

Pentecost 3  
June 5, 2016

Text: Luke 7:11-17

Theme: Faith Trusts in Jesus even in the Face of Death

Ben Franklin once wrote in a letter in 1789, **In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.** But he may have been paraphrasing Christopher Bullock who wrote in the play *The Cobbler of Preston* in 1716, **Tis impossible to be sure of any thing but Death and Taxes.** At any rate, we are familiar with taxes. And while none of us has gone through death ourselves, it's safe to say that all but the youngest among us have faced the death of a loved one. Death is one of those certainties in this life. Unless Jesus returns again, we will all face our own earthly mortality.

If you were to die tonight, are you prepared? If you answer no to that question, what makes you feel unprepared? Is it that you can't stand the thought of leaving behind loved ones? Maybe it's the kids that still need you. Maybe there are dreams not yet fulfilled. Maybe it's the moment itself, what will that instant be like when the soul leaves the body and stands before God's throne in heaven? Most things in life we can practice, that is do them over and over again to hone our skills to perfection. But there is no practicing for death. That alone makes it fearful for many. But it need not be a fearful thing. **Faith Trusts in Jesus even in the Face of Death.**

In this lesson, Jesus approached the mother of the dead son and said, **Don't cry.** Can you imagine? I've officiated at dozens of funerals and attended even more and there is one common element to them all. Tears flow. No matter the circumstances surrounding a loved ones death, no matter how much we can see it approaching, no matter how long and full a life was lived by the deceased, we're never quite prepared for the finality of death and so it's quite natural that when a loved one dies, we might be overcome by emotion. But Jesus' encouragement to her was in view of what he was about to do, namely, raise the son from the dead. He could do that because as the almighty God, he has power also over death.

That's a comfort for us today too. When we face death, we trust that Jesus is in perfect control, because he is. Then why is it that we're so often unprepared? That we're so fearful? If not even a sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge, then you know that the moment when we or a loved one breathe our last, is in his control as well. Our times really are in his hands. That doesn't make facing death easy. We miss our loved ones and we know that when we die, we are leaving behind grieving loved ones. But that knowledge that our times are in the hands of our Savior-God and not left to chance makes facing those moments easier.

That's even more true when we consider that death isn't really the end, but the transition to a glorious eternity in heaven for all who believe in Jesus as Savior. Because he lived for us and suffered and died in our place and because he displayed his power over death in a most incredible way by rising from the dead, we know that for a fact. It's not about whether we did enough good things, then we might have something to worry about. Our eternity with Jesus comes down to one thing, do we believe in him as our Savior. For all our wonderment about heaven itself, what's it going to be like and the earthly fears and concerns that we might have along the way. What awaits us and all who trust in Jesus alone for salvation is a bliss that goes beyond all earthly joy. A glory that goes beyond all earthly honors. The absence of all pain and sorrow and suffering.

It's certainly true that death is one of the few things in life that are certain. But, that certainty need not terrify or cause to worry the one who trusts in Jesus. Not only does he promise great things beyond our earthly death, he also promises to continue to watch over and protect all those we leave behind until he brings every last soul that trusts in him to the eternal glory and bliss of heaven. **Faith Trusts in Jesus even in the face of death.**