

# Episode 51

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*"Soon afterward Jesus went with his disciples to the village of Nain. A funeral procession was coming out as he approached the village gate. The young man who had died was a widow's only son, and a large crowd from the village was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart overflowed with compassion. "Don't cry!" he said. Then he walked over to the coffin and touched it, and the bearers stopped. "Young man," he said, "I tell you, get up." Then the dead boy sat up and began to talk! And Jesus gave him back to his mother."*

- Luke 7.11-15

What I noticed when reading these verses, is the amazing support this widow received from those around her, with Luke mentioning how a large crowd from the village was there for her as she struggled through this incredibly difficult time. They would have most likely been there as her son's health wavered, surrounded her as she considered a future without him, soaking up her tears as she faced the finality of his funeral. They were a community filled with compassion, doing all they could for the grieving widow.

Jesus was also there, and he did all that he could, which is more than we could ever hope to experience, the raising of this widow's son from the dead.

There's a holistic element to this story that I never noticed before. Those who knew the widow had done all they could do to carry her through this difficult time. Meanwhile, Jesus did what only he could do, he brought what was dead back to life. Even though what Jesus did was celebrated, and caused a stir throughout Judea and the surrounding countryside, we mustn't miss the part of the story that doesn't get underlined in many bibles, and that is the fact that it took the love and care of the village, and Jesus, to see what was dead brought to life, as the crowd drew Jesus' attention to this painful moment in this widow's life.

In the midst of this pandemic, we would do well to consider both sides of this account. Often, we hear of a situation and send a WhatsApp filled with praying hands, but leave it there, thinking there's nothing we can do. Or, we are quick to run and try rescue, to message and provide meals, spread the word and send the flowers, but never create a space for Jesus to step in and bring what is dead back to life.

News of a possible divorce, another covid case, car problems again for the single mom in the complex, jobs being lost, schools closed, mom's forced to become teachers, kids showing signs that this season is taking its toll - over and over again we lean into our emotional reserves, or throw our hands up and shrink back into the shadows.

However, reading through this chapter again, notice the Roman officer doing what he can to put his dying servant in Jesus' hands, the crowd getting Jesus' attention at the funeral, and even John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus throughout his ministry.

But then there's the Pharisee, standing in stark contrast to the kingdom values on display throughout this chapter. The Pharisee neither engages in the need right in front of him, nor does he point her to the one who can satisfy her need. Instead, all he sees is himself.

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