

## LESSON FOUR

# CHRIST'S COMPASSION

*When the Lord saw her, He had compassion  
on her and said to her, "Do not weep."*

LUKE 7:13 NKJV



## REFLECTION

Compassion frequently arrives in little gestures, such as a tactful suggestion for someone to watch his or her step to avoid injury. Compassion also makes larger gestures, such as pulling out of traffic to change a tire for a stranded motorist on the side of the road. Think of a time when someone showed compassion to you. How did it make you feel?

## SITUATION

As Jesus' popularity grew, it became increasingly complicated for him to travel. A crowd followed him everywhere he went. When he approached the village of Nain one day, the effect of the people might have been called a "crush hour"—and all the more because a procession of villagers was leaving town for a funeral. The two crowds met on the edge of town.

## OBSERVATION

*Read Luke 7:11–23 from the New International Version or the New King James Version.*

## NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

<sup>11</sup> Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. <sup>12</sup> As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. <sup>13</sup> When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry."

<sup>14</sup> Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" <sup>15</sup> The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

<sup>16</sup> They were all filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people." <sup>17</sup> This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

<sup>18</sup> John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, <sup>19</sup> he sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

<sup>20</sup> When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?'"

<sup>21</sup> At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. <sup>22</sup> So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. <sup>23</sup> Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

## NEW KING JAMES VERSION

<sup>11</sup> Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. <sup>12</sup> And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. <sup>13</sup> When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." <sup>14</sup> Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." <sup>15</sup> So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

<sup>16</sup> Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." <sup>17</sup> And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

<sup>18</sup> Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things. <sup>19</sup> And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to Jesus, saying, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

<sup>20</sup> When the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?'" <sup>21</sup> And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.

<sup>22</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. <sup>23</sup> And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

## EXPLORATION

**1.** Jesus and his followers encountered a funeral procession near the city of Nain. Why do you think Jesus chose to raise the boy back to life?

---



---



---

**2.** How did Jesus show compassion for the people in the funeral procession?

---



---



---

**3.** How did Jesus specifically show his compassion for the mother who had lost her son?

---



---



---

**4.** What good came from the miracle Jesus performed?

---



---



---

**5.** What do you think prompted John the Baptist to send two messengers to Christ?

---



---



---

**6.** What does it mean to stumble or be offended in your faith?

---



---



---

## INSPIRATION

Two crowds. One entering the city and one leaving. They couldn't be more diverse. The group arriving buzzes with laughter and conversation. They follow Jesus. The group leaving the city is solemn—a herd of sadness hypnotized by the requiem of death. Above them rides the reason for their grief—a cold body on a wicker stretcher.

The woman at the back of the procession is the mother. She has walked this trail before. It seems like just yesterday she buried the body of her husband. Her son walked with her then. Now she walks alone, quarantined in her sadness. . . .

The followers of Jesus stop and step aside as the procession shadows by. The blanket of mourning muffles the laughter of the disciples. No one spoke. What could they say? . . .

Jesus, however, knew what to say and what to do. When he saw the mother, his heart began to break . . . and his lips began to tighten. He glared at the angel of death that hovered over the body of the boy. “Not this time, Satan. This boy is mine.”

At that moment the mother walked in front of him. Jesus spoke to her. “Don’t cry.” She stopped and looked into this stranger’s face. If she wasn’t shocked by his presumption, you can bet some of the witnesses were.

Don’t cry? *Don’t cry?* What kind of request is that? A request only God can make.

Jesus stepped toward the bier and touched it. The pallbearers stopped marching. The mourners ceased moaning. As Jesus stared at the boy, the crowd was silent. Jesus turned his attention to the dead boy. “Young man,” his voice was calm, “come back to life again.”

The living stood motionless as the dead came to life. Wooden fingers moved. Gray-pale cheeks blushed. The dead man sat up. . . .

Jesus must have smiled as the two embraced. Stunned, the crowd broke into cheers and applause. They hugged each other and slapped Jesus on the back. Someone proclaimed the undeniable, “God has come to help his people.”

Jesus gave the woman much more than her son. He gave her a secret—a whisper that was overheard by us. “That,” he said pointing at the cot, “that is fantasy. This,” he grinned, putting an arm around the boy, “this is reality.” (From *Six Hours One Friday* by Max Lucado.)

## REACTION

**7.** What do you think motivated Jesus to heal the sick, deliver the demon-possessed, and give sight to the blind?

---



---



---



---

**8.** What new insight can you gain about Jesus’ character from this passage?

---



---



---

**9.** What difference does it make in our lives to know that Jesus had mercy on people?

---



---



---

**10.** What tends to keep you from acknowledging and appreciating what Jesus has done for you?

---



---



---

**11.** In what tangible way can you thank Jesus for the love and mercy he has shown to you?

---



---



---

**12.** Think of one person to whom you could show more Christian compassion. What has kept you from taking action on that awareness?

---



---



---

## LIFE LESSONS

Compassion grows out of our faith and obedience. We don’t practice compassion just because it “works.” We treat others with compassion

because Jesus showed compassion and we want to emulate him, and because all people are loved by God. One way to look at it is this: treat people in such a way that if they want to take revenge on you, they will have to be nice. If you want to take seriously Jesus' call to discipleship, you have to honestly consider if you have treated those whom God has placed into your life today with compassion.

## DEVOTION

*Lord, thank you for taking the time to keep a poor widow from a life of loneliness. Thank you for the length you went to in order to express care. It helps us see your power over death and your deep love and compassion for needy people. Our hearts overflow with gratitude for the mercy you have shown to us. Receive our praise and help us to show your love to the people around us.*

## JOURNALING

How has Jesus shown compassion to you? How are you demonstrating compassion to others?

## FOR FURTHER READING

To complete the book of Luke during this twelve-part study, read Luke 7:1–50. For more Bible passages on Christ's compassion, read Matthew 9:35–36; 14:13–14; 15:32–39; 20:29–34; and Mark 1:40–42; 6:34; 8:2.