

THE WEeping WIDOW OF NAIN

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INTRODUCTION:

A. Have you ever had a bad day? I mean a really bad day? A day when nothing seemed to go right?

1. We've all been there... Those days when we just cannot wait to go to bed so we can wake up to start all over again. It may only be the early afternoon, but we're already done with the day!
2. Words to the song: Had A Bad Day → I was having a rough day one day and a friend said, "I got a song you need to listen to." It didn't help much, but it sure gave me something to relate to
3. The car breaks down, the refrigerator stops working, the washing machine leaks, something goes terribly wrong at work, you get stuck in traffic due to a wreck on the way home and you only have 1/8 of a tank of gas, you get home & everyone is cranky. You turn on the tv & it starts to rain... That's no big deal, but you have satellite and now you'll miss your favorite show!

B. One day in the ministry of Jesus, he encountered a woman who was having a bad day to say the least!

1. She is the widow of Nain & she's on the way to bury her only child – Could any day get any worse?
2. But within this little account we have a collision between sorrow and joy, death and life, despair and hope, & excitement & gloom – This woman never thought this day would end like it did!
3. Let's begin this morning by reading the text (**Luke 7:11-17**) - As we study this very heart-warming account, we walk away impressed by some wonderful lessons about the Lord & our own lives

LESSONS FROM THE WEeping WIDOW OF NAIN

A. We learn from this that we must have compassion and look out for those who are widows

1. A simple statement summarizes this weeping woman – She was a widow! (**Luke 7:12**)
 - a. I don't know when it happened but this woman had made a trip outside the city some time before. She knew the routine, but she also knew the pain and emptiness of this day
 - b. Now she is saying goodbye to her only son – The greatest men in her life are now gone. Add to the loneliness & sorrow the fear... Who'll provide for me? Who'll fix what breaks around the house? Who'll protect me? Who'll open the jars I can't open?
 - c. We don't this child's age, but we know he was young. He was old enough to speak, but young enough that Jesus (around 30 yrs) calls him a young man... Makes it sadder!
 - d. Did she have other children? I don't know, but nothing is said of them. If this son was her only child, we can know something else about her → She is now left all alone!
 - e. When Jesus saw this great procession of death, pain, and sorrow he had compassion on her! Jesus' heart went out to this woman when he saw the situation she was in
2. God has always had a special place in His heart & in His plans for widows. This tells us that if you ever want to get on God's bad side just neglect or mistreat a widow or widower! (**Deut 10:17-18**)
 - a. **Illustration:** People who travel about door to door city to city preying on the older and on women whose husbands aren't there. What a day it will be when God makes it right!
 - b. Throughout the prophets the theme of injustice, or simply apathy, toward those in need or hurting is discussed. It was a major cause of Israel & Judah's fall! (**Jeremiah 7:3-7**)
 - c. Mistreating widows was part of the reason why Jesus gave such strong condemnations to the Pharisees. They devoured widows houses... Took advantage of them (**Lk 20:47**)

3. One of the core principles of true religion is caring for those who are widows or in similar situations – Our care for them is a real litmus test for our Christianity! **(James 1:27)**
 - a. We live busy lives don't we? This doesn't just keep us from tending to those in need, but it also squashes care and quenches the compassion we have for widows, widowers, and others in need. Jesus was extremely, but Jesus always had time to care!
 - b. If we don't take time to have compassion on those less fortunate than ourselves all the songs we sing, the money we give, the hours we pray, & the study we do is vanity!
 - c. Maybe today you feel your religion is lacking something? Check your care for widows, etc!
4. We need to mimic Job – He was a man who made the widows sing for joy! **(Job 29:12-13)**
 - a. Job is making a defense of himself against those who are telling him that he is suffering for his own sins. He is recounting his life how all was good and how he could feel God's presence. He attributes these good times at least partially to his care for widows!
 - b. What do you think Job did to make widows hearts sing for joy? Maybe he protected them from those who'd mistreat them, maybe he visited them on a regular basis, maybe he went and did things around the house for them, maybe he just took time to care!
 - c. When is the last time you delivered the poor, care for a widow, or help another in need? When you do this you'll make them sing for joy & most importantly God is glorified!

B. This account also reminds us that Jesus is the resurrection and the life:

1. On this day in Nain there were actually two very different processions that collided: **(Lk 7:11-12)**
 - a. There's a procession of death led by a weeping widow whose only son had recently died... Grief, emptiness, & despair were headed out of the city! I am sure the woman, with her family & friends had said, "It's not right for a mother to have to bury her son"
 - b. There's a procession of life led by Jesus the Son of God... He had healed the Centurion's servant and was headed into the city – There was excitement, anticipation, & hope!
 - c. This collision was also a collision between two great enemies – Jesus and death! The son of this widow is in the grips of death, but Jesus meets death head on & conquers it!
2. Here was a widow's only son meeting God's only Son & that made all the difference! **(Lk 7:14-15)**
 - a. Jesus had just told her, "Do not weep." We read these words & they seem to cold, but they were words of compassion. Still, they were meaningless without Jesus' action!
 - b. When Jesus raised this son from the dead He proved to all of them that He was God Son, but just as important as this is that He proved He was more powerful than death!
 - c. Jesus showed him & everyone there that He came to bring resurrection & life to all people!
3. A little while later Jesus collided with death once again and secured victory for all who will come to Him! Through Jesus death no longer has to win & keep us in the devil's grasp! **(1 Cor 15:54-58)**
 - a. Our two greatest enemies are sin & death. Jesus, as the resurrection & the life, conquered both of them! Now Satan cannot claim us and death cannot separate us from God!
 - b. He was the only one who could come to the gulf of sin & death & say, "I have the answer!"
 - c. There's a day coming when Jesus will deal death one final blow, crushing it in victory! He will return, we will be reunited with all the saved of all time, never to die again!
4. Jesus changed the nature of that funeral that day, and He has been changing the nature of funerals ever since because He is the resurrection and the life! **(1 Thess 4:13-18)**
5. We've got to know Jesus as the resurrection and the life because we are all going to share the same fate as that son one day: **(John 5:24-29; Hebrews 11:16)**

- a. That day there were two processions. The crowd behind Jesus was headed into the city & the crowd behind the widow was headed away from the city to the place of the dead
- b. Today there are still just two crowds which make up two processions... One is behind Jesus and one is behind the dead... Who you are following makes all the difference!
- c. One day there is going to be a resurrection. On that day there will be a crowd who have followed Jesus who'll enter the city & a crowd that's going to the place of the dead!

C. This account reminds us that God has visited His people:

1. Notice what the people exclaimed as they glorified God after this miracle – They recognize that Jesus was a great prophet then they say, “God has visited His people!” **(Luke 7:16)**
 - a. While these individuals haven't put all the puzzle pieces together, they have made a connection that many of their religious leaders could not see. They saw that if Jesus had the power to raise people from the dead He must have come from God!
 - b. Not only was Jesus from God, but He was God! In Jesus, God was visiting man on earth! Jesus is God in the flesh – He is God with skin on... God was literally in their midst!
 - c. While Joseph was struggling to make sense of Mary's miraculous pregnancy an angel came telling Him about Jesus & He was being born to be Immanuel, God With Us **(Mt 1:23)**
 - d. Visit doesn't just mean that God dropped by to say “Hello” and chat for a while. The term means to go to see and to relieve – God visited to take care of man's needs!
2. Zechariah prophesied that Jesus' birth was God visiting His people for redemption **(Lk 1:67, 78)**
3. Christians today, as followers of Jesus Christ, must develop the mindset of visiting, caring for and relieving the needs, of others **(Matthew 25:34-36; Hebrews 13:3; James 1:27)**
 - a. We have many opportunities in this church for this visiting! There's widows & widowers who have made the trip outside the city to bury their spouse. While they may not admit it freely, they have times where they feel lonely & could use some visiting
 - b. Maybe it's simple chores around the house that need taken care of or maybe it is things that need done that they really have no business having to do on their own
 - c. You can make a phone call, take someone out to lunch, go do yard work for them, go shopping with them, simply hang out with them, write cards, invite over for holidays
 - d. There's others who face physical needs from time to time – It does very little good for us to say, “Don't weep” or “Don't worry about it” → Pray for them and get involved!

“Joseph Bayly knew what the loss of a child was like. In fact, he and his wife Mary Lou lost three sons – one at eighteen days, after surgery; another at five years, with leukemia: the third at eighteen years, after a sledding accident. So when Joe Bayly wrote about the death of a child people listened. Here is a part of what he had to say: Of all the deaths, that of a child is most unnatural and hardest to bear. In Carl Jung's words, ‘it is the period placed before the end of the sentence,’ sometimes when the sentence has hardly begun. We expect the old to die. The separation is always difficult, but it comes as no surprise. But (what of) the child, the youth? Life lies ahead, with its beauty, its wonder, its potential. Death is a cruel thief when it strikes down the young. The suffering that usually precedes death is another reason childhood death is so hard for parents to bear. Children were made for fun and laughter, for sunshine, not pain..... In a way that is different from any other relationship, a child is bone of his parent's bone, flesh of their flesh. When a child die, part of the parents is buried....I met a man who was in his seventies. During our first ten minutes together, he brought the faded photograph of a child out of his wallet – his child, who had died almost fifty years before.” [As quoted by R. Kent Hughes p.261]