

God's Timing is Perfect

by Anton Bosch

This sermon in Luke 7:11-17 highlights Jesus' compassion for a widow who lost her only son, showcasing his power over death and the importance of trusting in God's timing. It emphasizes how Jesus reaches out to all, regardless of societal status, and challenges listeners to examine their level of commitment to following Jesus amidst the distinctions between disciples and the crowd. The passage reveals Jesus as the source of life and the fulfillment of God's promises, leading to awe and recognition of his divine presence among the people.

Scripture: Luke 7:16, Luke 7:13, Luke 7:14, Luke 7:16, Luke 7:17

Topics: "Compassion", "Trust in God's Timing"

Description

This sermon in Luke 7:11-17 highlights Jesus' compassion for a widow who lost her only son, showcasing his power over death and the importance of trusting in God's timing. It emphasizes how Jesus reaches out to all, regardless of societal status, and challenges listeners to examine their level of commitment to following Jesus amidst the distinctions between disciples and the crowd. The passage reveals Jesus as the source of life and the fulfillment of God's promises, leading to awe and recognition of his divine presence among the people.

Transcript

We're in Luke chapter 7 and we're going to read verses 11 through 17. Luke 7 verses 11 through 17. Luke chapter 7 verse 11.

Now it happened the day after that he went into a city called Nain, and many of his disciples went with him and a large crowd. And when he came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her.

When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, Do not weep. Then he came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still, and he said, Young man, I say to you, arise. And so he who was dead sat up and began to speak.

And he presented him to his mother. Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet has risen up among us, and God has visited his people. And this report about him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

So he begins by saying it happened the day after, and obviously that is the day after the previous story or the previous event of the raising of the centurion's servant. Now remember that when we started the

series, and I don't remember, I think it's a couple of years now, I can't remember how long it's been, but we spoke about the fact that one of the things about Luke's gospel is his focus on minorities, and I'm not getting political here at all, but his focus on minorities. So you'll see that the previous story deals with the centurion who is part of the Gentiles.

He is not accepted amongst the Jews. The guy who is healed is a slave, again one of those that are on the fringes of mainline society in Israel today. In this passage he deals with Jesus heals the, or raises the son of a widow, a minority in the sense that women were of lower esteem in Jewish society.

They didn't really count for much, and a widow especially. And so you can see how that, and as we go through the book of Luke, you'll pick these up as we go along, you'll see that Jesus reaches out and Luke obviously selects in order to make a point that Jesus is not just there for Israel or for Jews. He is not just there for those who are looked upon by everyone else as being of value and of importance, but Jesus is there for everyone.

It doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter what your background, your education, your ethnicity, your gender, none of these things matter. Jesus is interested and he cares about everyone and wants to save everyone. And so it happened the day after that he went into a city called Nain.

And so Nain is about a day, 22 miles from Capernaum where the previous story happened, the previous event. So this was common for a day's journey, that was as far as you could walk today. I guess most of us can't walk 22 miles in a day, but those days they did.

And so that would be generally what we would call a day's walk. And so 20 miles, 25 miles at the most, that would be a day's journey. And so he had clearly then walked the whole day, and there's this whole crowd of people who are following him.

And I'll touch on the crowd in a moment. But so this is then near the end of the day. This is in the evening.

Many times if they walked, they would begin early in the morning, and then they would take a break around noon when it was the hottest, and then they would resume again a little bit later in the afternoon to avoid the worst of the heat. And so they'd walked the whole day, and they arrived there towards the evening, and it says many of his disciples went with him and a large crowd. Now remember that when it speaks about his disciples here, it's not meaning the twelve.

Remember that earlier on in the Gospel of Luke, he speaks about the twelve and the disciples. The disciples are those who are following Jesus. They are invested in him, as it were.

They would go wherever he went. And obviously of those disciples, the twelve were the inner circle. Those were the ones who were closest to the Lord Jesus.

So again Luke—and this is the second time he does this—he makes a distinction between the disciples and the crowd. The disciples and the crowd. Those who were following Jesus, and those who were what in the Old Testament is called the mixed multitude.

Those who are just hangers-on, lookie-loos. They're just there for the excitement. They're just there watching to see what's going on, but they are not really disciples.

They are not really followers or students. The word disciples maybe could be also translated students of the Lord Jesus. They're not following his teachings.

They're following the excitement that comes with him. And remember the Old Testament for those who maybe weren't here when we dealt with that. When the people of Israel came out of Egypt, it speaks about the mixed multitude that came with them.

The mixed multitude was a mixture of people. Some of them were Egyptians. They were straight-out Egyptians, but they had attached themselves to the people of Israel.

They were not Jews, but they'd attached themselves to the people of Israel. Some of them had married a Jewish woman or Jewish man. This was contrary to God's desire for them, but nevertheless it happened.

And so they were sort of half-Jewish, but they were not fully accepted. They were not absorbed in one of the twelve tribes, because remember the tribes were very important at that point, and when they moved, they moved tribe by tribe. The Ark of the Covenant right at the front, and then the priests, and then the twelve tribes.

When they camped, they camped in a specific order—three tribes on each of the four sides of the tabernacle. But these people were not part of any of the tribes, and so when they camped, they would camp on the outside, just generally on the outskirts. When they traveled, they would move at the very back, because they were not one of the twelve tribes.

And the scripture calls them the mixed multitude, and it was the mixed multitude that often caused trouble for Israel. When they rejected the manna and they said, we want the stuff of Egypt, we want the leeks and the garlics and the stuff that Egypt has to offer, it was the mixed multitude, the scripture says, that fell a lusting. In other words, that started craving for the stuff of the world.

Here we have exactly the same picture. There are those who are the inner circle, there are those, meaning the twelve, there are those who are sort of in the second level of devotion to the Lord Jesus, the disciples, and then there is the mixed multitude or the large crowd that is attached. And of course, every church is made up of exactly the same mixture.

There are those in every church that are the twelve, if you will, those who are closest to the Lord Jesus. And remember, this has got nothing to do with being closest to the pastor. This has to do with being close to the Lord Jesus, who are devoted to the cause, if you will, devoted to the ministry.

And so every church is made up of the twelve, and they may be three or four, they may be twenty, depending on the size of the church, depending on the mixture of that particular congregation. Those who are the inner circle, if you will. Then there are the disciples.

They are following, they are learning, they are attached, they are committed to a certain extent. Because remember that at the end of the day, it was really just the twelve that were left. When Jesus was crucified, the same disciples who were following him cried, crucify him.

And only some stayed loyal and stayed faithful. And then there are those who are right on the outskirts, the mixed multitude. And obviously when it says a multitude in those days, in Jesus' case, these are thousands of people.

In a church like ours, there may be 10, 15, 20, who knows how many. But people who attach themselves to the church, who want the excitement, the blessings, the privileges, whatever comes from being part of a church, but they're really not part of the church. They're really not devoted to the Lord Jesus.

They're not serving him. They're not learning very much. They're really just there for whatever it is.

Some need to be in church occasionally to solve their conscience that they've been religious. Some need somewhere where their children can be blessed, or whatever their motive is. And so obviously the question we must ask is, where are we? Are we part of the twelve? Are we part of the disciples? Or are we part of the crowd of the mixed multitude? And it has nothing to do with the regularity of your attendance so much.

There were these people who were part of the crowd, and they were there every time Jesus spoke. And so they were pretty regular, but their hearts weren't there. So it's not an attendance issue.

It's a heart issue. It's a devotion issue. It's a commitment issue, not in terms of attendance or of tithing or any of that kind of stuff.

It's a commitment issue in terms of, where is my heart? Am I those who want to be really close to Jesus? And of course the test comes at the cross of Calvary. And there you see physically where people are at. Who was closest to Jesus at the cross? Well, the woman, Mary and Martha and the other Mary.

They were right there at the foot of the cross. John the Beloved was there as well. And then the other twelve, they're standing a little bit further away.

They're watching, but they're not going to be identified with Jesus at that point. And then where is the rest of the disciples? They're nowhere to be seen at the cross. They may be watching right at the outskirts, but they're not identifying with Jesus at all.

And then, of course, where is the large crowd? Well, they're the ones who are saying, crucify him, crying for his blood, because he would not do what they wanted him to do. And so you can see that just in this little verse we have a very, some very important lessons. Now in verse 12 then, when he came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a large crowd from the city was with her.

And so again, just remember one of the things, just to remind you, because now it's been a long time since we introduced the book. One of the other things about Luke is his attention to detail. So he is very specific here about where this happened.

He is very specific about who this guy is, who his mother is, about the crowd that had come with Jesus, and then the other crowd who had come with the funeral procession. And so Jesus comes to the gate of the city. Now remember, this is a city in the American sense, not a city in the European sense.

In Europe and in the United Kingdom, a city is a large place. It's defined generally by having a cathedral, either an Anglican or a Catholic cathedral, and a town would be a smaller place. Here in America everything is called a city, and so a couple of hours from here there is a place called Johannesburg, named after the city in South Africa, which is a city.

Johannesburg has about 100 inhabitants, but it's still a city. So this is not a city in the true sense. This is a town.

When it says it has a gate, this is at the entrance of the city, but it does not have a wall like Jerusalem. Most of the towns cities in Israel at that time didn't have walls because they were too small, but Jerusalem was obviously a fortified city. It was the capital.

And so the gate really is not a physical gate in the sense that there would have been in Jerusalem. Jerusalem had a number of gates, and they were physical gates that you could close at a time of war and defend the city. This was simply the entrance of the city.

This is where people would meet generally, and this is where the elders of the city would also meet to discuss the business of the town or the business of the city. So he comes near the entrance of the city. Maybe we could translate it that way.

Now I want you to see the picture because here's two crowds. There's the crowd following Jesus, and there's the crowd part of the funeral procession. The one is being led by Jesus, who is the very essence of life.

The other is being followed, being led by the funeral coffin, and we'll speak about that, by the dead guy. So here's two crowds being led, one by the one who said, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and the other one who is dead. And obviously there are crowds following both of them.

Now I'm not disparaging, I'm not saying anything negative about the people following the funeral. They were doing just what was natural. But I think that there is this symbolic thing.

Who are we following? Are we following him who has life, who is life, or are we following death? And of course the world can be divided into those two groups today. Those who are part of the procession of death, those who are part of the procession of life, and following Jesus who is the source of life. And so Jesus comes there and He arrives just as the procession is coming out of town.

Obviously they're going to bury outside of town. This is part of the law in the Old Testament, part of the ritual of making sure that the city was not contaminated in any way, so the burying had to happen outside of town. And so Jesus arrives after a day of walking, after 10-12 hours of walking, at the very moment that the procession comes out of town.

And of course this is absolute pure coincidence. This is just chance. No, there is no such thing.

There is no such thing. Jesus had... Why did He come to this town for exactly this occasion? This town was insignificant. It was a small little town.

The only significance about the town is that it is not far away from a place in Sidon where Elijah had raised the widow's son. So it's significant. That's the only thing that was important about this town.

There were hundreds of other towns Jesus could have gone to, but He arrives at this town at this very moment. What is the window between when the procession would begin and they would arrive and put Him in the ground, or in a tomb, or in a cave, or whatever they used to bury Him in this particular case? Maybe half an hour, at the very most an hour. And in all of eternity, Jesus arrives within the minute of when the procession is coming out of town.

He arrives minutes before this guy is to be put into the tomb. But He also doesn't arrive when this guy is getting sick, or whatever he died from, whether it was an accident, or getting sick, or... But He doesn't arrive in the process of his dying. He arrives once he is dead, but before he's in the tomb.

God is in control. God works all things for our good, and God times things in our lives. Nothing that happens to us is chance.

Nothing is coincidence. And I know we find that hard, because we say, well, it just happened. No, nothing just happens.

God is working something out in our lives. And remember that what He is working out is not necessarily material, or temporal, or, you know, have anything to do with this life. It has to do with our being formed and shaped into the image of His Son.

Why are we living at this time, with all of the stuff happening in our country and in the world, at this time? Because God is doing something in our lives. God is trying to get our attention. Unfortunately, we miss the point, particularly when we just ignore these things.

And we say, well, these things don't, you know, it doesn't matter. I met somebody yesterday, and, you know, he was saying, why are you wearing a mask? Nothing's going on. This is just a big hoax.

You know, there's a political agenda behind it, and on and on and on, and he bent my ear for a long time about the fact that this is just fake. There is really nothing going on. Now, this man claimed to be a Christian.

I don't know whether he is or not. But he's missing the point, because God is using this to get our attention. He's getting our attention in terms of our relationship with Him.

And I think that, you know, we spoke about this right at the beginning, and I'm not going to preach that whole message again. But I believe that one of the things he's doing is he's asking us to check whether our relationship with him is based on our relationship with one another, or whether we have a real personal relationship with him. And what we have seen in these last few months is that some, and praise God, a majority of those in this congregation have come through this time with their faith strengthened.

But we have seen many others, and praise God, not in this church, but in other churches and churches that I'm related to, fall away from the faith, turn to all sorts of nonsense, false teaching. God is allowing this, and it doesn't matter what he's doing with it in the world. As far as you are concerned, as far as I'm concerned, God is using this to bring us closer to himself.

But at the same time, it's a testing. It's a sifting. And will we stand? Will we endure? Why is this stuff happening in the politics of the country today? Oh, it's about this and that.

No, it's about what God is doing in our lives. He's asking us, where is your confidence? And if your confidence is in man, you will be disappointed. But if your confidence is in him, you will be strengthened.

And so nothing is by coincidence. And Jesus arrives at exactly the right moment. Now, remember the background, because it says that his mother was a widow, and it says he was her only son.

See the detail that Luke paints here. What did it mean to be a widow in those days? Well, probably more than anything else, it meant that you had no source of income. You had no source of income.

They didn't have social security. They didn't have insurance. They didn't have retirement policies.

When the husband died, the woman didn't work. I mean, it doesn't mean they didn't work, but they were homemakers. They kept the homes.

They raised the kids, and so on. And so women could not be employed. And unfortunately, the reality is that in many cases, maybe I shouldn't say many cases, but in some cases, the only source of income would be for a widow to become a prostitute, because there was no other form of income.

So this woman has no form of income, but she has a son, and she just has one son. So he is her insurance. He is the one who is her provider.

And we don't know how old he is, but notice that Luke says he was a dead man in the second line. Behold, a dead man. So he is not a boy.

He is not a teenager. He is a man. So he is probably around 30 years old.

And he is her source of income. He is providing for her. Remember when Jesus dies on the cross, he makes provision for his mother in the same way.

Clearly, Joseph had passed from the scene. Joseph was no longer there. And so Jesus was Mary's support, both emotionally and financially.

Now that he is dying on the cross, remember what he does. He says, John, take care of her. She is your mother.

You need to take care of her. And so she has lost her husband. Now she has lost her son.

And Jesus arrives at that very moment. Surely there was a process of him dying. And in that process, not only is she feeling the sorrow of losing her blood, her son, in the sense of her family, the one who was closest to her.

But there is also this awareness that once he is dead, what am I going to do? Who is going to provide for me? Who is going to help me? Who is going to look after me? So all of this is going on, and Luke doesn't explain that to us, but we can understand that this is part of the process. And in that process, maybe she is saying, is there no God who can help me? Who can stop this process of my son dying? But God doesn't seem to be there. He seems to be far, and then eventually he dies.

And I don't know how long that process took, but even if it took a few hours, it would seem like an eternity. Where is God? Why is he not helping me? Why is he not fixing this problem? Why is he not intervening in some way or the other? But God is there. I remember the same thing happens with Lazarus.

Lazarus dies, and Jesus waits four days before he goes. And they say, well, where is Jesus? He loved Lazarus. Lazarus was his personal friend.

No, he arrives at exactly the right moment. And you may be in a situation in your life today that you are saying, well, where is God in all of this? Why is he not helping me? Why is he not rescuing me? Why is he not fixing my problem? God is there, and he will appear at the right time. You see, the right time is not my time.

It's his time. And he knows the end from the beginning. And so, even before Jesus left Capernaum, I'm sure he knew what was going to happen.

And he arrives at the very moment that was the right time. Don't lose faith. Don't lose hope.

God will step in at the right time. And you say, well, the right time, when is it? It must be—surely it's got to be today. Well, the right time may be in a year's time, maybe in five years, maybe ten years' time.

And the right time may even be the resurrection, but it will still be the right time. It will be the right time. You see, it's the right time from God's perspective.

And one day when we're in glory, we'll look back and we'll say, yes, that was the right time. It wasn't the I wanted. It wasn't when I was looking for an out and for a solution.

But it was in fact the right time. Because in all the time of waiting, God was teaching me. He was shaping me.

He was molding me. And so, let's have confidence in the Lord that at the right time, he will appear on the scene. And so, Jesus comes, and a dead man is being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.

And a large crowd from the city was with her. And obviously, just remember that this crowd is making a terrible noise. That was just the custom, as is still the custom in some societies, that you've got to really cry out very, very loudly.

You've got to wail and shout, and it's just part of the culture. Most of us have somewhat of an English influence, which says that you have to have a stiff upper lip, and you don't show your emotions, and you just grin and bear it. This is not it.

And in addition to this, you have a renter crowd. You have a bunch of women, and remember we spoke about women and their income. Well, this was one way women could earn their income, and that was to be professional mourners at the funeral.

They would wail and shout and cry and carry on, and they were actually paid to do that, because somehow in the culture that made for a good funeral. And so the crowd is coming, and there's wailing and crying, and obviously I'm making light of it, but obviously there's tremendous sorrow on the part of this woman and of those who were close to her. And then verse 13 says, when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her.

And I think that it's interesting that Luke chooses, because remember that he could use many words to describe Jesus. He could speak about the Christ. He could speak about the Messiah.

He could speak about Jesus, but here he uses the word Lord. Notice, of course, that this is not capital letters. This is the first letter is capitalized.

The rest of it is lowercase. So this is kurios, meaning master. And so he is the master.

He is the Lord. He is in charge. So he saw her.

He is not Jesus, meek and mild. He is the Lord in this case. And so the Lord saw her, and he had compassion on her, and he said, do not weep.

I thank the Lord for his compassion. And over and over it speaks about the Lord Jesus. And in another place it says that he had compassion for the people, because they were a sheep without a shepherd.

He has touched, the scripture says in the book of Hebrews, by the feelings of our infirmities, our weaknesses, and our sufferings. We praise God that he is not an aloof God. He is not a God who is insensitive to our struggles, and that because he knows everything, there is nothing that you're struggling with today that he is not intimately aware of.

And because Jesus was a man just like we are, he knows what it feels to feel tired. He knows what it feels like to be frustrated. He knows the things that we experience and the things that we deal with.

And remember that on the cross he experienced physical suffering and physical pain second to very few. And so he's not just able to understand or to feel with us, but he has compassion. And this word compassion in the Greek is a very, very strong word, and it deals with the intestines.

It deals with the very heart of the very core of our being. And sometimes we speak about the fact that something makes us sick, and we use that term far too lightly. But if something is really, really terrible, it has a physical impact upon our stomach and upon our intestines and the way that we feel deep down.

This is the word. So that right from the very innermost being of the Lord Jesus goes out a feeling of compassion and of feeling sorry for and feeling compassion and mercy upon this woman. And I thank God that his compassion is not like our compassion.

His sympathy is not like our sympathy. You see, because we have sympathy, but we can't do anything. And sometimes we really feel sorry for someone.

We really have compassion on someone in their situation, whatever it may be. But our compassion is generally a hopeless one. We can't do much about it.

And particularly in the face of death, one of the most difficult things for a pastor is to do funerals, particularly if the person you have to bury is not a believer. And you have compassion, but you can do nothing. But Jesus has the answers.

He can fix the problem. And so he doesn't just feel sorry, but he's able to step in. And when he says, do not weep, this is not a weak platitude.

This is not just Jesus saying, oh, you know, what are you crying about? Or, you know, just stop making all this noise. No, this is prophetic. Jesus is saying, don't weep.

He's not saying at this point, but she will soon understand that why he said don't weep is because I'm going to raise him. The problem is going to be over. And I believe that even in our situations today, doesn't matter what situation we face today, doesn't matter how deep your trials are, Jesus says, don't weep, because he's got the answer, and he will present the solution at the right time.

Not when we want it, remember, but at the right time. Don't get yourself in a state. Don't get over-anxious.

Don't get down and discouraged and say, well, you know, nothing is coming right. Nothing is getting fixed. Nothing is working the way I want it to work.

Jesus says, don't weep, because I have the answers. When we say to people, well, you know, don't weep, well, you know, it's just really empty words. But when Jesus says, don't weep, he is saying, don't weep, because I have the solution.

And then he came, and he touched the open coffin. Now it's interesting, this translation, the New King James uses the word open coffin. The Old King James uses the word beer.

And I think the open coffin, while it's not a literal translation, is a good explanation of what it is. They didn't have coffins, and so the word coffin shouldn't really be part of it. These would generally be a stretcher or a, what do you, what do the ambulance guys use? A gurney.

And the body would be wrapped in cloth, and depending on, you know, on how rich or poor you were, in this case, probably just a single layer of wrappings. If you had more money, there would be embalming, and there would be many layers of wrappings, and so on. So the body is just simply wrapped, and it's carried on an open, on a stretcher, really, and it'll be put into the place where they would be buried.

And so Jesus comes, and he touches the stretcher. Let's call it the stretcher or the gurney. Jesus touches the stretcher, the gurney.

Now remember that the law prohibited this, that if you touched a dead person or anything associated with a dead person, you would be unclean, and you would have to go through a ritual, and you would not be able to go to the temple, and so on and so forth. So unless you were part of those who were dealing with the dead, unless you were an undertaker, let's call it that, then you, and obviously undertakers would be permanently excluded from the temple because of their work, and there were others who, because of their work, were also excluded. And so this would not be the right thing for Jesus to do.

But Jesus is not interested in the right thing, and obviously from Jesus' perspective, this man is not dead. And I'm not suggesting, please, I'm not suggesting that he is, that this guy is in a coma, and that Jesus wakes him from his coma. He's clearly dead.

But Jesus is, from Jesus' perspective, their problem was not his problem. What they saw, death, is not what he saw. And what we see in terms of our needs, in terms of our problems, and our challenges, is not what God sees.

He sees the answers. He sees the solution. Where we see death, he sees life.

And he touches the stretcher or the gurney, and those who carried him stood still. And he said, young man, I say to you, arise. You see, we just need the word.

It's interesting that he doesn't touch the young man, but it says that he touched the gurney, and that caused them to stop. And then he speaks to the young man. How did Jesus heal the servant of the centurion in the previous day? He just spoke a word.

He said, Lord, you don't have to come to my house. Just speak the word. Here we see exactly the same thing.

Jesus doesn't touch the young guy. He just speaks the word. The same word by which he created the earth is the same word that he uses to raise this young guy.

And it's the same word that God can speak into your situation to turn it around at the right time. It just needs a word from him. He doesn't have to work at it.

He doesn't have to work it up. You watch some faith healers, they have to work the crowd, they have to work themselves into some kind of altered state of consciousness, into some kind of trance to try and make something happen. No, he just speaks the word, and his word is powerful, and his word changes.

We don't have the same power, by the way. There are those who teach that we have the same power in our words, so we need to speak creatively into our situations. That's nonsense.

We don't have that power. Only God has that power. And so he says to him, young man, I say to you, arise.

And so he who was dead sat up, and he began to speak, and he presented him to his mother. Now we're running out of time, but we could speculate for another half an hour what he spoke about. Who doesn't tell us what he spoke about? But obviously it's simply saying there was clear evidence that he was alive.

He didn't have some kind of, I don't know if a dead body can have some kind of spasm that could cause him to sit up. It's nothing like this. This man is now communicating.

He is really alive. And Jesus presented him to his mother. He presented him to his mother.

That's interesting. And it's interesting because remember I said a little bit earlier that this is not far from where Elijah raised the son of the widow. Remember there was this widow who had cared for Elijah.

And Elijah goes out on one of his mission journeys. He comes back into town, and this woman is very angry with him because she's a widow, and now her son has died. And as a prophet, he had done nothing about it.

Remember he takes this young guy, and he takes him up into his little apartment, his room that the woman had built for him on the top of the house. He takes him up there. He prays for him, and the young man comes alive, and he brings him back.

And then King says in 1 Kings chapter 17 verse 23, Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and he gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, see your son lives. And that by the way is an accusatory thing.

He's accusing her because she accused him of not being there when he should have been there. Same thing as Jesus. Why weren't you here when my brother Lazarus died? Why did you stay where you were? And so Elijah says, you see, but he presents him to his mother.

And you see exactly the same thing. Jesus does the same thing. So he was dead, sat up and began to speak, and he presented him to his mother, gave him back to her.

All right, so verse 16, very quickly, then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet has risen up among us, and God has visited his people. When they say God has visited his people, they're not literally understanding that this is God. In fact, of course, Jesus is God.

One of the reasons he's doing this is he's proving who he is. So they're not recognizing Jesus as God, but they're saying God has visited his people through the prophet, because they're only understanding him to be a prophet. They're understanding that he is a great prophet, and that maybe he's even the prophet that Moses spoke about, that a prophet like unto me will the Lord raise up.

And so they recognize him as a prophet. But remember, it wouldn't take a long time before they would turn against him. Verse 17, and this report about him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

Now, Jesus does not perform this to become famous. Many preachers do stuff today, and I get very irritated when I watch preachers preach messages and sermons just to get the attention of people, just to be controversial, just to make a statement, you know, all sorts of ulterior motives. And you say, well, we shouldn't judge motives.

Yeah, we should, and we'll speak about that some other time. But Jesus is not doing this for fame. He's not doing this for sensationalism.

He's not doing this to make the newspapers. He is doing this to make a point, and that is that he is God in the flesh, and that he has come as the Messiah, and that they needed to believe in him. But here's the problem, that that multitude who were following him, even though he did this, and remember, Jesus raises the dead three times, and I'm not going to get into those.

There's an interesting comparison between those three. I'm not going to get into that now, because we're out of time. But three times Jesus raises the dead, proving beyond any doubt that he is indeed the Messiah, proving beyond any doubt that he is the Son of God, and yet they still said crucify him.

And that's the sad thing. Many people are saying, well, God, you know, if God would just perform a miracle in my life, if God would just give me a sign, I will believe. But Jesus gave them the sign.

He gave them sign after sign after sign, and yet they still rejected him. So when people say, well, you know, unless I have a sign, I won't believe. No, that's nonsense.

Even if you have a sign, you won't believe. Remember, Jesus speaking, or Abraham speaking to Lazarus in Hades, and he's... sorry, not to Lazarus, but to the rich man. The rich man says, well, you know, if Lazarus goes and preaches to my brothers, they'll believe him, because he's come back from the dead.

And Abraham says, even if someone is raised from the dead, they will still not believe. They will still not believe. And of course, exactly this happened concerning Jesus.

Jesus was crucified openly, publicly. He was raised from the dead, and they still did not believe. So this whole idea that we need miracles to be able to preach the gospel, that we need miracles in order to believe, that has been proven to be fake.

We thank God for the miracles. We thank God for the things that he proves. But they only prove to those who want to believe anyhow.

Those who don't want to believe, even if the dead are raised, they will still not believe. And so we cannot base our faith on the miracles. We base our faith on who Jesus is and on his word.

Father, we thank you for the Lord Jesus. We thank you, Lord, for the things that he teaches us through his life, and that above all, he teaches us about you and about your relationship with us, the fact that you have

compassion, the fact that nothing is by chance, but that you intervene and arrive at exactly the right moment. Lord, help us to trust you in this, because, Lord, sometimes it just doesn't seem—the timing just doesn't seem to work for us.

But, Lord, we thank you that the timing is right. Help us to not lose faith, but to hold on to your promises, to hold on to you. And in due time, you will prove yourself to be faithful on behalf of those who put their trust and their confidence in you.

So, Lord, we thank you for your word. We pray, Lord, that you would write these things deep into our hearts, and, Lord, that they may be things that will sustain us and strengthen us in times of struggle, in times of weakness, in times of despair. Lord, that we may not lose faith, but that we may trust in you.

And, Lord, that we know that even as the world is dying around us, and we seem to be in the last throes of the death of this world, we thank you that Jesus will appear again, and that he will arrive at exactly the right moment and the right time. And so, Lord, help us to put our confidence and trust in you. In Jesus' name I pray.

I pray that you'd go with us, keep us, protect us, bring us together again safely on Thursday. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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