



My Beloved Ones,

This week's Gospel presents an important lesson concerning death, and eternal life with God. We find our Lord preparing to enter the city of Nain with a large crowd of disciples, when they pass a funeral procession. Luke the Evangelist tells us that the dead man was the only son of a widow, who was full of grief, as she would now have to rely on the charity of distant family and her neighbors to live. Christ approaches the widow, compassionately comforting her, before commanding her son, "*Young man, I say to you, arise*" (Luke 7:14). Immediately, the son is resurrected in front of all the people and is reunited with his grateful mother.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Creator of the universe, holds all things in His hands. We can see, even before His own Resurrection, His ability to raise ordinary men and women from the dead: including the daughter of Jairus, and, eventually, His friend Lazarus. In his commentaries, a Church Father, Euthymius Zigabenus writes that we have been created by God not to die. However, as human beings, when we are not careful and ignore the image of God which dwells within us, we judge ourselves and punish ourselves. Death is a result of our continuing to separate ourselves from God; choosing to take ourselves away from Paradise. When a person dies, it does not mean an ending, as much as the separation of the two things that make up our nature: the flesh, and the spirit. The soul, the breath and image of God, is immortal. Therefore, after the death of the earthly body, the soul returns to await the Second Coming of its Creator. We refer to Christ returning as a Judge, but ultimately, it is how *we* choose to live our earthly lives, which will determine if we are to live separately from Him, or together with Him in eternity.

The Resurrection of the Widow's son demonstrates that Christ alone holds dominion over the unity of body and flesh. When there is a soul, the flesh has life—but a body without a soul can only bring destruction. I hope and pray, that, when the time comes, we can all say we have lived our lives in such a way, that we can "stand before the awesome judgement seat of Christ" without fear or shame.

+ALEXIOS
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