

“When Worlds Collide!”

(06-09-13)

With cameras rolling, brand new cars are propelled down a track into a concrete barrier. Smash! Air bags explode. Crash dummies react. Why? 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 turning it into a small slab of metal. Why? To show what can happen if drivers try to beat a train at a railroad crossing and are hit by it.

In the Gospel 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. Two groups intersected 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; at the front of the other was a man who'd defeat death. When the two groups intersected, they formed a new group--one filled with victory and celebration.

Open to Luke 7. The woman had lost her only son and her only hope of support for her future. It was a real time of uncertainty for her. She had no one left. How would she make it? In this moment, she surrounded herself with others who were mourning with her.

When Jesus met the mother, He cared for her deeply and wanted to take the pain of loss away. Verses 13-15, *“And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.” 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.”* Jesus turned a time of sorrow into a time of joy!

Aren't we also a part of the procession that was going out of Nain the day? From Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, to Abel, who was murdered by his brother, to the final body that will be buried before the Last Day, all living things are heading to death. Hebrews 9:27 reminds us, *“It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.”*

Why are all things dying? The Apostle Paul explains in Romans 5:12, *“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.”* You and I are on a constant collision course with death because we have rebelled against God! We continually feel we have a better idea than He does! We sin daily! The consequence of that sin is death and everything that goes along with it! That's a message we need to share with world filled with death living away from God!

But thankfully there's grace. Because of what Jesus has done for us by taking our punishment and dying in our place, and rising to life again, we move from the death our sin causes to new life! When death and sorrow intersect with life and hope everything changes! Luke tells us about the collision that took place as death and sorrow were going out of Nain and life and hope were going in. Death met life! Sorrow met hope! And how things changed! The Lord of life spoke to the living and the dead.

Open to John 11. This life and hope are the same things Jesus brought to Martha as she was mourning the loss of her brother, Lazarus. Jesus was going to bring life into death, and joy into sadness. Verses 25-27, *“Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”*

This Lord of life is the one who has given us life today and every day. It's sometimes hard to hear but we're all one day closer to the end than we were yesterday. But because of the life we've been given through His undeserved love and grace, we can live in hope right to the end that God has chosen for each one of us.

Open to Romans 8. Our own sin pulls us away from God. Satan and the world are trying to convince us there's no hope and we're not worth anything! Because of this, we're in desperate need of the hope that comes through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! Verses 38-39, *"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Jesus has come to give us life! In the waters of Baptism, we're called His brothers and sisters. As we come to the Table to receive His body and blood, we receive the forgiveness of our sins He won for us on the cross on Calvary! Because of what He's done for us, we can live in awe of Him because we know something wonderful waits for us at our earthly end! Heaven is ours as we walk by faith!

Two crowds collided at that intersection. One crowd overshadowed by death, the other dancing in life. One crowd singing dirges, the other celebrating. One crowd filled with mourning, the other laughter. And the crowds intersected. Sadness met joy. Death met life. In our world, it seems death intersects life and holds the upper hand. But that's not true! Jesus Christ and His power is supreme over all!

When Jesus intersects with your life, you're lifted out of sin, into holiness; out of death, into life; out of despair; into hope! When Jesus meets you where you are and fills you with His love and grace, you'll never be the same!