

Trinity XVI

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Preacher: Father Randall Russell

[0 : 0 0] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. In the ancient world, the life of the woman in this morning's Gospel seemed to be coming to an end.

And I say this for two different reasons. First, this morning's Gospel tells us that the man who had died was the only son of his mother.

Which is sad. And second, I say this because this morning's Gospel also tells us that the mother of the man who had died was a widow.

Which was not only sad, but for her would have been downright tragic. For in the ancient world, without any man to take care of her, this poor widow was now helpless.

And her life as she knew it was basically over. That is, until she met Jesus. For when our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ raises the widow of Nain's son from the dead, He is not only giving the widow of Nain's son his life back, but He is also giving that very son's mother her life back as well.

[1 : 2 6] And I believe that one of the great lessons that we all can take from this is that when the Lord often bestows life and salvation upon just one, He often bestows new life and salvation upon many others as well.

For example, in the ancient world, if someone wanted to try and convert an entire nation to Christianity, then that person might first begin by trying to convert and pray for that nation's king.

Or, in the ancient world, if someone wanted to try and convert an entire household to Christianity, then that person might first begin by trying to convert and pray for that particular household's father.

And so on and so forth. But the problem today is that we no longer think in those terms. The problem today is that we basically understand ourselves as a vast assortment of individuals with no real sense of unity or community to bind us together.

For we basically live in a time that is really no different than the time of the judges. When basically everyone does what is right in his own eyes.

[2 : 5 6] But just how much of biblical worship really is focused just upon the individual? For example, in the summary of the law, we are told that thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

And, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. So the object of our love really should not be ourselves, but the object of our love should be God as well as our neighbor.

And in the Lord's Prayer, we also certainly don't pray, my Father who art in heaven, but our Father who art in heaven.

Which again emphasizes the corporate nature of worship as opposed to the individual. And even, even in the Lord's Supper, what is it that we hear our Lord say?

He says, Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for many, for the remission of sins.

[4 : 11] For if the biblical view of worship is about much more than just me, myself, and Jesus, and if the biblical view of worship is about much more than just all my personal tastes, preferences, and testimonials, then perhaps, perhaps salvation is much more as well.

Which actually brings us back to this morning's Gospel. For again, when our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ raises the widow of Nain's son from the dead, he is not only giving the widow of Nain's son his life back, but he is also giving the very son's mother her life back as well.

Therefore, when we think of the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, let us not think only of ourselves, but let our thoughts expand, and let us actually think of all of creation.

Let us think of the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. Let us think of the earth and all stars, the sky, the sea, and the land. And let us think of all nations of men.

And yes, let us think upon even a certain widow and her son who long ago lived in a small city called Nain.

[5 : 42] For if salvation is not just about me or about when exactly I got saved, as some might say, then our worship, our worship this morning has timeless and cosmic ramifications beyond anything, anything we could possibly imagine.

For the same God who at the beginning said, let there be light, is the same God outside the village of Nain who said, young man, I say to you, arise.

For the same God who today says to us, take, eat, this is my body, drink ye all of this, this is my blood, is the very same God who on the last day will say, behold, I make all things new.

For as we sang just a few moments ago, for thy strong word bespeaks us righteous, bright with thine own holiness, glorious now, we press toward glory, and our lives and our hopes we confess.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.