

The Miracles Of Jesus Christ: Raising A Widow's Son

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The most profound of all the miracles Jesus performed during His earthly ministry are those in which He *resurrected* someone. The New Testament records three of these resurrection miracles, including the raising of a widow's son, of Jairus' daughter, and of Lazarus. Luke the physician is the only one to record the raising of a widow's son (Luke 7:11-17). It is interesting that each of the three resurrection miracles reports the dead person in a different stage of death from the other instances. When Christ raises Jairus' daughter to life, she is still in the bed where she had died only a few hours earlier. The widow's son lies in an open coffin on his way to his grave when Jesus performs the miracle. Finally, Lazarus is already in the grave and has been dead for four days by the time Christ arrives and raises him from the dead (John 11:39).

The varying length of times they had been dead and yet were still resurrected shows that Christ can raise the dead no matter what. His miraculous power to resurrect is not dependent upon whether a person has just died, has been dead for days, or is already decomposing. The same principle holds true regarding spiritual salvation: God and Christ can save any sinner no matter how old he is, how long he has been a sinner, or how badly he has sinned.

In the account of the resurrection miracle in Luke 7, the young man who has died is the only son of his widowed mother (verse 12). His death is twice as traumatic for the woman because she is now sonless as well as spouseless.

1. What trait of Christ is prevalent in this miracle? Luke 7:13.

Comment: In six of the approximately 33 miracles of Christ, His compassion is specifically mentioned as a factor in them. Besides this one, the miracles that speak of His compassion include the feeding of the 5,000 (Matthew 14:14), the feeding of the 4,000 (Matthew 15:32), the healing of the two blind men (Matthew 20:34), the healing of the leper (Mark 1:41), and the exorcism of the demons in Gadara (Mark 5:19). His compassion is present in every miracle He performed, but only in these six is it mentioned.

Jesus was the most compassionate of all mankind (Hebrews 4:15). Often when things do not go well for some people, they complain that Christ does not care. Yet, that complaint is unjustified: Scripture shows abundantly that He *does* care—a great deal more than we realize. It is not Christ who is uncaring, but humans. We lack compassion for God the Father, for His Son, and for one another.

When Jesus has compassion on the widow, saying, "Do not weep," He is not merely asking her to cheer up. Instead, it is a foreshadowing of His power. He will remove the cause of her tears and simultaneously give His disciples a preview of God wiping away all tears (Revelation 21:4).

2. How personally involved is Jesus in performing this miracle? Luke 7:13-15.

Comment: First, He knows all the specifics of the case. His disciples see only a funeral as they pass, but He understands the circumstances of the corpse stretched out in the coffin. He knows that the deceased is a young man, the only son of his mother, and that she is a widow!

Second, He does not wait for anyone to plead with Him. Isaiah prophesies of this in Isaiah 65:1: "I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me" (as quoted in Romans 10:20). Sometimes, before we call for help, He answers—what a special blessing that is (Isaiah 65:24; Daniel 9:20-23).

Third, when He sees the widowed mother, He has "compassion on her." Christ's concern is apparent in His expression of His mercy and tenderness.

Fourth, He says to her, "Do not weep," to provide comfort and encourage her.

Fifth, Jesus is not pretentious when He touches the coffin, but in humility He offers hope (Jeremiah 17:7). The widow thinks that all hope is gone, but even these dire circumstances are not enough to remove the hope found in Christ (Lamentations 3:26). Christ also shows great tenderness when "He present[s] him to his mother."

3. What is Christ's chief purpose in performing this resurrection? Luke 7:16.

Comment: This miracle produces fear in those who witness it, but this fear turns into a deep feeling of awe for His compassion and power. As a result, Christ's fame among the people grows, while the hatred of the Jewish leaders increases, as they reject His claims to be the Son of God.

However, His primary purpose is to glorify God. The people glorify God when they say, "A great prophet has risen up among us" and "God has visited His people." Christ is the Great Prophet of Israel (Deuteronomy 18:15; Luke 3:16; John 6:14). The tragedy in this situation is that, though a number of people look upon Jesus as the promised Prophet, few give Him much devotion.

In the original Greek, the word "visited" means "to oversee," as well as "to visit in mercy or in judgment." In this context, the meaning is that of favoring the people by sending this great Prophet, Jesus Christ, who blessed the people by raising one of them from the dead. In their praise, we see gratitude as they glorified God for favoring them with this great blessing.