

10th Sunday Ordinary Time C

June 9, 2013

Readings: 1 Kings 17:17-24; Galatians 1:11-19; Luke 7:11-17

The simple story in today's Gospel is only one of three in the Gospel where Jesus is described as bringing a dead person to life. We think of Lazarus, and the dramatic story of his being raised from the dead. Then there is the daughter of Jairus, and finally today's account. This is particularly sad, as the account teaches us that the woman, who already had lost her husband, has now lost her son- her only visible means of support.

The line that stands out to me is-“God has visited his people.” The healing was seen as a visit from God to His people. The Lord came down from heaven to visit His people. Obviously the people were fearful because they had never seen anything like this. What were they to think? For the first time in his Gospel, St. Luke refers to Jesus as “Lord”, a title reserved for God alone. People were beginning to see in Jesus more than a mere preacher, more than a prophet or teacher. It was sinking in.

Yes, he was called a prophet, but there was this growing sense that he was more, and the use of the word “Lord” highlights this fact. In calling Jesus a prophet, the people were perhaps thinking of another great prophet, Elijah, who also gave a son back to a grieving widow. This is the widow of Zarephath, about whom we heard in the first reading. That account is also mentioned in the Gospel. But there is an important difference.

Elijah is clearly a servant of God. He goes through an elaborate ritual and prays to his God to bring life back to the boy. Jesus, on the other hand, prays to no one. He speaks words of comfort to the woman and then simply orders the boy to get up. Elijah is a prophet of the Lord; Jesus is Lord.

The realization of Jesus as Lord was a break through moment in the early Church. It took time; it was a necessary process. Sadly, at times in our world today, it appears as though Jesus has been reduced to a mere prophet. He has become for too many a man with some wonderful teachings, but hardly the Lord. He has been reduced to a few of his most memorable sayings, and listed alongside other well-known thinkers, philosophers and holy people. But we know Him to be so much more. This is not a quantitative difference, but a qualitative one. Jesus is not simply “our” holy man, but He is our Lord and Savior.

Jesus was not a wonder worked in order to gain a following, but every single one of his miracles occurred within the context of faith. Jesus was not a magician, a shaman. God visited His people by sending His only Son into the world in order to save us from sin. The Lord Jesus is our Savior and he has made possible our salvation by means of his death on the Cross.

St. Paul tells us in the second reading that the Gospel he preaches is not of human origin, but the result of a revelation. Thus, the words he spoke did not originate from Him, but from above. St. Paul was sure to clarify this fundamental point, that God called him through grace.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, Jesus calls us through grace too, and when we respond to this call, great things can happen. It begins by being willing to allow this grace to transform us. For then we take our rightful place and take ownership of our faith, and with generosity we serve and volunteer. I encourage you to take this ownership of this parish by a generous response, a willing spirit of service. Do not be passive, but be active, for when you do, the Holy Spirit will continue to bless our efforts to spread the Good News to a world so desperately in need.