



Conclusion: We experience suffering and pain and death in this world, but because Christ is with us, we will, with Him, fight the good fight, and finish the course. Our tears will eventually be wiped away just like the widow's tears, because Christ is with us and we are with Him.

There is a beautiful passage in the book of Revelation that describes those who have gone through great tribulation and followed Christ:

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes." (Rev.7:13-170)

Christ is with us right now! Hear again His words of love and comfort as the widow heard them: I love you unconditionally! And I am at work to bring about your salvation, to lead you beside still waters, to wipe away all suffering, fear and death. Follow me! Keep your eyes on me, do not look back! I am the way, the truth and the life! No man comes to the Father but by me. Do not weep for I am with you and I will never leave you nor forsake you. **Amen!**



No More Tears

"Christ by His incarnation, by His life, His suffering, His death, His resurrection and His ascension showed us the way to deal with our pain and our suffering and our death."

Homily given at All Saints Orthodox Church
on the 18th Sunday after Pentecost, 2008,
by Fr. Nicholas Sorensen

At that time, Jesus went to a city called Nain, and many of His disciples and a great crowd went with Him. As He drew near to the gate of the city, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a large crowd from the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." And He came and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And Jesus said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." And the dead man sat up, and began to speak. And Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited His people!" (Luke 7:11–16)

Our Gospel reading this morning deals with the question of pain—"What is the relationship between God who loves us and the existence of pain?" Jesus in our text implies the answer by His words to the widow "Do not weep."

I. Reality of Pain and Suffering and Death

The Fall of Man in Garden of Eden resulted in pain, suffering, disease, death. "The wages of sin is death" And the fact is there is no one who has not sinned—who is righteous (Rom 3:10). Even our best good deeds are like filthy rags (Isa 64:6). An even more troubling fact is that our sin is voluntary: we want to sin, we choose to sin—and the result is separation from God, from life Himself, and the result is suffering and death.

If that is not enough Satan who is the enemy of mankind, who hates God's creation and desires only to corrupt it and hurt it and destroy it—is at work to bring about suffering and pain (both emotional and physical) and ultimately the fear of death and death itself to each of us. And when he does this he also whispers doubts and lies into our hearts: "How can a good God allow you to suffer like this? If God can stop this, why does it still exist? God is punishing you for sins, He is angry with you and doesn't love you." Satan's intention is to separate us from God and to lessen and destroy our faith in God's unconditionally love.

This is the true condition of man today. Suffering, pain, death are the reality of our world. Each of us are responsible for the existence of these things—not God. No human being can escape this, but this is not the end of the story.

II. God Does Not Abandon Us in Our Great Need.

In the Anaphora prayers of the Liturgy of St. Basil, the priest prays these words:

Yet Thou didst not turn away Thyself forever from Thy creature whom Thou has made, O Good One, . . . but Thou didst visit him in diverse manners through the tender compassion of Thy mercies. . . . And when the fullness of time was come, Thou didst speak unto us through Thy Son Himself . . . who . . . was born of a woman, the holy Theotokos, and ever-virgin Mary. . . .that He might condemn sin in His flesh, that they who were dead in Adam might be made alive in Christ. . . . He gave Himself as a ransom to death, whereby we were held, sold into bondage under sin. And having descended into Hades through the Cross, that He might fill all things with Himself, He loosed the pains of death and rose again in the third day, making a way for all flesh through the resurrection from the dead.

Christ by His incarnation, by His life, His suffering, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension showed us the way to deal with our pain and our suffering and our death. The way is to deny ourselves, take up our cross of suffering and death and follow Christ. Don't let go! Don't get sidetracked! Hold on to Christ—He is our only Hope and our God.

It is the presence of Christ and His words of comfort and victory over death that wiped away the tears of our widow in the text. And it is only Christ Jesus who can bring meaning to our pain and wipe away our tears.