us come and use us come and get glory to your own great name through us we ask it for your own great praise Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.