

## Luke 7:11-17

Jesus demonstrates mercy by overriding the power of death

Introduction: This takes place during the late spring or early summer of 32 AD. Jesus has approximately 1 year before He is crucified at Jerusalem. This continues a section concerning faith and the person of Christ (7:1-8:3). It helps answer the questions: does Jesus care about those who hurt, and can those who hurt genuinely trust Christ? The need in this section is even greater than the previous one.

### The sorrowful setting for demonstrating His compassion—7:11-12

- 1) The geographical setting—7:11a <sup>11</sup> *And it happened on the next day* (after the events in 7:1-10 in Capernaum) *that He went into a town/village called Nain;*
  - a) About 6 miles across the valley to the SE of Nazareth, @ 20-25 miles SW of Capernaum, 3 miles W of Endor; at the foot of Little Hermon
- 2) The social setting—7:11b *and ... (they) went with Him.*
  - a) *many of His disciples*
  - b) *and a large crowd*
- 3) The emotional setting—7:12 (a funeral procession, at the end of the day)
  - a) The young man about to be buried—<sup>12</sup> *Now as He approached the town gate, and behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son* [μονογενής] *of his mother*
  - b) The vulnerable mother burying her only child—*(and she was a widow),*
    - i) Socially alone and without protection. She is destitute (Cf. 6:20-21)
    - ii) Contrasted with the centurion in 7:1-10 who was wealthy and surrounded by people.
  - c) Her circle of acquaintances—*and a large crowd from that town was with her.*
    - i) The whole village was expected to attend.

### The demonstration of His powerful compassion—7:13-15

- 1) Jesus' authoritative, compassionate response to their misery—7:13-14 (He acts without being asked; initiative)
  - a) Compassion toward the mother—7:13
    - i) Inwardly—<sup>13</sup> *And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion* [σπλαγχνίζομαι] *on her* (cf. 1:78)
    - ii) Verbally—*and said to her, "Do not wail."* (the loud, external demonstration of grief)
      - (1) Jesus is not telling her to stop the genuine demonstration of sorrow, only the socially tolerated external wailing and lamenting, which was not always sincere (cf. Mark 5:39-40)
      - (2) He did NOT say, "He's in a better place," nor "Don't grieve because it won't do any good."
    - iii) To interrupt a funeral procession was a blatant breach of custom.
  - b) Authority toward the young man—7:14
    - i) Physically—<sup>14</sup> *And having approached, He touched the bier, and the bearers stood still.*

- (1) Technically this would make Jesus ceremonially unclean for 7 days (cf. Numbers 19:11, 16)
- ii) Verbally—*And He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!”*
  - (1) This would have been humorous if it had been spoken by anyone else.
  - (2) Cf. with resuscitations by Elijah (cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 17:21) and Elisha (cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 4:31-35)
  - (3) The young man has no ability to hear, but he listened. The young man who was lifeless sat up and talked.
- 2) The obedience of the dead man—7:15a <sup>15</sup> *And the dead man sat up, and began to speak,*
  - a) Two evidences of life: deliberate movement and speech
- 3) Jesus’s gift to the mother—7:15b *and He gave him to his mother.*
  - a) Cf. exact wording in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 17:23
  - b) The relationship broken by death is restored by Jesus.
- 4) This is a miracle to be repeated by both Peter (cf. Acts 9:36-39) and Paul (cf. Acts 20:9-11).

#### **The results of His compassionate miracle—7:16-17**

- 1) The initial incomplete response in Nain—7:16
  - a) Immediate—<sup>16</sup> *Then awe seized them all,* (cf. 5:9)
  - b) Ultimate—*and they were glorifying God, saying,*
    - i) *“A great prophet has been raised up among us (by God)!”*
      - (1) Is Jesus merely a prophet? (cf. 7:39; 9:8, 19-20)
        - (a) Clearly a reference to Elijah (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 17)
        - (2) Luke declares Jesus to be Lord (7:13), not just a prophet
      - ii) *and “God has come to help [ἐπισκέπτομαι] His people!”* (cf. 1:68, 78)
      - iii) But they don’t go far enough with their thoughts. He is so much more!
- 2) The eventual response in the neighboring region—7:17 <sup>17</sup> *And this report concerning Him went out ...*
  - a) *in the whole of Judea*
  - b) *and in all the vicinity.*
    - i) This is significant to set the stage for 7:18-23.

“Does Jesus care when I’ve said ‘goodbye’ to the dearest on earth to me,  
And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks—Is it aught to Him? Does He see?”

**Take-home truth:** We can trust a compassionate God in any and every situation.