

PP Summer in the Son: Luke

Luke 7:11-17 *The Compassion of Jesus*

8/27-28/2022

We have been spending the summer looking at Jesus as He is revealed in the gospel of Luke and today we come to a passage where we will see what the heart of Jesus looks like

Let's begin at Luke 7:11 where we read, ***"Soon afterward He went to a town called Nain, and His disciples and a great crowd went with Him."*** Luke 7:11

Nain was 25 miles southwest of Capernaum and Jesus had left that morning with a ***'great crowd'*** Hundreds, maybe 2,000 people walked the day's journey from Capernaum to Nain, a small town whose name means *'pleasantness and beauty'*, nestled on the slopes overlooking a valley

At early evening He ***"drew near to the gate of the town"*** (7:12) where a smaller crowd was coming out of the gate, for ***"a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow"*** 7:12

The Jewish people treated widowhood with the utmost respect, even taking a special offering every 3 years to support them as well as others in need

Their survival depended on support from others, and primarily the care of the oldest son That son was given the birthright, the extra share of inheritance to care for his aging parents Imagine your 401K tanked, your stocks going belly up, leaving no retirement for you Imagine the anxiety on top of your grief for losing your only son after losing your husband The Jewish people had 39 regulations to facilitate grief

For extreme grief like this widow's, she would tear her garments while standing, ripping directly over her heart signifying that it was broken

A mother would tear her undergarment and wear it backwards and then tear the front of her gown

so that no skin would be bared

During her 30 days of mourning, she would eat no meat or drink wine or even leave town She would eat on the floor or at a low stool, her meal being eggs dipped in the ashes and salt

The moment her son died, a long blast with a shofar went out by the town crier, signaling death The town would be alerted because the dead were buried the day they died and they would join His body would be placed on the floor and this grieving mom would begin to cut his hair and nails, wash his body, dress him in his finest clothes and then wrapping him in linen

Relatives or friends helping her would then leave to give her some final time alone with him They would hear her cries of grief as she wailed her heart against the cruelty of death!

But the time came for the funeral, and it would have been early evening by then

Men came, placed her son's body on an open wicker basket, face up, hands folded on his chest

The basket was then placed on a pallet or plank with handles called a bier for pallbearers to carry In Galilee, the rabbis taught that women brought life into the world, and they were to lead death out, so this grieving mother led the pallbearers, each of whom walked without shoes

Behind the coffin walked professional mourners and singers whose jobs were to stir up grief by saying, ***"Weep with them, all you who are bitter of heart"***

Behind the pallbearers and musicians walked the gathered townsfolk, who were all about to meet the God of compassion!

PP 1-Jesus is filled with compassion

“And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her” Luke 7:13

In the ancient world, the most noble ideal, the perfect state of inner being, was stoicism
 Think Star Trek, Spock, Vulcans, and you have a pretty good picture of stoicism
 The stoics believed that one characteristic of God was apathy, the incapability of feeling
 They had a sound argument it seemed, for if you could make someone sad or glad, then for that moment, you influenced that person, for that moment you were greater than that person
 But no one could be greater than God they reasoned, therefore, God must be incapable of feeling
 But Jesus, God in flesh, sees this grieving mother and the text says, ***‘He had compassion on her’***
PP ‘compassion’ (*splagchnizomai*) was a deep, emotional yearning in the bowels or heart
 Maybe a movie was *gut wrenching*, or seeing a friend’s marriage unravel is a *kick in the gut*
 When Jesus saw this grieving, weeping mother, He felt it deep inside Him, it was heart breaking
 You see, to feel compassion is to feel, and move toward the suffering of a hurting person to help
PP Compassion without action is just mere pity

Biblical compassion costs us something: finances, time, effort, sometimes reputation
 The heart of Jesus is filled with **PP mercy**, *the power and willingness of God to set right that which is broken, to repair that which has been damaged and marred by sin*
 Now watch what the breaking heart of Jesus moves Him to do: ***“Then He came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still.” 7:14***

A priest would never have touched that coffin, for they believed to touch anything dead, even accidentally, would spiritually contaminate them before God
 Jesus would not let anything stand in the way of relieving this mother’s suffering, so ***“He 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.” Luke 7:14-15***
 This is the heart of Jesus...full of compassion

PP 2-Jesus knows the big picture

“and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’”

Jesus seems so heartless here, so insensitive to this poor woman whose heart is broken
 There is a biblical word for weep which means to cry silently; a saying goodbye to good friends
 But this word ***‘weep’*** means to sob and wail out of pain and hopelessness
 Jesus was saying to her, *Don’t weep as one who has no hope*
 He was calling her to trust Him, for He knew He was about to raise her son to life
 Did you notice that **verse 11** began with ***‘Soon afterward’*** reminding us that He had just been some time before healed the servant of a Roman Centurion in Capernaum?
 Soon afterward, He lingered there a while, then went to Nain where this young man had died within the previous 24 hours
 If He had set out a little earlier He could have healed him rather than resurrected him
 Friends, have you ever said to God, *“If only You would have come sooner”;* or *“Why didn’t you heal my loved one?”*; *“Why did you let this happen?”*
 If so, His Spirit may bring back to you His Word, **PP “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your**

thoughts.” Isaiah 55:9

When pain and sorrow come into my life, I do my best to ask myself two questions:

First, **PP** *Do I believe that God will only allow into my life that which is for my highest good?*

Sometimes our hearts will scream that this cannot be true in *this* circumstance, and that is especially when we must cry out, even if our faith is weak and faltering

Our Heavenly Father is always good and He sits on a throne higher than all

This broken world is full of pain and sorrow, and there will be times you cannot make sense of something, but above the clouds the sun is still shining, though you cannot see its rays

PP *“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.” 1 Corinthians 13:12*

Ancient mirrors were usually made from polished bronze giving only a dim reflection

One day we’ll see clearly, know fully, but for today, God can be trusted

The second question is: **PP** *Do I want God’s glory more than my own comfort and welfare?*

This mother experienced a tragedy that ended with the glory of God as *“Fear seized them all, and they glorified God...” 7:16*

Though she was not aware of movements of God, He sent His Son at the exact time to encounter that funeral procession and raise her son to life and relieve her anguish

The result was that all of Israel, even down into Judea heard about it: *“And this report about Him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country” 7:17*

Is my highest motive that in every way, even in this trial, my life will shine favorably on God?

Has anyone ever said to you: *I don’t know how you can have such peace in a time like this!?*

God shows Himself in His mighty acts, and we shine a light on Him by our trustful obedience

We may weep in our trials, but by grace, we will hold fast to the perfect goodness of God!

PP 3-Jesus illustrated the gospel

“And the dead man sat up and began to speak, And Jesus gave him to his mother.” 7:15

Christian, before Christ met and touched you, you were as spiritually dead as that young man

Your life of sin caused great grief to God and to others, be they family or friends

There is no true communion that the living can have with the dead...it is an unrequited love

They wept over you, their joy was muted in life because of your deadness to God and Jesus has had compassion on them...you have much thanks to offer them for their prayers for you

But Christ has met you, touched you, called to you and gave you life!

Nonbeliever, you are spiritually dead, and even now you are on your way to your burial

If your life procession is not interrupted, you will find yourself laid in the mouth of the grave, the portal for unbelievers to hell where you will never die, but suffer for unending days

You will remain there for eternity in the cold, dark God-less domain of misery

Yet we hope, and pray that Jesus will find you before it is too late

That He will have compassion on those who plead for your soul, that He would stop you on your path and call you to live

Yet notice what happened to the young man when Jesus raised him to life?

He *‘began to speak’*

We are not told what he said, but I will tell you he was returned from the grave, and for the unbeliever, it is a place without God from which you can not find your way back

Have you sat up and begun to speak, to testify of the life that Jesus has given you?

Do we not testify to the spiritually dead and invite them to believe on the Lord Jesus and live?

We are seeing here the gospel in action!

What effectiveness there is for those who have been raised to life by Christ to speak passionately to those who need that same life

Christian, speak to the spiritually dead, speak to them of Jesus and share the joy of our Savior as

He ***'gave him to his mother'***, now with a fellowship they could never have shared before
Jesus is filled with compassion, He knows the big picture, and the picture we just saw was one of
the power of the gospel

Plead for your lost loved ones, trust that God is working, and speak to them of Jesus Christ

Amen?

Pray