

## Women Encountering Jesus- Lesson #6: Widow at Nain

### God Came Near

*Take a moment and think about the worst day of your life. Reflect on that as we try to understand this woman.*

The Canaanite Woman:

- Had bold, unshakeable faith
- Impressed God
- Was very persistent
- Because of her faith, Jesus healed her daughter

Contrast the Canaanite woman with the subject of this story

*Read Luke 7: 11-16*

It is fitting that Luke, the doctor, was the only writer to include this miracle in his writings.

### The Set-up

This scene took place earlier in Jesus' ministry than that of the Canaanite woman.

- When the Canaanite woman learned that Jesus was in her area, she had probably heard many stories about him already.

What had already taken place in Jesus' ministry?

- Tempted in the wilderness
- Rejected at Nazareth
- Teaches in Capernaum and starts his healing ministry
- Calls Peter, James, and John to become apostles--- heals more people—his reputation grows
- Pharisees and teachers of religious law start following him around
- All 12 apostles are called
- Jesus preaches the sermon on the mount on a hill outside of Capernaum
- Jesus heals the slave of a Centurion and calls the faith of the Centurion 'great'

...and now we arrive at the point of this story

### Nain

- 20 miles from Capernaum. About 6-9 miles from Nazareth
- Small, unimportant place. A little village
- The people in Nain undoubtedly knew about Jesus by this point in his ministry
  - o But today they were not seeking him
  - o Today, they were burying a young man

## **Widow**

- A Young man, her son, died
  - o How young? Teens? 20's?
- Probably a tragic death
  - o Accident
  - o Illness
- He was this widow's only son
  - o Did she have daughters? We don't know.
- Probably poor, illiterate
- Too old to remarry?
- Too old to have more kids?

This woman is experiencing *extreme* sorrow.

Her son probably died earlier that same day.

- In order to avoid ceremonial uncleanness, the body needed to be buried.

### **THIS IS PROBABLY THE WORST DAY OF HER LIFE**

- There was no social security
- No chance of employment
- Maybe relatives would take her in?
- Maybe she would be forced to beg?

This woman has lost everything....

She was absolutely devastated...

She was wrecked

--- Think now about your worst day—the day you were wrecked--

**... and Jesus comes to her!**

- Jesus goes out of his way to get to her
  - o What reason did he have to go to Nain other than to encounter this woman?

Here is the thing... chances are great that you will have more days like this in the future.

- Funerals
- Hospital beds
- Nursing homes
- Jail cells?
- Or worse?

The more you love, the more occasions you will have to be wrecked and devastated.

At these times there will be friends and family who will be there for you.

- They will get a gaze, a glimpse at what you are going through.
  - o This is the best they can offer.
- However, eventually they will go home.

**Jesus will never leave you. Jesus will never forsake you.**

Jesus finds devastated people and comforts them.

Think about the Samaritan woman.

- Jesus offered her the ultimate thirst quencher.
- He also offers the ultimate comfort

*Verse 11- a large crowd followed*

The crowd with Jesus was

- Joyful
- Jubilant
- Rowdy?

*Verse 12- funeral procession coming out/large crowd from the village was with the widow*

Try to picture this:

Jesus Crowd-----><-----Widow Crowd

Full of hope

Full of Sorrow

Joyful

Mournful

*Verse 13- His heart overflowed with compassion*

- Literally, his guts were broken open. Insides torn out.
- Jesus' heart was broken and he was deeply moved by her sorrow
  - o This woman who he had never met
  - o Deep compassion for a stranger

\*\* There are similarities between this scene and how he treated his own mother at his death. I wonder if he thought of this widow as he made provisions for Mary.

God knows all about your pain and he sees your tears.

God cares about you deeply.

This scene is a remarkably vulnerable portrait of God in the flesh.

Verse 13- *“Don’t cry!”*

- Jesus alone had every right to say ‘don’t weep’ because he alone could remove the cause of her grief

Verse 14- *Then he walked over to the coffin and touched it, and the bearers stopped*

- This was probably not a coffin. It was probably a stretcher of boards with a pallet or bed on it. It is called a bier.
- He touched the coffin. Made himself ceremonially unclean.
  - o Galatians 3:13
  - o II Corinthians 5:21
  - o Romans 8:3
- Jesus takes on the sins of the world
- Jesus takes on the deadness that defiles and turns it into life!

Verse 15- *Young man, I tell you, ‘Get up!’*

Comparison between this scene and what took place when Jesus healed the Centurion’s servant.

Centurion

Widow at Nain

Man

Woman

Gentile

Jewish

Ruling Class

Lower class

Powerful

Powerless

Faith moved Jesus

Compassion moved Jesus

\*\*\*Jesus did not play favorites

Salvation is for everyone—every spectrum of society

More details about this situation:

- There is no mention of this widow’s faith
- There is no entreaty she might have made
- There is literally nothing she could have done to merit this miracle

**Jesus took the initiative completely!**

- Jesus loves to see signs of faith but he is not bound by them
- Jesus took the initiative because he cares
- Jesus comforts people who don’t seek him

## Question about pain and suffering—Where is God in the midst of tragedy?

- Answer? God is heartbroken but still on his throne with tears in his eyes.

## Parallels between spiritual death and spiritual life

- Ephesians 2: 4-5—we were *dead* in our trespasses
  - o We did not seek God
  - o We do not play a part in our healing
  - o When we were dead in our trespasses, we were not crying out for help
- We are/were dead. **We do nothing.**
  - o Romans 5:6-8
  - o John 15:13
  - o Romans 8:32

Take another look at this story.

Verse 16- *Great fear swept the crowd*

\*\*\*This was the first time Jesus raised someone from the dead.

Why great fear? There is a section of The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis that gives a great explanation of the fear of God.

- Susan, the older sister, asks Mr. Beaver about Aslan:

*“Who is Aslan?” asked Susan.*

*“Aslan?” said Mr. Beaver, “Why don’t you know? He’s the King. He’s the Lord of the whole wood, but not often here, you understand. Never in my time or my father’s time. But the word has reached us that He has come back. He is in Narnia at this moment. He’ll settle the White Queen all right. It is he, not you, that will save Mr. Tumnus.”*

*“She won’t turn him into stone too?” said Edmund.*

*“Lord love you, Son of Adam, what a simple thing to say!” answered Mr. Beaver with a great laugh. “Turn him into stone? If she can stand on her two feet and look him in the face it’ll be the most she can do and more than I expect of her.*

and upon learning that Aslan is not a man, the conversation ends with this...

*Is he quite—safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.*

*“That you will, dearie, and no mistake,” said Mrs. Beaver, “If there’s anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they’re either braver than most or else just silly.”*

*“Then he isn’t safe?” said Lucy.*

*“Safe?” said Mr. Beaver. “Don’t you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”*

What else can we glean from the story of the widow of Nain?

- The emphasis on widows and orphans that is prevalent throughout the New Testament.
- James 1:27—pure and undefiled religion is taking care of widow and orphans.

How do we respond to hurting people?

It may be emotionally costly and exhausting to reach out to them in compassion... but it is necessary for us to follow the lead of Jesus... and that is what he did.