

HE RESURRECTS LIFE

CORE PASSAGE: LUKE 7:11-17

CONTEXT

Luke recorded his account of Jesus's sermon on the mount in Luke 6. After Jesus concluded His teaching, He entered Capernaum and encountered a Gentile centurion who came to Jesus to plead for the healing and life of his servant. This healing Jesus performed from a distance, praising the centurion's faith. He then traveled to a village called Nain, where He encountered a funeral procession. Jesus's compassion for the widowed mother of the deceased young man led Him to perform a miracle on her behalf.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus gives new life because He is compassionate and good.

As you examine Luke 7:11-17:

- Take comfort in the fact that Jesus has power even over death.
- Contemplate how Jesus's power to renew life, both spiritually and physically, fits into the good news that we are to share with the world.



TIMELINE

Jesus Heals a Leprous Man
(Luke 5:12-16)

Jesus Teaches About and Heals
on the Sabbath (Luke 6:1-11)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus Raises a Widow's Son
from the Dead (Luke 7:11-17)

Jesus Forgives and Heals a
Paralyzed Man (Luke 5:17-26)

Jesus Delivers His Sermon
on the Plain (Luke 6:17-49)

John the Baptist Seeks
Confirmation That Jesus Is
the Messiah (Luke 7:18-35)

Daily Readings

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Day 1: Luke 7:1-10 | ☐ Day 4: Luke 7:24-28 |
| ☐ Day 2: Luke 7:11-17 | ☐ Day 5: Luke 7:29-30 |
| ☐ Day 3: Luke 7:18-23 | ☐ Day 6: Psalm 88 |



Scan this QR code to access
this session's Scripture passages.

**JESUS HAS COMPASSION ON US AND WANTS TO GIVE US
NEW LIFE (LUKE 7:11-13).**

Underline the circumstances surrounding the mother and son in this passage.

11 Afterward he was on his way to a town called Nain. His disciples and a large crowd were traveling with him. **12** Just as he neared the gate of the town, a dead man was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow. A large crowd from the town was also with her. **13** When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said, "Don't weep."

When Jesus entered Nain, he entered a serious and sorrowful scene—a funeral procession for a widow's only son. Since this woman was a widow, aside from her grief at losing her child, her only son's death meant that all provision and protection died with him.

LEADER NOTE: Understanding the cultural context of this scene may provide more gravity to what was happening. A widow in the first-century would have been extremely vulnerable without a husband to provide for her. She likely was struggling already. Yet her son would be the primary provider, so his death did not just bring about emotional loss but also economic and social loss. Her future would have been entirely uncertain, so when Jesus met her, he was addressing real, felt needs.

Jesus's compassion for the bereaved mother was not simply pity for her circumstances. His emotions were not performative. His compassion was not just a feeling to be experienced but one that led to action. Jesus's example here is clear. He did not just feel sad for the woman, but His empathy produced an action that showed care and provision for the woman.

How should knowing that Jesus is compassionate toward our pain change the way we approach our struggles?

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

"Our Lord Jesus Christ never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His heart is still as compassionate as when he was on earth. His sympathy with sufferers is still as strong. Let us bear this in mind, and take comfort from it."¹

—J. C. Ryle (1816–1900)

Interrupting the funeral procession, Jesus gave the widow a strange command: “Don’t weep” (v. 13). He was not chastising this mother for her mourning or for feeling sorrow about her loss. This command wasn’t a condemnation of her tears but a comment on the reality the woman was about to experience. “Don’t weep” was a promise of the work Jesus was about to do.

Soon the mother’s tears would no longer be necessary because Jesus would perform a miracle. Jesus has power over life and death, so He had the authority to do something about this grieving mother’s circumstance. The widow couldn’t see all that Jesus was about to do, but that couldn’t stop Jesus. His gentle command was a request for faith from the widow, to trust that when He told her not to weep, it was not a request without a promise.

LEADER NOTE: This event helps the reader see both Jesus’s humanity and His holiness. Jesus is fully human, affected by the emotional pain and sorrow of other humans. Jesus is fully God, powerful enough to do something about this pain. He was able to sympathize with the sadness of the widow, a very human capability, and He also was able to make a request as God, asking the widow not to weep, for He would be able to make her tears cease.

How might you need to reevaluate the circumstances in your life that lead you to mourning and weeping?

Jesus’s request with His promise to this mother foreshadows the promise Jesus made about His own resurrection. Death would not have the final word over this woman’s son, nor would it have the final word over Jesus’s sacrifice on our behalf.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus can bring new life in our own lives. As we trust in Him and submit to Him, we are given new life in Jesus, and He will give us resurrected bodies at His return as well.

JESUS HAS THE POWER TO RESURRECT LIFE, AND MANY NEED TO KNOW IT (LUKE 7:14-17).

Underline all the action words related to Jesus's miracle in this passage.

14 Then he came up and touched the open coffin, and the pallbearers stopped. And he said, "Young man, I tell you, get up!" **15** The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. **16** Then fear came over everyone, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us," and "God has visited his people." **17** This report about him went throughout Judea and all the vicinity.

After Jesus told the widow not to weep, He demonstrated exactly why He said this to her. The first thing Jesus did was something entirely unexpected. He touched the open coffin where the dead man was, which according to Old Testament law would make Him unclean. But as God the Son, Jesus's compassion and holiness were greater than His concern for ritual uncleanness, as we see when He touched a leper (Mark 1:40-42), was touched by a woman with a bleeding problem (Mark 5:27-34), and touched the widow's son's coffin (Luke 7:14). Further, Jesus could not be made unclean by death or sickness because, as God the Son, He has power over both.

Why do you think Jesus was willing to touch the open coffin?

While touching the coffin and standing in close proximity to the corpse, Jesus commanded the dead man to get up, and the man did so and began to speak. With words, Jesus told a grieving mother not to weep, and again with words, He raised her dead son to life, giving her the family and security she needed.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

RESURRECTION: Both the Old and New Testaments teach that one day believers will experience a resurrection of the body from the dead (Isa. 26:19; Ezek. 37:12-14; John 11). The promise of the resurrection is found in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and it will take place at the future return of Christ. Because Christ was the firstfruits of the resurrection, Christians can be assured that their resurrection will be similar in nature, meaning it will be both bodily and glorious (Phil. 3:20-21; Rom. 8:22-23). The hope of the future resurrection gives Christians confidence that death has been defeated in the death and resurrection of Christ.

This miracle was important, but so was the reaction of the crowd. Their response was fear, awe, and worship. Why? Because they saw the dead raised to life, and the only logical response was to worship God, the One with power over life and death. Through this miracle, the crowd recognized Jesus as a prophet and that God was helping His people, but they did not understand that Jesus is actually God the Son.

LEADER NOTE: The people responded to this miracle with fear (Luke 7:16). Fear is often misunderstood by Christians. In verse 16, it refers to awe or fear that produces a reverence and wonder at God's power. This fear did not cause the people to run away or tremble but to worship. For those who know Jesus by faith, we can approach God with such fear, with a confident recognition of who God is and who we are before Him. Because of Jesus, we can respond to God's power with worship because we know we are secure and saved in Christ.

The crowd likened this miracle to the work of a prophet. No doubt the people saw the parallels with the story in 1 Kings 17:17-24 where the prophet Elijah raised the widow's child from the dead. Yet the reality of this situation was greater. God had raised the dead and God had "visited his people" (Luke 7:16) because God was present among them in the flesh!

LEADER NOTE: The comparison of this miracle to Elijah's raising the widow's son in 1 Kings 17:8-24 is intentional. Parallels include the mention of the town gate (Luke 7:12; cf. 1 Kings 17:10), the widow grieving her only son's death (Luke 7:12; cf. 1 Kings 17:18), the language of giving him back to his mother (Luke 7:15; cf. 1 Kings 17:23), and the recognition of Elijah and Jesus as a man of God (Luke 7:16; cf. 1 Kings 17:24). The major difference, however, is that Elijah prayed to ask God to raise the boy, and the Lord listened (1 Kings 17:21-22). Jesus, by His own authority, spoke the command to raise the boy. Elijah was indeed a prophet; Jesus is God in the flesh.

Regardless of the people's understanding about Jesus's identity, their response to His miracle was correct. This was the work of God, so they worshiped, and they saw in Jesus the power of God, so they told others about Him. This miracle did not just remain as a conversation within the crowd, a local legend; rather, this news about Him was shared and spread across the entire region.

When have you experienced Jesus's compassion and power, and how did you share the experience with others?



Notes



ARRIVAL

ENGAGE: As group members arrive, invite responses to this: “Describe an act of compassion you’ve witnessed that changed someone’s situation in a powerful way.”

TRANSITION: Recall **Pact Item 6: Jesus’s Compassion** and review with your group how Jesus’s compassion for others spurred Him to act. Briefly discuss how we are called to respond with compassion to those in need. Say: “In today’s study, we’ll be looking at an act of compassion from Jesus that revealed His life-giving power.”

CONTEXT

SAY: Jesus had become something of a local celebrity in the region of Galilee because of His teachings and miracles. Crowds followed Him from one place to another. But where some people might let such popularity go to their heads, Jesus kept His feet on the ground with an eye for people’s faith and a compassionate heart for the plight of others, just as He does for people today.

RECAP

ASK: In your personal preparation this week, studying about Jesus’s life-giving miracle for a widow’s dead son, what stood out to you about Jesus’s compassion and His power?

TRANSITION: Today’s passage shows us that Jesus is not distant from our pain. His compassion leads Him to act, and His power leads Him to give life. The people in the town of Nain experienced both the mercy of God and His glory through this miracle, and we experience the same through studying this account.



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Key Concept: Jesus gives new life because He is compassionate and good.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Notes

CHART: Direct your group to page 100 in their Personal Study Guide (PSG), where they will find a chart titled “Before and After.” Recreate this chart on a board in your room so you can record the group’s responses.

Before and After	
BEFORE	AFTER
WIDOW	
YOURSELF	

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Luke 7:11-12.

DISCUSS: Highlight how the widow’s life, like ours, could be described in two snapshots: before Jesus and after Jesus. Encourage your group to talk through what the widow might have experienced in the moments before Jesus interrupted her son’s funeral procession. (*fear of the future; grief over her son; sorrow for her loneliness; guilt as if God were punishing her*) Under the “Before” column in the chart, record words and phrases from the group for what this mother might have felt in this situation. Say: “Many of us who have experienced the loss of a loved one may have experienced these same feelings. But Jesus arrived on the scene in this woman’s darkest moment.”

READ: Invite a second volunteer to read Luke 7:13-17.

DISCUSS: Lead your group to consider what the widow might have experienced when Jesus defied customs by interrupting the funeral procession and touching the coffin. (*To address any confusion about Jewish laws concerning being*

Notes

[illegible]

*“unclean” after such an action, pass out copies of **Pack 11: Jesus Is Clean** and highlight Jesus’s unique, divine, and holy authority as our Great High Priest.) Then under the “After” column, write down words and phrases for what she might have felt after Jesus’s miracle, and encourage the group to record these in their PSG.*

INSTRUCT: Each of us who has trusted in Jesus as our Lord and Savior has had a moment when Jesus met us in our darkest hour, namely, when we recognized that we were spiritually dead in our sin and separated from God. Instruct the group to write down what they felt before and after their encounter with Jesus, who brings new life to those who are spiritually dead.

DEBRIEF

How does remembering your own “before” and “after” story encourage you to trust in Jesus’s compassion and to share His life with others?

SUMMARIZE

Just as the widow's story was rewritten by Jesus's compassion, our lives as believers in Christ bear witness to His power to bring new life, and we are called to help others see their own "after" in Him.

HEAD, HEART, HANDS

Walk the group through the Head, Heart, Hands section in the PSG (p. 101). If running short on time, specifically highlight the **Hands** section in this week's study, inviting volunteers to share their responses to the question in this section.



 **HEAD:** Jesus's authority over death demonstrated who He is, but the crowd did not categorize Jesus properly, thinking He was simply a prophet like Elijah. Their understanding of Jesus was limited and therefore not a full picture of His identity. Jesus was a prophet, and much more—He is fully God and fully man, God the Son in human flesh.

How might you have a limited or incomplete understanding of who Jesus is in your life?



 **HEART:** Jesus was moved with a gut-level compassion for the widow. His compassion reminds us that God is not distant or removed from what we feel and experience; rather, Jesus is able to empathize with our feelings. God is not indifferent to human pain—to our pain.

What thoughts and emotions arise when you contemplate the truth that Jesus has compassion toward you in your suffering?



HANDS: Jesus's compassion spurred Him to action. He did not simply feel and then walk away. For those who follow Jesus, this miracle is an example for us. While we may not raise anyone from the dead, we do have the power and authority of Jesus in us through the Holy Spirit. When we see someone suffering and are moved with compassion, we should take action: pray, offer support and care, and meet physical needs as well as spiritual ones.

How can you show someone in need that compassion spurs action instead of just empathetic feelings?

NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions as responses to this session.

- Whom can you comfort? Like Jesus in Luke 7:13, notice someone's grief or need this week and come alongside them by supporting them with compassion through both prayer and meeting their practical needs.
- Evaluate your heart and see if there are any ways you are still living in your "before." By God's grace, you are not who you once were, so walk confidently in your new life.
- God has shown His compassion for us in the Son taking upon Himself the punishment we deserve and in the Holy Spirit continuously interceding and praying on our behalf. With these truths in mind, take time this week to journal and reflect upon God's compassionate heart.

Invite volunteers to share prayer needs for this week. Encourage them to record these in the space on page 101 in their PSG so they can pray for others throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

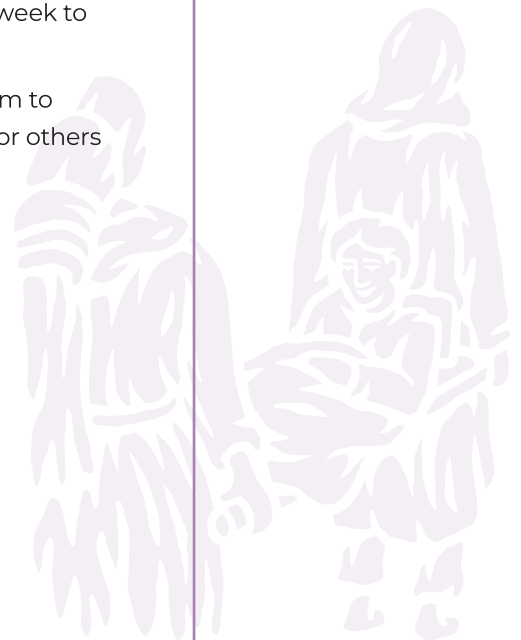
PRAYING SCRIPTURE

CLOSE: Pray through Psalm 88:9-12 with your group. Thank God that He does hear our cries for help even though we may feel hopeless and sorrowful. And thank God for His promise in Jesus that He will not leave us in the grave but will raise us up in resurrection according to His compassion and grace.

References

1. J. C. Ryle, Luke, Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997), Lk 7:11–17.

Notes



THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD

By Daniel Stevens



“Can God make a rock so heavy that He cannot lift it?” Often discussions of God’s omnipotence quickly devolve into philosophical speculations like these, but the truth that God is all-powerful as laid out in Scripture ought to be received as spectacularly good news. (Incidentally, no, God cannot do that because the question involves a contradiction. It is like asking, “Can God know so much that He does not know something?” or “Can God be so much in a place that He is not there?”)

God’s omnipotence means that He is all-powerful, that He can accomplish anything He wills to do, and that nothing can stop Him from doing His will. This has historically been part of the definition of what it means for God to be God and is usually grouped with other “omnis” when talking about the divine nature: (1) omniscient—God is all-knowing, (2) omnipresent—God is present in all places and not physically limited, and (3) omnibenevolent—God is perfectly and limitlessly good.

GOD’S POWER FOR HIS GLORY

The Bible begins with a grand display of God’s omnipotence. He speaks, and all the universe bursts into being (Gen. 1). This act of creation and the ongoing sustaining of the created world speaks of God’s limitless and eternal power (Rom. 1:20; Heb. 1:3). God is so powerful that we do not have words to sufficiently describe His strength. All the forces of the physical world are both made and upheld by Him, and what we can describe are only the fringes of His power (Job 26:13-14).

God’s power is not mere mechanical action but the full execution of His will: “The LORD does whatever he pleases in heaven and on earth” (Ps 135:6; cf. 115:3). The movement of weather (135:7), the judgment of the wicked (vv. 8-11), and the reward of His people (v. 12) are all accomplished by His power. As the newly repentant King Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed: “There is no one who can block his hand or say to him, ‘What have you done?’” (Dan. 4:35). No force can stand in the way of God doing His will. He is all-powerful and will accomplish what He sets out to do for His glory and the worship of His name.

GOD’S POWER FOR OUR GOOD

In Scripture, however, God’s great power is not shown chiefly in creating and sustaining the world but rather in the salvation of His people. Isaiah stated, “The LORD’s arm is not too weak to save” (Isa. 59:1). The language of the “arm” or “hand” of the Lord is frequently used in the Old Testament to point both to the limitless strength of God and the way He reveals His power to save His people and judge their enemies. After God led the children of Israel through the Red Sea and destroyed the Egyptian host, Moses sang:

LORD, who is like you among the gods? Who is like you, glorious in holiness, revered with praises, performing wonders? You stretched out your right hand, and the earth swallowed them. (Ex. 15:11-12)

God's omnipotence means that He is all-powerful,
that He can accomplish anything He wills to do,
and that nothing can stop Him from doing His will.

When looking forward to the great deliverance that Jesus would bring, the prophet Isaiah asked, "To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" (Isa. 53:1).

In the New Testament, God's power to save remains a dominant theme where we find the power of God revealed in the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus to save His people. The power that raised Christ and exalted Him over "every ruler and authority, power and dominion" (Eph. 1:21) is the same power that works in and for us who believe (1:20). Since nothing can stay God's hand:

neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers,
nor things present nor things to come, nor
powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other
created thing will be able to separate us
from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus
our Lord. (Rom. 8:38-39)

We should see in Jesus
an echo of the power that
spoke light out of darkness
to create the world and
the power that speaks life
into the spiritually dead.

Because God's love and power are inseparable, all the unlimited power of God works for the good of His people.

JESUS AND THE POWER OF GOD

While the primary display of God's power in Jesus is the salvation worked through His death, resurrection, and ascension, we see the power of God on display in Jesus's earthly ministry as well. As perfect man, we find Jesus perfectly relying on the Spirit and performing wonders through the Spirit's anointing (Luke 4:18-19). But we also see Jesus directly exercising power that only God has because He is God the Son. Jesus has the authority to forgive sins, which belongs to God alone (Mark 2:7; Luke 5:21). He speaks, and the created world obeys (Matt. 8:27; Mark 4:41). He speaks, and death gives way to life (Mark 5:41-42). We should see in Jesus an echo of the power that spoke light out of darkness to create the world and the power that speaks life into the spiritually dead when we are saved (2 Cor. 4:6).

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