

**Pentecost 2C 2010**  
**Luke 7:11-17**  
**Sermon for Advent LC**  
**June 6th, 2010**

**“Rise Up!”**

Dear sisters and brothers, grace to you and peace from God the Father and our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

How is death determined? That is, what must happen for one to be dead- in a medical sense I mean? According to a medical blog I found this is what might happen in order for one to be determined no longer alive. “Examine the person who may be dead. Their pupils should be fixed and dilated—that is showing no responsiveness to light and remaining fully open. No breath sounds should be present, and no other evidence of breathing. They should be unresponsive and have no heart sound for one minute of listening. If this is true, the patient may be declared deceased.” Now, I am sure there are other, more scientific ways that doctors determine when death sets in- and many of us have been around loved ones when this time does come. So there you have it- death, it’s a final reality of this earthly life but as believers we understand that it’s not the end by any means- we have much more to look forward to and we grasp the hope of the afterlife and the resurrection. Yet death, in all aspects of it is tough, hard and takes some time to deal with. Death...

The widow in our Gospel this morning was obviously at the very beginning of working through her grief and her process of dealing with the loss of her son. Jesus noticed her, and Luke tells us that the man was dead, was being carried out and as far as we know was showing all the signs of medical death and had been dead for a good while. The men were carrying him as part of a funeral procession and there was large crowd following closely. Jesus approaches the procession and calls the widow out- stop crying he says – the nerve of this Rabbi- to stop a procession of grief and the celebration of this man’s life for his own agenda- but he does...he stops her, he tells her to quit weeping and then touches the mat the man was on and speaks these words that change everything, “Young man, I say to you, rise!”. At that very instant the woman’s grief changes to joy- her son is alive, her life can go on, she now has a way to sustain herself and we can imagine she thanks the Lord for what has happened. Death...in this case was not final, was not permanent was changed by the power of the living God speaking against it. Young man, I say to you rise- Jesus says, and he does just that.

Now I have been around death many times, I have seen it and there have been times where I prayed that such a miracle would happen for the person I was with. That God would intercede and speak the words rise up. And I am sure there have been times when this kind of miracle has happened- I have not seen it firsthand. So what do we do with this story of Jesus raising the dead man in such a stunning way? Do we just look at it at face value and take it as a time when Jesus really gets going at the work of his identity as the Messiah? Do we just accept it as a nice story that reminds us of God’s glory and grace and the fact that Jesus is God and has power to raise the dead? Do we just long for more of this around us- miracles, people rising, people defeating long odds? All of those options are good and would suffice for our effort today. But as I read and reread and prayed about what this Gospel had in store for us today it became clear to me at least- that Jesus is saying the same words he said to that man lying dead on the mat to you today- he is looking at you, loving you and saying Rise up!

You know as I researched briefly to find how one can define death, and then as I read what I read at the start of this message I began to think about what death of faith looks like. And in a lot of ways it is similar to medical death- it gets hard to breathe, our pulse changes or maybe even flattens out when our faith begins to be pushed away, our eyes lose focus and the sparkle that they have when we are connected fully with our God- people can notice that we are different if our faith is either dying, dead, or not part of

our life. And Jesus is about the business of not accepting that from us- sure he loves us wherever we are at in our life and our faith but he loves us too much to leave us where we stand. Friends, God calls us to constantly rise up in our faith, to keep growing, to not reach the end- so wherever you are at today- God speaks to you and calls you to rise up! Rise up good and faithful servant God says and be filled with the promise of my grace and overflow in your life with the goodness that you know to be true. Dear beloved Child of God- Rise up!

So what does that mean to you? God is calling, God is loving you where you are at this day- and God stops you in your tracks touches you through the Holy Spirit, at the Lord's table and says dear one you are mine, I am your God Rise up and let me lead you. That word, that calling is going to be different for all of us- depending on our life, our place in our faith, the way we hear it but it is the same God and it's the same Love that demands we hear it. So friends, hear the voice of your Lord saying to you "I know life can be hard, I know life can take you places you don't want to go, I know faith takes work, I know you are busy, I know you have a lot on your mind- but child of mine Rise up- above it, and through it and know that I won't let you down and I need you to shine on." The voice of God is clear dear friends, rise up.

God loves you and so do I. Amen.