

THE MOTHER OF NAIN

The lady of our text this morning is often referred to as the widow of Nain, yet in the Scripture she is referred to first of all as a mother. I cannot think of a woman in her situation that if given a choice would not also rather be referred to as a mother rather than a widow. So today I have chosen to go with first mention and call her the Mother of Nain.

In Luke 7:1 we see that Jesus was in Capernaum. Then in Luke 7:11, He travels to the city of Nain, which was a twenty mile walk. It appears that our Lord had gone out of the way to make this visit. Here's what we know about our Lord, "...He hath done all things well..." (Mark 7:37b). Christ never does anything by happenstance; there is always rhyme and reason to all His actions. His purpose is the continuing thread through all His activities. It is interesting to note that when a Jewish person died in those days, they were placed in the grave on the same day. The interesting fact is that our Lord seems to have headed out to Nain before this mother's son had passed. We do not always know what God is up to, but He does! In John 6:5 and 6 we read, "When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do." The "not knowing" is for our test and growth. Rest assured our Lord is very aware of all that goes on around us. I would concur with Job who made this claim in Job 9:10, "Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number. " And then in Romans 11:33, Paul boldly exclaims, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" You mean the Savior would travel twenty miles out of the way to meet the dire need of one broken-hearted mother? You'd better believe it! To assure you that our Lord had the greatest respect for mothers, we go to the cross and we hear these loving words from our Lord's dying lips: "... Behold thy mother!..." (John 19:27b). Let us behold this mother of Nain and learn from the events surrounding our story. Consider:

I. THE CURIOSITY OF THE MULTITUDE

In Luke 7:11 we observe that not only the disciples, but also many other people decided to take the twenty-mile walk with Jesus. Granted, many of the people were simply curious to see what Jesus would do next. At Capernaum He miraculously healed a servant of a famous centurion in the area. And He did it with just a simple word! I can imagine the people are thinking, "This is amazing; everywhere Jesus goes miracles are happening! Let's go see what happens next!" In Luke 5:15, it says, "But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and

great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.” Curiosity was piqued because good things were coming to pass. Some even followed Jesus because of carnal reasons. It is recorded in John 6:26, “Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.” In Philippians 1:15 through 17 Paul taught that some people preach Christ with envy, strife and contention, yet others preach Christ with good will and love. Then he summarized in Philippians 1:18, “What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.” For whatever motive, we are touched that God allows even men’s wrong motives to get the word of the Gospel out!

II. THE CARES OF A MOTHER

In Luke 7:12 we contemplate a dear mother. She has had far happier days. I see her in courtship falling in love with the man of her dreams. I hear her laughter; I visualize her preparing for the wedding day with girlish glee. I see her setting up housekeeping with her husband. I hear the cry of their little baby and see the wonder of every parent who marvels at this...the best part of God’s creation, the gift of human life! Behold! A child made in the image of God! Then the sad day comes when this same child has to join his mother in burying his father. And then this sad day is followed by another very sad day -- the son dies! I see this precious mother now following the funeral bier to the same cemetery to lay her son’s body next to his father’s. Every child is special to Jesus and He is especially compassionate toward the parent of one child for whom all of that parental affection is directed as seen in Luke 8:42 and Luke 9:38.

Let us see what we may learn in the beginning of a sad event. The poet, Robert Browning Hamilton wrote:

“I walked a mile with Pleasure;
She chatted all the way;
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.
I walked a mile with Sorrow,
And ne’er a word said she;
But, oh! The things I learned from her,
When sorrow walked with me.”

III. THE CONCERN OF OUR LORD

In Luke 7:13, 14a please examine with me:

A. Christ’s Evaluation

“...When the Lord saw her...” (Luke 7:13a). Nothing and no one escapes the sight of our Lord. Hebrews 4:13 says, “Neither is there any creature that is not

manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” The Lord is never neutral or non-caring. Please notice:

B. Christ’s Response

“...He had compassion on her...” (Luke 7:13b). The word “compassion” comes to us from the Greek word, “splanchnizomai.” One scholar translates this word: “It has to do with feeling something in your gut; it is the emotion you feel and it churns your stomach. It makes your heart beat rapidly. It makes your heart stop. Sometimes, it is something you feel so strongly that it can create a kind of fear.” We sense that definition is congruous with Mark 6:34a: “And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd....” The Lord went so far as to say, “...Weep not...” (Luke 7:13c). This would be considered cruel to say to a woman in her situation, that is, unless you could change the reason why she was weeping to begin with. And indeed He could! And then we observe:

C. Christ’s Action

“And He touched the bier...” (Luke 7:14a). Although the Lord did not say stop, His action demanded it: “...and they that bare him stood still...” (Luke 7:14b). The reason was because what Jesus did was a most defiling action according Numbers 19:11-22. As soon as Jesus touched the bier, life began to generate. Our Lord had the touch of life! Compare this with Hebrews 7:26, for He was declared holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.

IV. THE COMMAND TO LIVE

In Luke 7:14 and 15 we contemplate this was a command that was:

- A. Personal: “...Young man, I say unto thee...” (Luke 7:14c). And it was:
- B. Functional: “And he that was dead sat up and began to speak...” (Luke 7:15a). It was:
- C. Relational: “...And delivered him to his mother” (Luke 7:15b).

V. THE COPIOUS CELEBRATION

In Luke 7:16 a celebration broke out and it affected everyone. It was:

- A. Reverential: “And there came a fear on all...” (Luke 7:16a). It was also:
- B. Directional: “...and they glorified God...” (Luke 7:16b). And finally it was:
- C. Soteriological: “...God hath visited his people” (Luke 7:16c; Luke 1:68; Matthew 1:21).

CONCLUSION:

In Luke 7:18 and 19 the disciples of John take him the news of the many miracles Jesus was performing. John the Baptist’s response was a moment of doubt, as if to say, “I have followed you, but where is my release? Where is my

miracle?” Perhaps there is a mother saying, “Thank you, Lord, for the help this mother received, but I need help with my child and my life as well.” Remember, today is a good day to claim Psalm 27:13 and 14.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.