

Luke 17:11-17

June 5, 2016

“I Love a Parade! I Love Jesus!”

Our Redeemer

3rd Sunday af. Pentecost

Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

[Introduction]

“I..... love a parade”

Americans have been singing this song since the 1930s, and we do love a parade!

From the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade

to any one-of-a-number of Mardi Gras parades.

to the daytime and nighttime parades at Walt Disney World.

From the local Coralville Fourth of July parade

to the glamorous Hollywood Christmas Parade

to the granddaddy of them all – the Rose Parade!

What can be better than one parade? How about two!

[Two Parades]

And that is what we have in our text. Two parades!

A parade of death! A parade of life!

Here is a poor widow woman. Her husband is dead.

Now her son is dead, and she might as well be dead.

Her sole source of protection and financial support was gone.

She was left lonely and saddened with sorrow.

The mother was distraught and sobbing.

You see, it was Jewish custom to bury the dead immediately.

As soon as the eyes of the deceased shut, preparations for burial were begun.

First, the body was anointed with oils and perfumes.

Then, the body was tightly wrapped with strips of cloth.

Finally, the body was paraded throughout the town in route to the burial tomb.

As the parade passed by, the townspeople joined in.

These preparations were culturally important and without doubt the mother would have begun immediately.

And the parade begins. When we first meet the mother,
it is highly probable that her son had just died, and we are told that she sobs.

It is a parade of death! that meets a parade of life!

Luke tells us that Jesus had just arrived to the town of Nain,
which is half-way between Capernaum and Nazareth.

Following Jesus is not only his twelve disciples, but a great crowd of people.
They had just come from healing the Centurion's son.

And at the city gate, these two parades meet.
Facing each other the two groups stopped.
Jesus and the widow stood side-by-side.
Each of them had a procession of people, a parade behind them
– one procession which wept over death and another which rejoiced over life.
A parade of death! And a parade of life!

[Miracle]

Without a further word Jesus turns to the widow and says, "Stop sobbing!"

Compassion moved Christ.

Our Lord and Savior knows the hurts and sorrows of this sinful world.
Our Lord and Savior knows your hurts and sorrows.

For thirty-three years he lived upon this earth.

He was born and he died.

He was tempted by the devil and he was rejected, mocked, and spit upon.

Christ knows the hurts and sorrows of this life,
and it was compassion which moved him to perform this miracle.

To the boy who was dead Jesus says, "Young man, I say to you, ARISE."

With the power of his spoken word, life is brought to the lifeless.

In response to Christ's word, the dead boy sat up and began to speak.

The boy was raised up from death to life.

In response to Christ's action, the villagers were moved from silence to shouts.

First, the people cried out, ***“A great prophet has risen among us!”***
Their reference is God’s prophets from the Old Testament like Elijah.

Today we heard the account of Elijah raising a boy from death.

Again it was a widow’s only son.
The mother was distraught and blamed Elijah for her son’s death.

Over the lifeless body of the boy, Elijah prayed to God.
The Lord heard Elijah’s plea and gave life to the lifeless.
The life of the child returned to him and he revived.

Second, they cried out, ***“God has visited his people!”***
They attributed the miracle to the saving power of God for they knew that only
God can give life to the lifeless.

But the villagers did not know what they were really saying.
They did not know the vivid truth of their words.

When the people said, ***“God has visited his people,”***
they did not know the literal truth of their statement.

They were standing in the very presence of God – God incarnate.
God in the flesh
Immanuel – God with us!

In the Gospel of Luke we see the growing revelation of the power and authority of
Jesus. He releases the people from demon possession, sickness, and sin.
Now, he demonstrates his power and authority over death.

[Jesus Touches]

By touching the casket, Jesus risks becoming ritually unclean.
But instead of being defiled, Jesus cleanses and heals.
Jesus turns the parade of death into a parade of life!

The power of holiness and of life is in Jesus.
And he brings purity to the unclean situation, not the other way around.

And you know... Jesus comes and touches you too!
Yes, you: the unclean – the sinner – the one who is dead.

Jesus comes and he touches you.

He touches you in your baptism

– placing the sign of the cross upon your forehead and heart.

He touches you in Holy Communion

– placing his body into your hands, his blood upon your lips

He touches you and brings you peace, brings you life.

Once you were dead, but now you are alive.

The Creator has come in the flesh

to re-create our flesh.

[Conclusion]

Oh it is true! Americans love a parade.

It wouldn't be Thanksgiving without the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

It wouldn't be New Year's Day without marveling at the Rose Parade.

And it would be a trip to Walt Disney World without watching and toe tapping to the Main Street Electrical Parade.

Yeah, "I... love a parade," but you know what? I love Jesus more. Amen.