

# TRINITY 16

September 27 2020

Old Testament: 1 Kings 17:17-24

Epistle: Ephesians 3:13-21

Gospel: Luke 7:11-17

## **Standing...**

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

It's not by chance that our Lord goes to a city called Nain—  
and it's not by chance that once there,  
He meets a funeral procession and stops it.

Let us pray. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord—our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

## **Sitting...**

I am a fan of documentaries.

Much to the chagrin of my children,  
who quickly vacate the room when I suggest watching one.  
For my wife, a documentary is nothing more than digital melatonin.  
If there's not a lot of action and a high body count,  
she's out in 10 minutes.

So, I was watching a documentary not too long ago, *by myself*,  
about Crosby, Stills and Nash—remember them? The rock folk supergroup.

David Crosby,  
who after ingesting, inhaling and injecting  
every known drug available—many at the same time—  
wondered why he wasn't dead.

For so many of his contemporaries had died  
via drug overdose or alcohol poisoning.

They consumed a lot less than he did.  
Crosby went on to say how shocked he was  
that no one talks about the reality of death.

I thought, you've got to be kidding...

No one talks about death?! The man clearly isn't Lutheran—  
 for Lutherans talk about death all the time.  
 We sing about death in our hymns—including prayers made  
 about saints who've gone before us and now rest from their labors.  
 We remember those who die every year on All Saints Day,  
 and the subject of death comes up  
 throughout the course of the year in the lectionary.  
 Today, beloved, is more of the same...

For Death has already devoured a woman's husband,  
 and now, Death has just gobbled up her son.  
 And just like them, Death is coming for you too...  
 and you too, David Crosby—there's no escaping it.

Yet gratefully, the voice of Jesus is stronger than Death.  
 That's my theme this morning: The voice of Jesus is stronger than Death.  
 You see, our words have no authority over Death—you know this...  
 When we speak to Death, we're ignored.  
 We curse at Death, but Death doesn't care.  
 We can cry for our deceased loved ones to,  
 "Wake up! Don't die!"  
 and we're met with nothing but cold silence.  
 Death has grabbed them,  
 and it will not let them go.

Almost all of you have walked behind a coffin bearing someone you love.  
 And if you haven't yet, you will.  
 Death shows no mercy—no pity.  
 Laughing at us as it takes its victims, while we're left to weep.  
 But with Jesus, things are different.  
 When Jesus speaks, Death reacts.  
 When He speaks,  
 Death is forced to give up its victims.  
 Forced to release them.  
 And just like the wind obeys His Word,  
 and the waves,  
 and the demons,  
 and diseases,  
 Death does as well,  
 going home empty-handed.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks into a dark dead tomb saying,  
 "Lazarus, come forth!"  
 Death releases him, and Lazarus walks out.

In the Gospel of Luke, a little girl has died, and Jesus taking her hand, says,  
 "Child arise."  
 Death releases her, and she gets up at once.

In today's Gospel account, Jesus says,  
 "Young man, I say to you, get up!"  
 Death releases him too, and the man gets up.

See a pattern here beloved?  
 The voice of Jesus is stronger than Death.

So, when it comes to your death, let's remind ourselves of what the Bible teaches:  
 so that you can be informed and comforted.

To be alive is to have body and soul united.  
 However, when one dies, Death divides body and soul.  
 The soul of the Christian goes immediately to be  
 in the presence of Jesus.  
*To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.*  
 And the body?

Well, your body matters to God.  
 This why we don't burn it up when we die.  
 Your body was knit together in your mother's womb.  
 And when Death comes, separating body and soul,  
 the body is tucked into a grave to await the voice of Jesus.

This is why Jesus can tell this widow,  
 and tell us not to weep in the face of Death.  
 Why not?!  
 Because what takes place on the way to this cemetery in Nain,  
 foreshadows what is to come of all cemeteries.  
 When all those who've died in Christ  
 will hear the voice of Jesus.  
 And when they do,  
 Death will release its grip.

And though Death mocks us now,  
it won't then.

The graves will burst open,  
and those in Christ  
will rise!

Get that! Even though your body lies in a metal coffin,  
sealed within a cement vault,  
with who knows how much dirt atop,  
not to mention the fact that you're dead...  
none of that matters.

For the Lord promises to descend from heaven with the cry of command,  
with the voice of the archangel,  
and with the sound of the trumpet of God.

And He will command those who have died  
to come out of the grave.

"Arise, O sleeper!"

Dead ears will hear,

and dead bodies, having now been reunited  
with their soul—will pass through the coffin,  
and the vault, and the dirt,

to stand once and for all  
under a new heaven

upon a new earth,

in the presence of Jesus,

and in the recognition of  
all the saints.

You'll do this in a glorified body, completely free from sin,  
death,  
pain,

fear,

anxiety,

decay, and

disease—unto life everlasting,

the way it was always meant to be.

And looking back over your shoulder you will say,

"O grave, where is your victory?"

"O Death, where is your sting?"  
The grave will no longer be victorious.  
Death will no longer have a sting.  
Jesus took that sting of death, for you.  
And your grave,  
it'll will be as empty as Jesus' is.

What a great tombstone:  
Here lies **[insert your name]**,  
awaiting the voice of Jesus.

In the Holy Name of Jesus, Amen.

***Standing...***

And now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.