

“Hope”

06-05-16

With cameras rolling, a brand new car is propelled down a track into a concrete barrier. Smash! Air bags explode. Crash dummies recoil from the impact. The test is repeated on dozens of new cars. Why? Researchers are trying to learn from the collisions in order to make cars safer for the times when real people are involved in a real accident.

A train speeds down a track and collides with a car compacting it into a small slab of metal. Why? To show drivers what could happen if they carelessly try to beat a train at a railroad crossing and are hit by it.

Open to Luke 7. In our Gospel for this morning, Luke tells us about a collision that took place at a city called Nain. It wasn't a collision between trains or automobiles, but two groups collided at the city gate. A procession of death and sorrow met a procession of life and hope.

At the front of one was a man who'd been defeated by death, and at the front of the other was a man who would defeat death. When the two groups ran into each other they formed a new group--one made up of victory and celebration!

Verses 11-12, *“Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her.”*

The woman that led the funeral procession out of Nain was not only filled with sorrow, but was in a difficult situation. There were a lot of “NO's” in her life! **No Husband! No Son! No One!**

The mother of the deceased had already buried her husband and was now all-alone. This meant short term and long-term misery for her. She would face a future with little companionship and little or no financial support. It would be a life of poverty and misery until she too was carried to the cemetery. Funerals probably don't get any more heart wrenching than this one described by Luke!

There were probably few dry eyes among the crowd going out of Nain. As people do at funerals, many were probably thinking about their own mortality. *“When will death strike me?” “Am I next?” “What happens when I die?”* Questions like those were most certainly swirling in the minds of the people going out of Nain.

Look at Jesus' reaction to what he saw as He came into Nain. Verse 13, *“And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.”* When Jesus saw the woman, He saw her with **Compassion, Love, and Life!**

Verses 14-15, *“Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.”* When Jesus touched the bier, since it was an object of death, He instantly made Himself unclean! He wouldn't be able to go to the synagogue. But to Jesus, what was more important than the rules of the church, was to bring life to the man and life to the woman! The Lord of life spoke to the living

and the dead! At the moment Jesus met up with the young man being carried to his burial, and commanded him to rise, **Jesus Gave Hope!**

What had seemed like an impossible situation of sorrow, became a celebration of joy! What was so negative became joyously positive! It truly showed that Jesus had ultimate power over life and death! Would the young man and his mother live a long, long life together? We don't know, but because of what Jesus did, there was now hope in their lives!

So, what about our situation? Every day it seems to be getting harder and harder to be a Christian! The State, the Nation, and the world seem to be fighting against faith. What used to be accepted and talked about openly isn't any more. This leaves a Christian with a sense of loss and hopelessness. There are so many things that get in our way from living a life of faith.

Sin. From the time of the Garden of Eden at the Creation, man has gotten involved in everything human and not follow and do God's Will! Man thinks that they're in charge and can do anything they want! But God has spoken very clearly on the consequence of that kind of life. Romans 6:23, *"For the wages of sin is death."* Death is what's deserved by committing sin, but thanks be to God, He sent Jesus to be our Savior!

Fear. With the unsettledness of things around us, many times we live lives of worry. Worry of making the wrong choices, worry that our job or our finances will run out, worry of not staying healthy, worry of being alone. God knows our thoughts and He wants us to know He's there right at our side, and living a life with fear isn't what He desires for us. Listen to 2 Timothy 1:6-7, *"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."*

Death. It's a universal power—everyone's going to die. The Bible says in Hebrews 9:27, *"And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment."* Death is no respecter of persons. High or low, rich or poor, young or old. Death comes to us all!

But in love, God the Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ to conquer death and give life to all who believe! Just as His words and actions brought the young man to life, His action on the cross and the empty tomb bring life to you and me!

Jesus wants us to know, that even though we die, we will live forever because of what He's done for us! Listen to His promise to us from John 11:25, *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live."*

Open to Romans 5. You and I are so blessed. Even though at times we struggle, **Jesus Gives Joy and Hope.** Verses 3-5, *"Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."*

Through prayer, build a closer relationship with Jesus Christ! He's calling for you today. He loves you. He wants you to be His and to know the forgiveness of all your sin and have the hope of heaven! And you know what, that's a hope doesn't disappoint!