

Lesson 246

Jesus Raises a Widow's Son

Story Elements



- **Text:** Luke 7:11-17
- **Setting:** circa AD 28, in Nain (a town in Galilee).
- **Characters:** God, Jesus, a widow of Nain, and her son
- **Plot:** Jesus intercepts a funeral procession and then resurrects a widow's dead son.
- **Key word(s):** " _____ " (v 13) – Unlike the healing of the centurion's servant (Luke 7:1–10), where faith is emphasized, the widow never asks for help. She displays no recorded faith or request. Jesus acts entirely out of His own compassion.
- **Climax:** **Luke 7:13** *And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.* These words of Jesus must've sounded startling and dissonant to everyone there. It was the custom of the day to join in the weeping, not try to assuage grief. The first-time reader would wonder what Jesus will do to justify such a greeting to a grieving mother – of course, Jesus does not disappoint.

Incredible "Coincidence"

1. (v 11) Jesus, with a large crowd following him, travels to Nain, a town in Galilee. Edersheim notes that Nain, means "the pleasant" and adds "the Rabbis regarded [the city] as fulfilling that part of the promise to Issachar: 'he saw the land that it was pleasant.'"¹ (cf. Gen. 49:15)
2. (v 12) *It came to pass* as Jesus was coming into a city that a funeral procession was coming out. Many would call this a coincidence, but believers recognize coincidences as the _____ of God. The providence of God is "His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions."²

APPLICATION➔ Edersheim explains, "In this God-caused, designed concurrence of events, in themselves ordinary and natural, lies the mystery of special Providences, which, to whomsoever they happen, he may and should regard them as miracles and answer to prayer."³

Individual Compassion

3. (vv 12-13) As the two crowds met (the one following Jesus and the other following the bier), Jesus understood the woman's sorrow and plight, for the man that died *was the _____ son of his mother.*

APPLICATION➔ This woman's sorrow was compounded by her tragic circumstances: as a widow, losing her only son meant that she also lost her only means of subsistence. Ryle reminds us: "The world around us is full of sorrow. Sickness, and pain, and infirmity, and poverty, and labor, and trouble, abound on every side...And whence does it all come? Sin is the fountain and root to which all must be traced...We must bear this state of things patiently. We cannot alter it. We may thank God that there is a remedy in the Gospel, and that this life is not all. But in the meantime, let us lay the blame at the right door. Let us lay the blame on _____. "⁴

APPLICATION➔ In this story we are reminded of the compassion of Christ for the individual. Christ's motivation

¹ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Book III* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971) 556.

² Benjamin Keach's *Baptist Catechism*. cf. Neh. 9:6; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3; Ps. 103:19; Matt. 10:29,30

³ Edersheim, 560.

⁴ J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel, Volume Two, Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books; 2007) 208-9.

in his work of redemption included his love and pity for the suffering. **Isaiah 63:9** *In all their affliction he was _____, And the angel of his presence saved them: In his love and in his pity he redeemed them; And he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.*

Impossible Commands

4. (v 13) Jesus told the woman, *weep not* - something that would've seemed odd to say considering that...
- i. ...she was in a desperate situation, having been bereaved of any hope of care in this world.
 - ii. ...it would've been _____ unacceptable for her to **not** weep in such a situation.

APPLICATION➔ Likewise, we often commanded to act in such a way that runs contrary to our intuition or even socially acceptable behavior; but God knows something we do not: how our story ends. When we follow God, “against all odds” we are living by _____. **Hebrews 11:13** *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

5. (vv 14-15) Jesus said to the dead man, *Arise*. Here is a command that he could not follow; it is a **commanding** that has with it an **empowering**.

APPLICATION➔ **This is the grace of God** – that God enables us to do what we cannot. It is the same with saving faith. Man, by nature is dead in sin and in rebellion against God. But God graciously convicts and draws the sinful rebel to himself, and he raises the spirits from their _____ to new life.

Philippians 2:13 *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

Ephesians 2:5 *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

6. (v 15) The man immediately came to life and began to speak. Edersheim theorizes that the man talked “Not of that world of which he had brief glimpse,”⁵ but was like a man who awoke suddenly from a _____, and forgetting the dream, was disoriented and confused about his surroundings.
7. (v 16) All of the people *feared* and *glorified* God.
- (a) They feared because *a great prophet is risen up among us*.
 - (b) They glorified God, because he had _____ *his people*.
8. (v 17) *This rumour of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about*. The term *rumour* does not mean “unsubstantiated news.” Rather, it used in the archaic sense: it is news about an important event or _____ person – such news that found its way all the way to the imprisoned John the Baptist.

Answer Key: key word(s) “compassion” • 2. Providence • 3. Only; ➔ sin; ➔ afflicted • 4. ii. socially; ➔ faith • 5. ➔ deadness • dream • 7. b) visited • 8. famous

⁵ Edersheim, 557.