



NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Supplemental Texts

Ex. 4:31; Num. 19:11-13; Due. 18:14-19; Ruth 1:6; 1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:18-37; Pss. 8; Mal. 4:5-6; Matt. 9:8, 18-26; 20:29-34 21:10-11; Mark 6:34; 8:2; 10:45; Luke 1:67-79; 5:12-16, 26; 7:18-23; 8:54; 9:7-8, 13; 10:33-35; 15:20; John 3:16-17; 11:38-44; 19:25-27; Acts 3:14-23; 7:37; 9:40-42; Rom. 8:31-39; 1 Cor. 15:54-58; 2 Cor. 1:3-7; 1 Thess. 4:15-18; James 1:27

Study Summary

Following the healing of the centurion's servant comes a story reminiscent of the prophets of old (Elijah and Elisha). In this passage Jesus encounters a funeral procession for a widow's dead son. Moved with compassion in the face of this mother's suffering, Jesus—unaddressed by the widow or her entourage of mourners—brings the son back to life. The funeral procession is immediately turned into a party of praise as the onlookers are overcome with awe at this miracle. They proceed to tell all in the surrounding country that God has come to help His people in the great prophet Jesus. They speak truer than they know, for this Great Prophet is none other than the One promised of old: the Only Son of God who has come to take away the sting of death for good.

Historical & Theological Background

Widows: A widow was “frequently classed with the fatherless and orphans.” “The plight of the widow was recognized in the number of laws designed for her protection and even survival. God was her legal protector (Ps 68:5), and saw that she was provided with the essentials of food and clothing (Dt 10:18). Those who denied her justice were cursed by God (Dt 27:19). At harvest time the widow might glean the grain in the fields as well as some grapes and olives,” “and she was also eligible for some assistance from the third-year tithe. Nevertheless, the poverty of widows and the cruel treatment extended to them was” widespread. “There were few openings for a woman to earn her living in the first century” and “legally the widow was ignored for purposes of inheritance.” “If her husband died prematurely, this was considered a judgment for the life he had led, and she became an object of reproach, partly for her inability to prevent his untimely death (Ru 1:20, 21; Is 54:4).” “The dead man” of this story being the widows only son meant she was likely without a male protector and “to add to the hardship” “there was the knowledge that the family line had ended,” unless her former husband had relatives who could sire an heir through her according to levirate law. [citations taken from: *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary* by Morris; *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*]

DISCUSSION PRIMER

In a culture that largely denies the existence of death, as followers of Jesus we have a unique opportunity to face death as the tragedy that it is with the hope we have in Christ. Read through this article from TGC: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/talk-death/> and consider the place of death and grief in the life of the believer.

TEXTUAL INVESTIGATION

LUKE 7:11-17

Big Idea: The Resurrection of Jesus Reunites What Death Separates
Fallen Condition Focus: Grief and Death

- What story comes before this one (v. 11)? (See Luke 7:1-10)
- Why is it important that this grieving mother is a widow? Why is it important that her “only” son has died (v. 12)? (See James 1:27 & HTB)
- What is Jesus’ reaction when He sees this grieving mother (v. 13)? What are some of the other instances that Jesus is moved with compassion? (Mark 6:34; 8:2; Matt. 20:29-34)
- What does Jesus do for the widow (v. 14-15)? How is this similar to Jesus’ encounter with a leper? (See Luke 5:12-16 and Num. 19:11-13)
- How do the people respond to this miracle (v. 16-17)?
- How do the words of the people in verse 16 connect with earlier prophecies? (See Luke 1:67-75 and Due 18:14-19)
- What OT stories does this story reflect (See 1 Kings 17:17-24 & 2 Kings 4:18-37)

Gospel Connection: Read 1 Cor. 15:54-58 and reflect on how the sacrifice of God’s *only* Son removes the sting of death.

TEXTUAL INTERSECTION: How does the text intersect with our lives?

- How does the world around us deal with death?
- How do you deal with death?
- What does it look like for followers of Jesus to mourn well?
- How has the compassion of Jesus brought you comfort even in the most difficult times?
- How might we comfort one another in our MC? Our church? Our city? (2 Cor. 1:3-7)
- Knowing that Jesus *sees* our suffering and responds with compassion, how are you showing compassion? What is unique about Christian compassion? What needs do you *see* around you? How are you meeting those needs?
- As believers, why can we have hope even in the face of death? In what ways is this hope expressed in your daily life? (See Rom. 8:37-39 & 1 Thess. 4:15-18)
- How are you sharing the amazing hope we have in Christ with those who don’t have it? How might you grow in your witness this week? This year?

REPLICABLE QUESTIONS

Read **Luke 7:11-17** and explore together what the passage reveals about:

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| 1) The character and purposes of God? | 4) Our identity in Christ? |
| 2) The fallen human condition? | 5) Our obedience to Christ? |
| 3) The gospel of Jesus Christ? | 6) Our relationship to others |

TEXTUAL APPLICATION: “So, what now?”

Have each participant identify a personal take-away in light of this study. Is there . . .

- a command to obey? • a beauty to behold? • a mission to fulfill?
- a promise to claim? • a truth to believe? • an example to follow?
- a sin to repent of? • a service to render? • a person to tell?