

“A Year with Jesus”

Week 11, March 14th, Luke 7:11-17

//Grief

Noun: keen mental suffering or distress over affliction or loss; sharp sorrow; painful regret

What is your initial reaction and emotion to reading the definition? All of us more often than not are carrying around with us grief/sorrow. Sometimes it's obvious, at the forefront of our thoughts and emotions, and sometimes it's smaller, partially hidden, but still present in our lives. Reflect on the definition above, paying attention to the emotions that surface in you, and identify the places of grief and sorrow in your life.

//Read Luke 7:11-17 and journal any initial thoughts.

Note on the Widow

The widow is facing multiple struggles. She's dealing with the death of both her husband and now her only son. This involves not only deep sorrow from the physical loss, but also the total loss of financial and social support. A widow with no children in this society would have been in a desperate situation for the remainder of her life. The leper in Mark 1 from an earlier devotion was a picture of an outcast, the widow here is a picture of grief and helplessness.

//Read the story again, and as we have done throughout our devotions, imagine the story. Choose to do so from the perspective of the woman, as one in the crowd, as a disciple, or as someone carrying the bier. Use all your senses, experience the scene, and write/reflect on your thoughts.

The story is filled with statements identifying Jesus' compassion. Take time to meditate on each of these phrases from the text below.

- his heart went out to her
- “Don't cry”
- Jesus gave him back to his mother

//Take a moment and call to mind a grief or sorrow you are currently experiencing. With this in mind, get into a comfortable place, and use the following guide to enter into a time of prayer in light of Jesus and his compassion for the widow.

- Imagine and place yourself in a setting of your choosing.

- Spend a moment reflecting on your particular grief/sorrow.
- Like the story, imagine Jesus seeing you in your place of grief. Many healing stories involve people approaching Jesus with their requests and hopes. Here, Jesus' observation and compassion draws him to the widow of his own will. Instead of going to Jesus, observe him in his love and compassion coming to you.
- Sit in the promise that Jesus' heart goes out to you, and offer to him your struggle.
- What does Jesus say to you? Is it “don't cry,” or is there another word he offers?
- Rest in whatever healing Jesus brings in this moment, and when you are ready, move away from your encounter and end your time of prayer

Journal your thoughts and like the crowd, offer praise.