

Luke 7:11-17

*NIV Harmony 79; Loyal 75-78 Compassionate 91-93***Introduction**

1. When did you last see or hear about a tragedy that moved you deeply? How did you respond?
2. In this lesson, Jesus, deeply moved by the death of a widow's only son, raised the son back to life.
3. This miracle story is found only in Luke's gospel.
4. **Read Lk 7:11-17.**

A. The Need (11-12a)

1. Nain is a small town in Galilee about 25 miles from Capernaum and 6 miles SSE of Nazareth. It would have been a long day's walk from Capernaum to Nain.
2. Robert Stein writes, "We find an important parallel in this story in 1 Kgs 17:17-24, where Elijah raised the son of a widow of Zarephath (cf., also 2 Kgs 4:8-37). The close similarity between these two accounts suggests that Luke wrote 7:11-17 with 1 Kgs 17:17-24 in mind" (Robert Stein, *Luke* in NAC, 222). **Read 1 Kgs 17:17-24.**
3. This woman from Nain was also a widow and just lost her "only son" (12).
 - a. She was left destitute and with no one to care for her in her old age.
 - b. It was not only an emotionally overwhelming loss for her but also a desperate economic one as well.
4. Jesus and His disciples most likely arrived in late afternoon after their long walk from Capernaum just as the burial detail was going out from Nain.
 - a. The Jewish custom is to bury their dead on the same day that they die.
 - b. The burial party was trying to complete this task before sundown.
5. Warren Wiersbe notes, "**Two crowds met**....What a contrast between the crowd that was following Jesus and the crowd following the widow and her dead son! Jesus and His disciples were rejoicing in the blessing of the Lord, but the widow and her friends were lamenting the death of her only son" (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Compassionate*, 91).

B. The Responses (12b-17)**1. From the Citizens of Nain**

- a. "And a large (Gk., *ikanos* – "worthy, sufficient") crowd from the town was with her." (12b)
- b. We hurt for others in their times of grief and reach out to support them as best we can.
- c. Jesus offers a kind of support, even for us today, that no one else can.

2. From Jesus

- a. "When the Lord saw her, his heart went out (Gk., *esplagchnisthe* – "deeply moved") to her and he said, 'Don't cry.' (Gk., *Me klaie*)." (13)
- b. Jesus' command anticipates His following action.
- c. Jesus didn't wait to be asked. He simply acted in response to the need.
- d. "Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still." (14a)
 - 1) The widow's son was likely wrapped in cloths and carried on a bier or stretcher.
 - 2) Notice that Jesus defiled Himself according to the ritual law (cf., Nu 19:11,16), but the need of the woman and her son was greater than His need to be ceremonially clean.
 - 3) Remember Jesus is not only the Lord of the Sabbath but also the Lord of life.
- e. Wiersbe notes, "**Two only sons met**. One was alive but destined to die, the other dead but destined to live....**Two sufferers met**. Jesus, 'the man of sorrows,' could easily identify with the widow's heartache....Jesus felt the pain that sin and death have brought into this world, and He did something about it" (Wiersbe, *Be Compassionate*, 92).
- f. "...[Jesus] said, 'Young man, I say to you, get up! (Gk., *egerthti*)' (14b) – Stein notes, "In this healing, unlike the preceding one, no mention is made of anyone's faith. This shows that Jesus' healings ultimately were not dependent on the faith of the person being healed but on his own power and might" (Stein, 223).

g. G. Campbell Morgan writes, “The final touch is full of beauty; ‘He gave him back to his mother.’ What pictures of joy that statement inspires. A funeral procession had become a march of life. A bier had become empty. A desolate mother had been turned into a singing mother. A public highway had been a highway of glory when Jesus passed along” (G. Campbell Morgan, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 96).

3. From the young man

- a. “The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.” (15)
- b. Wiersbe writes, “**Two enemies met.** Jesus faced death, the ‘the last enemy’ (1 Cor. 15:26)....Jesus had only to speak the word, and the boy was raised to life and health....The whole scene reminds us of what will happen when the Lord returns, and we are reunited with our loved ones who have gone to glory (1 Thess. 4:13-18)” (Wiersbe, 92-93).
- c. The woman’s son was not simply “near death” as had been the Centurion’s servant. Her son was “dead” and on his way to the graveyard. Jesus’ absolute power over death and life was on display.
- d. The dead son responded to the word of the Lord and was restored to life.

4. From the crowd—a mixture of disciples with Jesus and the crowd of mourners with the widow

- a. “They were all filled with awe (Gk., *phobos* – “holy awe”) and praised (Gk., *edoksazon* – “glorified”) God.” (16a)
- b. Charles Erdman writes, “In view of such miracles, possibly we dwell too exclusively upon their purpose as authenticating the mission of Jesus, or as demonstrating his divine message. These purposes are real, but we must never forget that such works were also manifestations of the nature of the ministry of Jesus and revelations of the very heart of God. Such recitals dry the tears of mourners and bind up broken hearts and inspire the despondent with eternal hope. Surely Jesus is the Lord of life and he will yet wipe away all tears from the eyes of those that trust him” (Charles Erdman, *Gospel of Luke*, 75).
- c. The people proclaimed, ““A great prophet has appeared among us’” (16b)
 - 1) They were waiting for one to come in the power of Elijah (cf., 1 Kgs 17:17-24).
 - 2) Perhaps Jesus was the long awaited Elijah who had been prophesied to come before the end (cf., Mal 4:5-6). **Read Mal 4:5-6.**
 - 3) Certainly, Jesus had literally returned this son’s heart to his mother and thereby calmed her troubled heart.
- d. The people rejoiced, ““God has come to help his people”” (16c) – This is a common Old Testament saying describing God’s action for his people (cf., Ex 4:31, Ru 1:6, Ps 106:4).
- e. “This news (Gk., *logos* – “word”) about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.” (17)

C. Reflections

- 1. Are you rejoicing in your daily walk with Jesus or walking alone to the eternal graveyard?
- 2. God’s compassion for human need is the same today as it was in the Old/New Testament times.
 - a. Jesus has compassion for you and your loved ones in your times of loss and need.
 - b. He is with you and will never leave nor forsake you.
- 3. We must be compassionate to others like the widow’s friends from Nain and especially like Jesus.
- 4. The needs of others must move us directly from feeling to appropriate, godly action.
- 5. We must help those in need as much as we can and then bring them to Jesus for the help that only He can provide.
- 6. We must be like the crowd who witnessed this miracle and spread the good news about Jesus and His mighty power throughout our city, state, nation, and world.
- 7. What death or loss of life are you experiencing right now?
 - a. Maybe you are like the son who was dead and seem to be without hope?
 - b. Maybe you are like the mother watching her loved one die?
 - c. Jesus speaks His words of life to you today.
 - d. Are you responding to His words and finding the hope, comfort, and life that He offers you even in the face of death?