

Mourning Glory

When Jesus Made a Mother's Day

May 8, 2022



Today I'd like to share a special message for Mother's Day.



We've been talking about the chain-breaking, totally naked, self-mutilated, and insane Gadarene and his legion of demons, who dug in, to make his home among the graves, across the Sea of Galilee from Capernaum. Know who his mother was? Me neither. So today, we'll just let him *stay* in his hole. Cuz it's *Mother's Day!* **Which is not an easy day for anyone suffering any type of loss.** So this is for *you*. Because if ever there was a mother's day *moment* in the *Bible*, it's early on in Jesus' ministry, in this little town of Nain, when **Jesus turns a grieving mother's day-of-mourning into a day-of-rejoicing!** But before we get to *that*, answer me *this*: **Do you know the difference between your home and a hole in the ground?** Well your home is in *heaven*. And one of the common Scriptural images for our fallen world is an *abyss* or a dark *pit*. (Ezek 31:14-18) And, just after Jesus delivered His Sermon on the Mount ...



When He had come down from the mountain, *great multitudes* [tens of thousands from all around] followed Him. – Matthew 8:1 NKJ



Into Capernaum, (Lk 7:1) in order to *see* and *hear* and *touch* the very *Light of life*, who'd come into our *darkness*, in the *flesh*, to dwell *among* us. (Jn 1:4, 14)



Soon afterward, Jesus went [about 22 miles south] to a town called Nain, and His disciples and a large crowd went along with Him. – Luke 7:11 NIV



And it's *still* populated; and *right here* is where this very old church was built over the original city gate. Nain's name comes from the Hebrew word "na'ah" for "throne of God" and "meadow of the flock", as in:



The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green "na'ah" ... He restores my soul ... though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me. – Psalm 23:1-4 NAS



Sounds like home to *me*. Nain's gate would've been similar to the remains of this ancient gate at Megiddo.



As He approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out – Luke 7:12 NIV



Making any who carry it or even *touch* it very *unclean*; (Num 19:11-12) of which the grieving couldn't care *less*. **This is a collision course of opposing forces! The outbound are crying or silently grieving. And at their head is the dead.**



The inbound are laughing and loudly rejoicing. Cuz at their head is the Life!

But as soon as they see the corpse, they hush and stand aside. To show respect; and, to avoid touching it, or even contacting someone who has. They're unclean. Give 'em room. Now, the dead man being carried out was ...



... the only son of his mother, [no others at her side for support] and she was a widow. [No husband to share her grief. Not to mention, her only means of livelihood was gone along with her son] And [he was well known and beloved by many, so that] a large crowd from the town was with her. – Luke 7:12 NIV



You know what the pallbearers are thinking? "One day, they'll be carrying me out this gate." These are the thoughts we have at funerals, because that's when **we have to face the reality of mortality**, our own parade to the grave. **Are you prepared for your date at the gate?** Let's face it. There's no avoiding it. Cuz *all* of Life is a *parade*, led by *fears* and followed by *tears*. And there's no standing aside to let it pass by. Which is why He *came!* So, **who are you relating to in the story thus far?** Those *contemplating* their own mortality? Those *side-stepping* the *issue* for the *moment*? Or the *mom* dealing *head-on* with the heart-wrenching *loss* to *death*? **Know what Jesus was facing at that gate? His mortal enemy.** Cuz, **He came to take on death.** Even gave it the home court *advantage* in this deep, dark, abyss. And *beat* it at *Golgotha* (lit. the place of the *skull*).



[You see] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word *was* God. ... In Him was *life*, and that *life* was the *Light* of men. [And] The Light shines in the darkness, but the darkness [by and large] has not understood it. – John 1:1-5 NIV



Not like *this* mother *will!* *Because ...*

When the Lord saw *her*, [facing *alone*, the very thing He'll give His *own* life to *destroy*] His heart went out to her [and *this* right *here* is the *heart* of the *story*] and He said, "Don't cry." – Luke 7:13 NIV

She doesn't cry out for Jesus' help. She's *preoccupied*. **The Lord is moved by her suffering alone**, which is so important for us to see in this story. **This is what gets His attention.** Sometimes we get mad at God, blame God, for not intervening on *our* timetable, or giving us the answer our heart *aches* to hear, during our *temporary* stay down here. **We tend to think He doesn't fully care till we call His attention and make Him aware.** But, take heart, He doesn't *lack* compassion; **we're just on the dark side of the gate, in the valley of the shadow.**

When we say, "Don't cry," we mean, "I wish I could remove the reason for your tears." But when Jesus said, "Don't cry," the pain in His face, the compassion in His eyes, and the confidence in His voice, said: **"Your suffering breaks My heart; but, watch what I can do; and I'll give you a tiny, temporary, example of what I've come to do for all of you for all eternity."**

Then He went up [behind the pallbearers and] and touched [lit. *grabbed onto*] the [open] coffin, [cuz *He* couldn't care *less*, and He couldn't care *more!* And they didn't have *lids*] and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, – Luke 7:14 NIV



And *right here* is where everything would go into a surreal slow motion that *everyone* within *earshot* would *recall* and *retell* for the *rest* of *their* life. **The day when an immovable object met an unstoppable force, face to face at the gate.** And ... well, if even the *gates of hell* can't prevail, **what chance did a little *dose of death* stand?** (Mt 16:18) ...

Now this multitude had seen Jesus *heal* and *reveal* and even *deal* with *demons*; but when the gloves came off against the *dominion* of the *darkness* of *death* that *day*, to put it *simply*, **they saw the Light.** And to put it *lightly*, **He made that mother's day!** Cuz **instead of the dead making the clean *unclean*, Mr. Clean made the dead *un-dead!*** And it happened when ...

He [simply] said, "Young man *I say* to you, *get up!*" [lit. "*Wake up!*" And *that* separated *soul* snapped *back* into its *corpse* with *such force*, that] The dead man sat up and began to talk, [**Whoa! What just happened!**] – Luke 7:14-15 NIV



We're not told if the pallbearers *lowered*, *dropped*, or *threw* him down; but I think we all know it was likely the *later* – and only a *matter* of how *violently* they'd *done* it. Because you see, in the order of *miracles*, **there's something quantifiably different, not to mention fairly distressing, in the reanimating of a corpse!** What do you think he might've said? "Why are you all here? Why are we at the gate?"

... and Jesus gave him *back* to his *mother*. [**You want to tell him?**] – Luke 7:15 NIV

So, what's it all mean? Well, **it *doesn't mean* He'll intervene in every tribulation.** After all, He *didn't* raise her *husband*. No comments. Remember, **He promises a world of troubles, not a life free of trials.** (Jn 16:33) Even *this miracle* was *temporary*. They're *all* long gone. But **He does promise to restore what we've lost;** if we'll *trust Him* to carry out *His will* in *His time*. (Mt 19:29)



And we *can* trust; cuz He's shown us with *this* example among *many*, that He *has* the *heart*, and *certainly* the *power*.

But back in Nazareth, *before* He made this *mother's day*, He reminded His friends and family, who refused to put their trust in Him, that ...



There were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time ... Yet Elijah was not sent to *any* of them, but to a widow [at the *city gate* (1 Kng 17:10)] in Zarephath. [**Who's only son had died**] – Luke 4:25-26 NIV

[And] Elijah *cried to the Lord*, "O Lord my God, *let* this boy's life return to him!" The Lord heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. Elijah ... gave *him* to his mother [And the Lord said, "**Why's Elijah get'a have all the fun?**"] – 1 Kings 17:21-23 NIV

So Jesus *declares* it, and then He *duplicates* it. *Why?* What's the purpose in *repeating* this?

[Well] They were *all* filled with *awe* and praised God. "A great *prophet* [like *Elijah*] has *appeared* among us," they said. [But some, who *knew* their Bible, saw what was going on, and said] "God [himself] has *come* to *help* His people." [BINGO!] – Luke 7:15-16 NIV

But what *was* it they'd *seen* – both in His *Word* and in His *actions* – that gave Him *away*? If we simply *compare* the *stories* we can *see* for *ourselves*: "Elijah cried to the Lord ... 'let this boy's life return'". Whereas Jesus simply said, "I say to you, get up!" **Jesus skips the prayer**, cuz He doesn't *need* to *pray*; cuz, in repeating this miracle, **He's not reprising Elijah's role ... He's reprising God's!** To show those who know His Word, that **He's the One Elijah was praying to!**

[Because] The Word was with God, and the Word *was* God. [Remember?] ... In *him* was *life* ... The light shines in the darkness ... and made *His* dwelling among *us*. [Can you believe it?!] We have *seen* His *glory*, the *glory* of the *One* and *Only* – John 1:1-5 NIV

The One that can overcome any suffering that can come ... *has come*. So, *what* happened *after* Jesus raised her son? We don't know. But we do know those **two opposing processions became one united parade, with the Light of life leading the formerly dead back to his house.**



But not his home, at least, not *that* day. Eventually, mother *and* son would be carried through the gate to be buried in the grave; because **they had a date at a pearly gate.**



But on *that* mother's day, you can *bet* she can't *let* all that funeral food go to *waste*. And turns out, *nobody's* *unclean*, 'cause nobody's dead! And even though it's now a massive crowd, there's little chance the food ran out. Cuz *this* is *Jesus'* party! And you know how *He* is with *fish* and *loaves* and *wine*. Especially when He's just turned everyone's *mourning* into *dancing*!



So try to keep in mind the difference between *your* home and a *hole* in the ground. And hopefully this will bring a *little* comfort, if you're having a *rough* time, as you *realize* that **you're not alone**, and **you're not unloved**, and **you're not without hope**. Even if *all* is *lost*, *down here*.



Jesus doesn't sidestep *our* suffering. He grabs on and turns it around, by His *glory* and *for* His *glory*. *Momentarily* *down here*; but *foreverly* *up there*. Because **His glory is His love.**

And if He would *leave* His heavenly *throne* to *share* the *sorrow*, and *restore* the *joy*, of a weeping *widow*, **I can't imagine what awaits *inside* His gates!**

So, whatever *you're* facing, listen *close* and you'll hear Him say, **"Your suffering breaks My heart; but just trust and wait ... and watch what I can do!"**