

**Luke 7: 11-17; "The Greatest Present to a Mother", A Mother's Day
Sermon delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 9th, 2010,
in the Morning Worship Service.**

It must have been a very interesting procession that entered the city of Nain that day. The Lord Jesus was surrounded by His disciples and there was also a large crowd following along with them. They were all wondering what their eyes would behold the Lord Jesus do on that day. We who follow Christ, as His modern day disciples, would do well to ask ourselves that same question: "I wonder what the Lord Jesus will do today to show forth His glory, His power, and His love toward fallen, sinful mankind? For He is building His church, and something new is afoot every day. This particular day, as Jesus drew near the gates of this city, a funeral procession was just going out. Was this coincidence? No, this was not coincidence; it was God's providence. What appears to be coincidence to us is according to God's purpose. God orders all things after the counsel of His will, and the timing of all events is in His mighty hands. It was no accident that this mother would meet up with our Lord on that day. As Jesus and his band of followers came near to the "portal" of the city, (that is how the word gate can be translated here; the city was a walled city and it had a large "portal" as a gate), the sounds and sights of mourning and weeping met them. Death was marching out of the city and life was marching in. The two large crowds meet each other and they stop. The procession of death was intending to go out of the city; and the procession of life had come there to meet them and to greet them with Jesus at their head. Those following Jesus did not know why they were there; only Jesus knew what He intended to do. He was going to give to this woman the greatest present she could have asked for; had she had the opportunity to ask Him for it. A dead young man was being carried out, and his mother was crying. This young man who had died was the only son of his mother. And not only had she lost him to death, but she had also lost her husband to death some time before this as well. Jesus knew this all, so very well, and He had determined to minister unto her, and to everyone watching that day.

Since today is Mother's Day, I want to attempt to bring encouragement to the hearts of every mother here; to have them know, that the Lord Jesus does see and know your deepest sorrows, your greatest joys, and your most cherished hopes in regard to your children. And even as He gave to this woman, the greatest present that she could have ever asked for on that day; even so, He is able to do the same for you. I am not saying that the Lord Jesus raises the dead every day. But I am saying that the greatest present ever given to any mother is the presence and help of Christ Himself. Because of His compassion, this woman came to know the help of His presence and the comfort of His words. By His great power, the life of her

son was given back to him, and also to her. The greatest hopes and the greatest fears that a godly mother has, have to do with the welfare of her children; both their temporal and eternal welfare. Those whom she has given birth to; she thinks about. As a loving mother, she thinks about how those whom she has raised are doing presently; and she has thoughts of how they will turn out in this life. Will they be godly children? Will they make her heart glad? Will they find eternal life? Oh what joy comes to a mother's heart; when this, the greatest of presents is given to her, when Christ gives spiritual and eternal life to her children, and they respond to that gift accordingly. This is what we want to look at this morning. We will look first at the sorrow that sin and death brought to this mother's heart. Then we will look, secondly, at the joy that Jesus' compassion brought to her heart. And then 3rdly we will look at how Jesus' presentation of this young man to his mother brought astonishment and joy to others who witnessed it. May the Lord draw near to each of our hearts this morning, and especially the mothers among us; so that we will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

1st of all – Let's think together about the sorrow that sin and death brought to this mother's heart. (Verses 11 and 12)

Here we have a young man who has died. His mother had not expected him to die so young. Her husband, his father, had evidently died a while before this, and this young man had been a great consolation to his mother in many different ways. I do not know how old he was, but I suspect that he was in his teens or his early twenties. He had probably helped to take care of her in his father's absence. He had probably helped to provide for her in whatever ways that he could. This was a great comfort to her when her husband had died, but now she had no one; she was desolate. Death sometimes comes and takes our nearest and dearest relations from us, and O what sorrow death brings. What pain, what loss; and the many tears that death brings. One who is close, one who very dear to us, is removed from us in death. We live in a fallen world, and even with all the advances of modern medicine, still death may come to our loved ones; even to those whom a mother cares the most about in this life; her own husband and her own child. Why is this? Dearly beloved, let us lay the fault where it deserves to be laid; it is because of sin. There would be no sorrow in the world today, were it not for sin. It was Adam's sin in the beginning that brought fear and sorrow with it. It was his and Eve's breaking God's one good commandment to them in the beginning of the world, that has brought all the sorrow of death along with it. God had told them not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because in the day that they ate of it, they would die. But Eve was deceived by the Serpent and thought that she would become wise if she ate of this fruit. Satan had told her that she would not die, but God had said that she would die. She was deceived into not believing God. Satan told her that she would become like God knowing the difference between good and evil. Instead of wisdom came deception and death in the transgression of the commandment. She did not think that she had died when she ate of the forbidden fruit. She did not look like someone who had died, to

Adam, when she handed him some of the fruit to eat, and said, "Take some". So he ate and thus they both died. They did not die physically right away. That would come many years later. Indeed it would come some nine centuries later. But they spiritually died the moment that they ate of the fruit. Sin entered their nature, and death through sin. They didn't realize that something was very wrong until God came looking for them, to have fellowship with them, as He usually did in the evening, in the cool of the day. And then they felt fear and they hid themselves from God. Then they felt shame, and they tried to cover themselves so that God would not see their shame. It not because God is a cruel judge that all this has happened. He is a righteous judge, but He is not a cruel or heartless God. It was because sin had entered the world and death by sin; that is the reason that they died. And that is the reason that they felt fear and shame, and no doubt sorrow when they knew what they had lost.

God is a good God. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift, but He must judge sin, as it is that "abominable thing that He hates." (Jeremiah 44: 4) It is that abominable thing which robs Him of the glory and praise which are due Him from men, and which deprives men and women of their true life and fellowship with God, and their being able to know what is truly good for themselves. Since the Fall people must not only be taught the difference between good and evil by other men, but they must all be taught by God to be able to see things in a spiritually right way, by the Spirit of God Himself. They must be given eyes to see, and ears to hear, and a mind which can comprehend what God has said in His word is true. Sin brings sorrow, in that most people do not see why they themselves or those whom they love, should have to die at all. They do not see that sin ruins everything excellent that God has given them in their body and in their soul. They do not see the sinfulness of sin. Most people are ignorant of the word of God, and they do not even see the connection between sin and death, even when they are told of it. And when they are told that death is a punishment of God for Adam's disobedience to God's command, they would blame God and His justice, and Adam and his weakness. But they do not see that they themselves would have done the same thing if they had been there in Adam's place. They do not care for God's plan and purpose in His creating men, and they do not believe in God's justice as being perfect, if men and women have to suffer as a result of His being faithful to it.

But when death comes, in our society, many people do know something of the reality of their loss. They know the value of people, because they usually can see something of that. Mothers especially know it, because God has created a natural tenderness in them which the Fall has not erased from their hearts. They love their children not only for selfish reasons, but because they in many cases they have been taught by their own parents to know the value of what God has given them in little people who grow up. And so, they learned that children are a gift from the Lord. They valued them, and they imparted things to them which were of lasting value and worth. Many mothers, especially, see the value of persons and the value

of family, the value of communicating and passing on to the next generation something of the good and valuable things of life that God has given in his common grace. Motherhood is a very good and precious thing in any society, and it ought to be honored as we are honoring it today. If there are some women who are hardened to the death of one of their children, it is only because they have cultivated their sin to such a degree where they no longer feel as they ought to feel. They no longer feel in the way that God created them to feel. This is why we honor our mothers on a day such as this; because we came from their body, we were nourished by their love; we were made wiser by their instruction, and they imparted things that were precious to us. They taught us something about beauty and love, and how to observe life, and perhaps even how to be wise in an earthly or perhaps more importantly, an eternal sense. But this woman of our text had no children to honor her that day; no child to share her life with any longer, and this is why she sorrowed. And yet this is why she was honored by others. It says, "A large crowd from the city was with her." They would sympathize with her sorrow, even if they could do nothing more to help her.

Now this young man may have died in an accident which was not his fault at all. Or, he may have had a disease which took his life. He may have come down with an illness like a common cold, which developed into a pneumonia, and he died. It does not say in our text, but we must understand that was it because of Adam's sin that he died. It is because of Adam's sin that all men die. Turn with me to Romans Chapter 5 and you will see this. Verse 12 says, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—(for until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law." "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come." Look also down at verse 20. "Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound." "But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more." What is interesting about this passage, among other things, is that sin is not imputed where there is no law. Sin is not formally charged where it has not be defined and declared by the law to be wrong. And sin had not been so well defined for men during that time period before the law was given, as it was after it was given. But nevertheless, death reigned, it says. The law could not bring the condemnation of that person's actions, but sin in the heart and life, still worked like a disease to kill those persons, most surely. Death "spread", like a disease, to all men from Adam. And thus the sorrow of death spread to all men as well. It is sin which brings sorrow, not only to a mother's heart, but also to the hearts of those who sympathize with her loss. And that is why when a mother is bereaved of her children, many in the community will turn out to sympathize with her loss, even those who do not know God, or who may be actually blaming God for her loss. They still know the value of a loving mother, and the value of persons, and the value of the intact family. But the greatest gift that a mother can ever receive is the salvation and the help of Christ Himself; for

as it says here in Romans 6: 20, "But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more." That is the value of this passage. This woman did not go out of the city, mourning that day, unobserved by Christ. He had come to that city, and to that funeral procession, to minister to this very mother, for this very purpose; to demonstrate this truth; that where sin abounded, that grace would much more abound.

Now 2ndly - we want to look at the joy that Jesus' compassion brought to her heart.

Verse 13 says, "When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep.'" "Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still." "And He said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.'" I like the simplicity of Luke's statements; especially this one. "When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep.'" I would have each mother in this place to know this morning, and all the rest of us as well, that there is a joy which only Jesus can bring to your heart. Jesus did not just stand there and watch the procession go by that day. He did not stand there unmoved at this mother's plight. He entered in to her sorrows and felt them. Indeed, He knew that He would go to the cross so that they would be taken away forever. Isaiah 53: 4 says, "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." Jesus knew what He came into the world to do; and one of the greatest of the presents of grace that He suffered and died to bring to us, was the removal of our griefs and sorrows. To the many mothers who have lost their children; to those who will receive His ministry and trust in Him, He says, "Do not weep." "Do not despair!" "I am here," Jesus was in effect saying that to this woman. How can He say this? No other person in the world has the right, the authority, or the power to tell you that you should not weep over the loss of a child or a loved one. They do not have the power to take away your grief. They cannot turn off your sorrow with their words. But Jesus can, because He alone has power over death; He alone is the Prince of Life. Someday, when He comes back again; when He appears for those trusting in Him; He is going to wipe away every tear. Revelation 21, verse 4 says, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying." "There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." For those who believe in Jesus, not only death shall pass away, but sorrow and crying shall also pass away. This episode of this woman receiving this present of her son being raised from the dead is a token of that glorious time which is coming for all believers. Jesus only raised three people from the dead which are recorded for us in the gospel records. He raised Jairus' daughter in Luke Chapter 8, and He raised Lazarus in John Chapter 11, and He raised this young man in the passage that we are looking at. In all these passages you will note if you read them, that they are all young people who have died, and they all had relatives who were very concerned about their death and sorrowing over the loss of one so young. Jesus showed His compassion to their relatives in every case.

This leads me to attempt to apply this passage to the case of you mothers who have children who are dead in their trespasses and sins. A mother cannot continue to weep when Jesus is present to heal; when He is right there giving her the assurance that He is immediately going to do something. This widowed and bereaved mother responded to Jesus' words in faith. But a tender-hearted mother who weeps many tears, for many years over a dear son or daughter who is spiritually dead, is one whom the Lord Jesus does take notice of. Only He can address the legitimate concerns that you have for their salvation. Only He can take away your fears and dry your tears. Only He can address the loving concern that you have for their eternal soul. But you should know that He does have compassion on those mothers who pray. He will act lovingly and wisely in relation to all of your children whom you pray for. He will show compassion. This dear widow of our text never prayed a prayer, never asked Jesus to come and lay hands on her son so that he would rise from the dead; but Jesus' compassion in accordance with the will and purpose of God were enough for Him to act. It will be just the same with you, dear mothers who pray. The outcome is all in the hands of God; but I want you to remember the great, seeing compassion of Jesus. Do you remember the parable that Jesus told in Luke Chapter 18, verse 1? "Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man." "Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.'" "And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me." "Then the Lord said, 'hear what the unjust judge said.'" "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him though He bears long with them?" "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" Ah, there is the key for all mothers to use in regard to their unsaved children. It is the key of faith. A mother's faith in Jesus, if persevered in, will often unlock the doors of the Lord's mercy. It is true that God will show mercy to those whom He will show mercy, and He will have compassion on those whom He will show compassion. But He also knows how to give good gifts to His children and to honor a mother's faith. His purposes in regard to election will stand. But His compassion; His showing mercy to thousands who are unworthy and undeserving will also stand. It is a part of His Electing love. Remember Hannah in 1 Samuel 1, verse 26. She said, speaking to Eli the priest, "O my lord!" "As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to the Lord" "For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition which I asked of Him." Know that when you pray, dear mothers, that the Lord is full of compassion. If He raised the son of this mother in Nain from the dead, without her ever asking for it; how much more will He have consideration to the continual concern of your heart for the salvation of your children.

And you young people and children who are listening to me this morning need to take notice of this as well today. When Jesus came up and touched the open coffin, and those who were carrying it stood still; when He spoke the words which raised him from the dead, He spoke them in the form of a command, as though the young man could already hear Him, even though he was dead. He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." You may be dead in your trespasses and sins, but you can still hear me speaking to you today. I am not the Lord Jesus Christ, but I am His servant, speaking His word to you. "Awake, sleeper, and rise from the dead, and let the light of Christ shine upon you." Throw open the curtains of this room of your heart house, even today, and let the light of the gospel in. Rise from your sleepy lethargy, not regarding the true meaning of life. You are not too young to forsake the world and its pleasures. You are not too young to perish in your sins if you do not. You are not too young to be delighting yourself in the Lord and thus make the heart of your dear mother glad. You may not think that you can live this Christian life, but Jesus Christ can raise you from the dead, in a moment. It would be the greatest Mother's Day present that your mother will ever receive, if you would tell her that you have responded to the gospel call and have found life in Jesus name. This leads me to my third and final point.

Thirdly - We want to look at how Jesus' presentation of him to his mother brought astonishment and joy to others who witnessed it.

Verse 15 says, "So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother." "Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us; and God has visited His people." This young man, Jesus raised from the dead. Can you imagine how very thankful that he was? To have another opportunity to live and to please God. Another opportunity of years stretched out before him in which to help and serve his mother? I am sure that he made the most of it. He sat up and he began to speak. "I believed and therefore I spoke," it says in one of the Apostle Paul's letters. Jesus helped him down out of the bier, and presented him to his mother. What a very great gift this was; the greatest present that could have been given to the mother who had thought that she had lost her son. If you are a true Christian, young man, you will speak of it. You will tell of what Jesus has done for your soul, and you will be most happy to do so. What Jesus has done for you, if you speak of it, will bring joy and astonishment to the hearts and minds of your hearers. There is no better place for a public confession than before the church, as this young man's apparently was. He spoke not only before believers and followers of the Lord Jesus, but before many others as well. This whole episode created fear in minds of those beholding the miracle, our text says. It was a kind of holy fear which has regard for greatness and works of God. They were truly astonished that Jesus had done this. Jesus did not do this by prayer, or by stretching himself out on the young lad as Elisha had done so many years before; He did it by His own inherent power and authority in connection with the Father's purpose. His mother had received a very great gift in the raising of her son, but actually she had received a

greater gift in the presence and help of her Savior with her. There is little doubt in my mind that this woman had faith in Jesus when He first came up with the crowd following Him. But if she did not have it when He first came up; she certainly did have it by the time that her son was presented to her. What further proof could she need of Jesus' compassion, His willingness to help and to exercise His power on her behalf, than what she saw demonstrated with her own eyes? Well did Jesus know, that she would need His going to the cross. Well did He know how He would have to bear her griefs and carry her sorrows. He saw how He could give her the greatest present that a mother could ever want. It would be to give Himself on the cross to be her Savior and the Savior of her son, and the Savior of many others; mothers who are here today. Let your heart rejoice this morning, dear mothers who are here, if you have met Christ. For if you met Christ, and have come to know the power of His love and grace, you have all things. He has raised you from the dead spiritually, and has caused you to rejoice in Him. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.