



Someone once said: "...God is by nature indifferent to good and evil." If God is there, he doesn't care". Some, observing the brokenness of the world conclude that if God were there, he'd be evil. I

hope that in this series in Luke's gospel we can see that is not true. The current state of the world and our personal sufferings do not mean that God is indifferent to us or evil. God himself, in Jesus, has visited the world he created, and has seen and known our every sadness. We read in Luke's gospel about all his miraculous signs that show God cares, and not only does he care, but he's powerful enough to do something about it.

The Tragedy of the Scene

Not long after healing the centurion's servant, Jesus goes down to Nain, with his disciples and a large crowd were following him. There was something truly magnetic about Jesus. He could say the word and leprosy would just go, restore someone who was at the point of death without even seeing them. But what about death itself? Could Jesus bring back someone who was gone? It just so happened Jesus's arrival in Nain coincided with a funeral. (v 12), Every funeral is desperately sad but this is a particularly sad scene because the person who had died was a young man, the only son of a widow. Loss is heartbreaking but for this widow would have no one to provide for her needs. She was now alone in the world. Clearly the town of Nain recognised her dire straits because the whole town, it seems, are with her.

This story begins very solemnly with death. Death that seems so unnatural to us because we were never created to die. God created a good world with no pain, disease, or death, but human rebellion happened and wrecked everything. Death is all around: sickness, war, and old age shows that our world is broken because it stands against God. As individuals we are in rebellion against the God who has created us to know him and love him and as a result we are alienated from him. It's not only physical death; we are by nature spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins. Sin has taken such a tight grip on us that we are spiritually useless and powerless. But the good news of Luke's gospel and indeed the whole Bible is that God in his mercy sent Jesus to put things right and he does so by giving his life on the cross and the rising again. One day his glorious return will be our full and final salvation from all the sorrows of this world! Jesus has died and risen to life again, nothing more needs to be done to redeem us from sin's power!

The Compassion of Jesus. When these two crowds met at the city gate Jesus intervened. The Lord's heart went out to her. (v13) The Greek word Kyrios (Lord) is a divine title. Wonderful! The divine Lord Jesus, God incarnate, sees her in her desperate sadness, in her grief, and his heart breaks for her! Maybe Jesus' own thoughts went out to his own mother here. We aren't certain when Joseph died, many believe it must have been before Jesus began his ministry, but there is no mention of him after the one story we have of Jesus' childhood when he stayed behind in the temple, (2:41-52). Jesus is also certainly showing the heart of the Old Testament Law here; he defends the cause of the fatherless and widow (Duet. 10:18) So often in suffering we convince ourselves that God is distant, disinterested, or tired of hearing from us but this passage reminds us that Jesus is neither indifferent nor cold. That means we can bring everything to him in prayer: our grief, confusion, fears for the future, and even the things that are so unpleasant that we cannot put them into words. This widow never even asked Jesus for help, maybe they thought it was too late for him. How much more then should we come boldly to him, knowing that he cares for us. He doesn't

just pat us on the back and say 'there, there!' That's not compassion! Compassion means that you enter into someone one's pain as if you share in that pain with them. 'The little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes,' absolutely not! He was a real "man sorrow and acquainted with grief". He was a man who wept when his friend Lazarus died. And he was man who's heart broke, when he saw the deep distress of this widow at her son's funeral

The Power of Jesus. He says, 'Don't cry!' It seems a strange thing to say to a widow who has just lost her only son 'Don't cry.' It's a very insensitive and unwise thing to say. At best they are just words of empty comfort to someone in despair, unless of course you have the answer! Crying is probably the best thing she can do for herself! If we ever find ourselves sitting with someone in grief, let them cry! Sometimes that's the best thing. Job's friends were the best comforters until they started to speak! But the Jesus is different from us. He can say these words because of the power he has to reverse her sadness and bring joy into a desperately sad situation. He touches the bier and commands "Young man I say to you, get up!" In Luke 8 Jesus went to the home of Jairus whose only daughter has just died. Jesus tells the professional mourners 'Stop your wailing. She's not dead but asleep.' And then he entered the house and said to her, 'My child, get up.' And she does. Jesus says to this man 'Get up.' Breath fills his lungs; his heart starts beating and he sits up and starts taking. This wasn't trickery or a fluke of dying nerves. Jesus had literally brought him back to life again. To Jesus bringing someone back from the dead is as easy as waking someone up from sleep. He is Lord over death that he defeated himself! Not only does Jesus have power over physical death which we will experience when he returns and the dead are raised, he has power over spiritual death also! Remember, we all by nature are dead in our sins, but Jesus has power over eternal death too! He can wake us up. "While we were still dead in our sins, God made us alive with Christ"! Is he speaking to you today? Is he saying to you today 'Wake up.' If he is, the Bible says, do not harden your heart. Listen to him, respond and receive him!

Jesus takes the young man and gives him back to his mother. In this life we will have many sorrows, pains, and sufferings, that bring many tears that we might never understand. Jesus, the one who has victory over death itself has promised he will return and make all things new. "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Rev 21:4) That's a promise for all who love and trust Jesus! Somethings we must live through until the day we are called home to glory. But he sees us and is with us! And one day when we get to heaven all suffering will cease!

This young man died again. But his mother and the people got a foretaste of that great future day! It's little wonder that the witnesses were in awe and praised God, but not Jesus himself. An event like this happened in the Old Testament during the time of Elijah and Elisha which is probably why some concluded a prophet had appeared. 'God has come to help his people' or 'God has visited his people'. That phrase is linked back to Luke 1:68, Praise be to the Lord God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them. That's who Jesus is; truly God himself come in real flesh to redeem us from our sin, and brokenness, to sympathise with our sadness, and to make a way for us to ascend to heaven. Whether they really saw that I'm not sure, nevertheless, the word about him spread!

Conclusion. God is not indifferent to good and evil. God is not evil! That could not be further from the truth. God in Christ sympathises with our sadness and even went as far as tasting death for us on a cross. One day he will return and wipe away every tear from our eyes. The same Jesus who spoke life into this dead young man still speaks today. He calls spiritually dead sinners to life through the gospel. Come to him. Trust him. Bring your grief, your guilt, your fear, your sin and discover that the one who conquered death is willing and able to save completely.