

Christ's Compassion

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[0 : 00] Let's turn for a little to the chapter we read in the Gospel of Luke chapter 7, Gospel of Luke chapter 7, and reading at verse 11, Gospel of Luke chapter 7, reading at verse 11.

Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd with him. But as he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her.

And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said to her, Do not weep. Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bierer stood still. And he said, Young man, I say to you, Arise.

And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet has arisen among us, and God has visited his people.

And this report about him spread throughout the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country. Not only was Jesus an amazing teacher, he was also an amazing person.

[1 : 25] And when you consider the life of Jesus, we find it really quite remarkable. And this chapter, if we were to go through the whole chapter, shows us that Jesus deals with quite a variety of different experiences and different situations.

But he deals with each situation expertly. He deals in the first section with illness, with sickness. He deals in the second section with death.

He deals in the next section with a doubting prophet. And then he deals in the last section with a repentant sinner. Four different, quite distinct situations of life.

And yet, he deals with each one. And in his ministry in this world, we're finding this is the pattern of Jesus' life. That all the time, he was confronting somebody who might be blind, or somebody who was deaf, or somebody who was a leper, or somebody who was paralyzed, or somebody who was demon-possessed.

He was meeting people with all kinds of different situations and different experiences. And in all these things, he was able to work out for them. And the one thing we've got to remember, that the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

[2 : 52] Which means he is unchanging. What he was in the past, he is in the present, and he will be in the future. And that means that, irrespective of what your situation today is, Jesus is able to help you.

That doesn't mean that he's going to work things out exactly the way you want, the way you hope. But he will work things out, ultimately, for your good.

And it's one of the things that we find throughout the Bible, is this amazing way that the Lord has of identifying with people.

And it's so important for us to have the faith to go to the Lord with whatever situation we're in. And to tell him honestly, and exactly how it is.

There's no point going to the Lord and just saying to the Lord, telling him kind of, or not telling him. Or if we do tell him, just in sort of vague, to be honest.

[3 : 54] And if you're hurting today, tell him you're hurting. Tell him why you're hurting. If you're confused today about something, tell him. If you're struggling in relationships with someone or with people, tell him.

If you're struggling at work or struggling in the home, if you're struggling financially, it doesn't matter what it is, go and tell him. This is faith where we engage with the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's not something that just we think about. It is something that involves our whole being. Faith is real. God is real. Jesus Christ is real. We engage with him.

We become involved with him. And that is what he wants us to do. And that is why often he allows things into our life in order to get us into a real fellowship, a real relationship with him.

Not one that is just sort of a token thing, but one that is real. So that he and you and he are engaged together, interacting together, involved together.

[4 : 57] So you speak to him and he speaks to you through the word. And so we find here that Jesus, when he comes into this particular town, he sees this woman and it tells us in verse 13, and when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her.

And I think that's a beautiful word. And it's one that describes quite often the ministry of Jesus, one of compassion. Compassion, I think we've said it before, has been, somebody has said it's, your pain in my heart.

Which is a beautiful description. Someone's pain. If you have real compassion for somebody, you feel their pain in your heart. You are so identifying with them.

And that was one of the wonderful things about Jesus. And that's why I'm saying it is still the same. Your pain in his heart. So that he feels.

It's not somebody remote and somebody who isn't affected and somebody who isn't touched by it. It's real. Of course, his ministry in this world was so head on. It was so involved.

[6 : 07] It was so intense. It was so physical for that period when he was here. Now, the scene that we have before us really is quite a heart-rending one. Because we have this woman.

And she's a widow woman. And she has only one son. A young son. And this young son has died. And we catch this up just at the funeral procession.

Where this poor woman, remember that she was living in days when there was no help. That could be given. It wasn't like where there would be any forms of benefit.

Maybe in the way that there might be today. Or any little pensions. Or anything of that nature. She was going to be dependent entirely upon what anybody else could provide for her.

And having lost first her husband. And now to lose her son who would have been providing for her. She was somebody who was absolutely bereft. But it's very interesting how often in the scripture it talks about God's interest in the widow.

[7 : 13] And those who are left. And I think it's important that those who are widows take hold of what God's word and his promises. That he is a widow's shield.

He is a widow's refuge. He is a widow's stay. He is a widow's strength. We get all these different descriptions given to us in the word of God. I think it's very important to lay hold upon these things.

And to claim them. And to go to the Lord and say, Lord, this is actually what your word says. Help me to experience that. And whether it's widow or widower, it falls into the same category.

We go and lay hold upon what the word says. But the scene that we have here is a very sad scene. And it's one that's enacted over and over and over.

Death is that great robber that comes in and just destroys, breaks up. And everybody here has experienced the pain of death within family, amongst friends.

[8 : 13] And you know your life is never the same again. Because those who are part and partial of your life. And somebody who's close to you. Somebody that is part of who you are.

It's taken away. Life is, it's never the same again. There's always that hole, that emptiness, that pain. And death, death is just that which, it tells us in the Bible very simply, it's an enemy.

And that's what it is. There's no getting away from it. It is the, in fact, it's described as the last enemy. It's the great enemy. That enemy. And I think before we go any further, we should remind ourselves of where death came.

Because a lot of people get sort of what say, how did all this come? Now we know it, but sometimes it's good for us to remind ourselves. Remember that when God created this world, he created this world in a way that mirrored himself.

And it was a world that was perfect. Every sight, every sound, every scent was perfect.

[9 : 23] Because God said over everything, as he looked upon it, very good. That was his declaration over everything. And then, of course, we know how he created Adam and Eve.

And he set before them everything. Everything was there for their good. Everything was there even for their pleasure. There were things that were good to taste.

There were things that were good to the eye. Everything was there for them. And they had freedom with everything, with the exception of one thing.

Remember how in the middle of the garden there was a tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And God had said to them, everything is huge except this one thing. And Adam was, and we've got to remember, he was our covenant head.

He was our representative. He didn't just stand for himself. He stood for all humanity. What he was, we would be.

[10 : 30] And Adam was in this period of probation. And if Adam had continued in a state of obedience, giving the obedience because he was perfect. And Eve was perfect.

And they lived in a perfect relationship with one another and with God. And if they had continued like that, then this world would have stayed as a perfect world.

But that's not what happened. We know that they gave in to the temptation. And because Adam was this covenant head, because we were in him, what he would be, we would all be.

When he fell, we fell. So this is where the whole thing went wrong. This is where sin entered the world. And I know that there's a lot of people today will look at the Bible and they say, no, they don't want to think about long these things.

Well, the fact is, there is nowhere else that gives us such an insight, such an understanding of how this world is as it is.

[11 : 36] Because a lot of people say, how come? Here we are in the 21st century. How come we cannot live with one another? How come, despite every attempt and all the efforts and all the money that is spent in and all the great social structures and all that is working towards our development and our maturity, and here we are, where we are, surely by now we can learn to live one with another.

But we have never learned. Still the same. History keeps repeating itself century after century in so many different ways.

And it comes back to the origin of evil because we've lost, we lost what we had. We lost that innocence, the purity, everything that we had because we were made in the image of God.

Man and woman reflected the image of God in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. And we know that in that moment, all that was shattered. It was broken. That was it. And so that all that beauty and love and harmony was broken.

And remember, Satan had promised Adam and Eve that you will know both good and evil. It is the greatest anticlimax that has ever been known in this world.

[13 : 01] When Adam and Eve took of the fruit, they believed it would be an enriching experience. Well, at one level, what Satan said, there was an element of truth. There's always an element of truth in what Satan says.

Because he's saying to them, you only know good. If you take that, you will be as God. You will know both good and evil. That was true. They had known good and nothing else.

Once they took of that, then they knew evil. But they couldn't turn the clock back. They were stuck. And it was that awful moment where there was just the shattering of all these things.

And they began to experience, in the same way as you and I experienced things. But they experienced things they had never known before. Things like suspicion and resentment.

Hurt. All these things that are part and parcel of life. We wish they weren't there. And we long for it. You know, that's one of the wonderful things about the Christian life.

[14 : 02] The future. The hope that we have. The hope of glory. Because, you know, there will be none of these things. It's going to be like Eden restored. It's going to be like when the new heavens and the new earth are made.

Wherein dwells righteousness. All these things are going to vanish away. No suspicion. No hatred. There's not going to be a cloud in the sky. And this is what the Lord is going to give us.

So, we've got to remember that this is where death came. Because the wages of sin is death. When God had said, in the day that you eat of the fruit of that tree. And this was God testing Adam and Eve.

If you eat of that, then death will come in. They didn't know what death was. But they discovered it all changed. And as the Bible shows it, it didn't just affect the human race.

It affected the whole of creation. The whole world. And that is why we're told in Romans that the creation is groaning. And that's why we have our volcanoes, our earthquakes, our tsunamis, all these things.

[15 : 09] Because this world is groaning. And so, just by way of background, we're seeing what's all at the back of this.

Reminding ourselves of where death has come. But we pick up the narrative in verse 11. And we find here that there are two different crowds. Verse 11, there's one crowd. And verse 12, there's another crowd.

Verse 11. Then Jesus and the disciples came to this town, Nain, and a great crowd with them. But then in verse 12, we find another crowd.

And that's a funeral crowd. And a considerable crowd from the town was with her. So there are these two different crowds. Verse 11, there's a crowd.

And this crowd is following Jesus. Verse 12, there's another crowd. And this crowd is following the coffin. And you know, there's a spiritual picture here.

[16 : 08] And this is where we're spiritualizing. And whether you agree with spiritualizing or not, there is an element here that you cannot miss out. Because there are only two ways of going in life.

There's a way that's following Jesus. And there's a way that's following death. There's no other. There's a broad road. There's a narrow road. There's a way of life. There's a way of death.

The Bible makes it very clear. There's no middle ground. You can't be walking two different directions at the same time. That's impossible. You can't go north and south at the same time or east and west.

You can't walk both sides of the road at the same time. You're walking one or the other. And so one crowd is following the way of death. The other crowd is following the way of life.

Question we need to ask ourselves. Which road are we on today? Which crowd are we walking with? Who are or what are we following? Because we're following someone, something.

[17 : 08] Which destiny are we heading to? Which direction are we going in? So that's what we have in this picture. But then there's another difference. As we say there's the two crowds.

There's another difference and yet there's a similarity. Because there are two sons. Two sons. One son. And the thing is not only are there two sons here in verse 11 and verse 12.

But there's only sons. Jesus is an only son. This son who was being buried was an only son.

But of course there's a difference. Jesus is a son by eternal generation. Jesus is eternal in his being. The son of God. Which shows his divine nature.

He is one with God. Equal with God. Equal with the Father. Equal with the Spirit. Equal in power and glory. And yet he is somebody who by the very nature of his work is submissive to the will of the Father.

[18 : 14] But here are these two sons. And it's very interesting. One son is alive. Jesus. But he's destined to die.

The other son is dead. But he's destined to live. And this is again this great transition. This great transaction that takes place.

And Jesus has done this for so many of us. Because he is the one. We were dead. He was alive. But he died in order that we might live. But anyway we find the two people here.

And we could almost say there are two people who are sorrowing meat. Jesus meets with this widow woman. Now it doesn't tell us that this widow woman approached Jesus at all.

There were many people like Bartimaeus the blind beggar. He approached Jesus. Lepers approached Jesus. We often find people coming and approaching Jesus. But sometimes Jesus approaches people.

[19 : 21] And it would appear on this occasion that that's what it was. Because when Jesus came in and saw the situation. And knew what had happened. Tells us that he was moved with compassion.

And he goes to this woman. Now Jesus could identify with her. Because you know what it tells us in the Bible. That Jesus was a man of sorrows.

And he was acquainted with grief. In other words he was somebody who personally knew all about sorrow and grief. Now we mustn't just think of Jesus as somebody who went through this world.

All the time really really sad. Because Jesus was somebody who was also full of joy. How do we say that? Because he was full of the spirit.

And being filled to fullness of the spirit. Part of being full of the spirit is having joy. It's one of the fruit. When you go through the fruit of the spirit.

[20 : 24] Joy is part of the fruit of the spirit. So there was always perpetual joy in the heart of Jesus. However, there was also sorrow and grief.

Sorrow to such an extent that the Bible says, Whose sorrow is likened to my sorrow. That's how great the sorrow of Jesus was in this world.

Why? Because Jesus lived in a world that was sin sick. And here's the big difference between Jesus and you and me.

Because we are sinners, we side with sin. We have a sympathy with sin. Yes, there are times we find sin repulsive.

And that once you become a believer, you battle against sin. But irrespective of how much you battle against sin and how much you hate sin. If you're honest with yourself, you still love sin.

[21 : 22] There's a part of you that still loves sin. That's the nature of sin. That's the nature of being a sinner. But Jesus never, ever, ever, ever, ever loved sin.

In fact, sin was repulsive. Repugnant. It was awful to him all the time. If I can maybe use an extreme illustration.

If you or I were plucked from time where we are right now. And just hurled back into one of these awful periods in history.

Into a place of genocide. Or into a place of these, an awful death camp. Where babies clubbed to death. And women hacked to pieces. And old men and women being shot.

And you would, it would unhinge your reason. You'd say to yourself, let me out. You'd be screaming to get out. It would be more than your whole being could take. Because you've gone into this extreme environment of all that is beyond words.

[22 : 29] It is so awful. So beyond just being able to bear with. Well, in a sense. It was like that for Jesus coming into this world.

Because he was holy. He was pure. He was undefiled. There was not one stain of sin in him. So that he was seeing the impact of sin in a way.

The effect of sin in a way that you and I can't. And no wonder he was a man of sorrows. Because he was seeing the result of sin all the time.

And we often find this description of Jesus of being moved. Different things moved him. Right within his very being. He was being moved by what he was confronting.

What he was seeing. Well, here is this situation. And so he comes up to this grieving widow. And he says to her. Do not weep. Now, if you and I had gone into the situation.

[23 : 32] And you saw this widow woman. And oh, you said, I feel so sorry for her. And you went alongside her. And you put your arm around her. And you said, oh, do not weep. That wouldn't help her one little bit.

In fact, it might even annoy her. Because she can't help weeping. Her heart is broken. And it's no use somebody saying, oh, don't weep, don't cry. But Jesus doing so was different.

Because when Jesus said, do not weep, it was for a particular reason. He had a reason why she shouldn't weep. He was just going to show her why she shouldn't weep. And he was bringing her to exercise faith in him.

Because he was going to demonstrate his authority and his power. So that's why God so often in the word says to us, do not fear. Because he gives a reason.

For instance, in Isaiah, it says, fear not. Okay, why? Because I'm with you. I'm with you to help you. I will uphold you with my right arm. There's a reason for not fearing.

- [24 : 37] There's no point just saying to somebody, ah, don't fear, don't fret. But when you say to somebody, don't fear, do you know why? And I'll give you the reason why.
- So that's what the Lord does. Do not fear. I am with you. I'm with you to help you. I'm with you to uphold you by my right arm. And here he says to her, do not weep.
- And he's just about to show her why she should not weep. Because he was going to demonstrate all his own authority and all his own power over death.
- That's why it tells us in Thessalonians that the Christian doesn't grieve in the same way as others who have no hope. When our loved ones in Jesus, when they pass away, of course we grieve.
- The Bible doesn't say to us, don't grieve. But that we don't grieve as those who have no hope. Because we are seeing by faith the other side.
- [25 : 35] We're seeing how things really are. And so this is why. So Jesus comes, he touches the coffin. Now of course it would be different to the kind of coffins we have nowadays. It would be more a kind of a stretcher with an open kind of thing.
- It wouldn't be the sealed up coffin the way that we would have. But of course he would be covered. And he says, and they stop, and he says, Young man, I say to you, arise.
- And it's here we see the awesome power of Christ over death. And that's why in the Gospels we have Jesus demonstrating this power now and again.
- And he's showing that he is Lord over life and over death. And here we have a picture of what will happen at the end. Because there's going to come a day when Jesus is going to say over every grave the same thing.
- Young man, young woman, old man, old woman. I say to you, arise. There's going to come a day when all the graves will open. And the sea will give up its dead. You say to yourself, how is that going to be?
- [26 : 42] I don't know. You know, it's one of the things often when I go to the cemetery. And it doesn't matter whether it's Agonish or Sandwick or whichever cemetery.
- And I so often think, I wonder. Because we don't know. Well, imagine the return of Christ when we're still here.
- Imagine us seeing the graves opening. We might probably know it won't be. But there's no knowing. We don't know. None of us know when the return of Christ will be.
- Nobody knows. We're told not even the angels in heaven know when that will be. What we do know is that in such an hour as we think not, that's when he's going to return. But I often think what an incredible spectacle it will be when all the graves will open.
- And the sea also will give up its dead. And people say, ach, that's impossible. How do you mean that all the bodies that have disintegrated into dust, do you mean to say that they're going to rise up again as bodies?
- [27 : 49] Yes. How? I don't know. But let us go back to the very creation. God took the dust of the ground. And he made what had never been before.
- He made man out of the dust of the ground. And from man he made woman. He built, he fashioned, he shaped. Man and woman both came from the dust of the ground.
- And the Lord said after the, when man had sinned and death entered, you're going to return to the dust. We came from the dust and we're returning to the dust.
- But the Lord's not finished with it. So the Lord who made out of nothing, made us out of nothing. Do you think it's too hard for him again to recreate the dust again to make what had been before?
- Not at all. Now we, as I say, it's way beyond our understanding. Because we can't, we can't even begin to understand it. But faith, this is where faith comes in. I can't understand.

[28 : 55] If somebody said, sit down with me and explain how this has happened. I couldn't even begin to. But I'll tell you, faith, I believe it. I believe it as surely as I'm standing here.

Because the faith that I have in God enables me to believe that this is nothing impossible for him. With God, nothing is impossible. And this is what he will do.

And so we have this picture here of the Jesus' power over death. And this is what he says, young man, I say to you, arise.

The young man sat up. And here we have a picture even of a person coming to faith in Jesus Christ. Because it's the same word and it's the same power in the word that brings life, spiritual life, into our being.

There was a day you were dead. I said, spiritually dead. And nothing meant anything to you. You might have come to church and it just went, in one ear, out another.

[30 : 01] You might have had moments when you thought about it. But there came a day when things changed. And God got hold of you. And God spoke to you. And God addressed you. And you heard these words, arise.

And there was power in the word and you were enabled to. And we see the effect of this, the impact. The young man, he sat up and he began to speak. And again, once you become a Christian, you begin to speak.

A new song has gone into your mouth. You begin to praise. You begin to pray. You begin to engage in the things of God. The things of God that didn't mean anything to you before have all of a sudden become very important.

And you love to think about God's dealings in this world. About the future. What now will it be like in heaven? You begin to think about new things. All these kind of things go through your mind.

And then we see, as we come to the conclusion, Jesus gave him to his mother. I love that. It's quite possible that this young man would have said, oh, when Jesus took him back from the dead.

[31 : 06] Oh, I want to go with you in the same way that, remember, Legion, who was delivered from all the demons. He wanted to go with Jesus. And Jesus said, no. Do you know what I want you to do? I want you to go back home.

And I want you to be a wee missionary back at home. And I want you to tell people what great things the Lord has done for you. Maybe this man wanted to do exactly the same.

Oh, Jesus, thank you. I want to go with you. But Jesus, he gave him back to his mother. Because Jesus knew that this young man's mother needed her son more than anybody.

Because she had to have somebody who could work for her and provide for her. So it's a very touching, it's a very beautiful, beautiful thing. Two things in conclusion.

We see verse 16. Fear seized them all. And they glorified God. Fear. We tend to think of fear, the fear of God, when we see God's greatness.

[32 : 12] But you know, sometimes it's God's goodness that brings fear. Where we're overwhelmed by his love, by his grace, by his mercy.

That sometimes brings the fear of God into our heart. And then the second thing is, and this report about him spread throughout the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.

But, sorry, before that, it said, A great prophet has arisen among us, and God has visited his people. Take note of these words.

God has visited his people. Why did they say that? Because somebody who was dead came to life. Do you know this? Every time a person is born again, Every person, every time, Somebody comes to faith, We can say that God has visited his people.

You know, sometimes people say to the day, Ah, there's nothing happening. Church is dead. God has forsaken us. He hasn't. Every single time a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ, We can say, God has visited his people.

[33 : 28] Isn't that lovely? And thank the Lord, He is still visiting his people. You pray and ask that the Lord will visit your heart, And dwell with you today.

Let us pray. O Lord, our God, We pray that you will bless us. We give thanks for being under your word. Lord, we pray that we might know your presence and your power, And that you will deliver us from all that brings us down, And that you will enable us to focus upon yourself, So that we might be lifted up.

Help us to dwell upon what we have in you, And to dwell upon the hope and glory that we have. Help us to be filled with a sense of who we belong to, And where we're going, And be merciful and gracious to us.

Watch over us and take us all to our home safely, And forgive us our every sin. In Jesus' name we ask this. Amen. We're going to conclude singing in Psalm 146, And the last two verses of the Psalm.

Psalm 146, And the last two verses of the Psalm. Psalm 146, 1, 4, 6, 9, 10, Below the paragraph, ■■■■■■brief we speak to them, In

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