

Man of Sorrows

The Incident at Nain - Luke 7:11-17

series: The Jesus I Follow

week 4



One of the things we often desire in a leader is that he or she is somehow impervious to pain. We can experience suffering, but we want them to rise above it, to be immune to it, to give us hope that they can lead us forward into victory. The last thing we want is for them to be wounded—or to die. We long for a Henry V or a William Wallace or a Teddy Roosevelt who's still standing when the smoke clears. We aren't initially inspired when we read the words, "*He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.*" And yet that is the description given of our mighty Messiah in Isaiah 53. No wonder the Jews tended to avoid that passage when they talked of their hope for a conquering hero. The passage goes on:

Not long after that, Jesus went to the village Nain. His disciples were with him, along with quite a large crowd. As they approached the village gate, they met a funeral procession—a woman's only son was being carried out for burial. And the mother was a widow. When Jesus saw her, his heart broke. He said to her, "Don't cry." Then he went over and touched the coffin. The pallbearers stopped. He said, "Young man, I tell you: Get up." The dead son sat up and began talking. Jesus presented him to his mother.

They all realized they were in a place of holy mystery, that God was at work among them. They were quietly worshipful—and then noisily grateful, calling out among themselves, "God is back, looking to the needs of his people!" The news of Jesus spread all through the country.

- The Message

"He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him... Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

And yet today, 2700 years after Isaiah wrote those words, one of the qualities of Jesus most cherished by His followers is His ability to feel and understand our pain. It's not just that He intellectually knows about our suffering, but He experienced it Himself.

Read the following passages and observe how Jesus reacted:

- John 11:32-35
- Luke 19:41-44
- What **word** do the following verses all have in common?
Mark 1:41, Matthew 9:36, 14:14, 15:32, 20:34

When Jesus feels this, what does He tend to do?

"The *splanchnizomai* word group is not used frequently in the NT. But its occurrences seem especially important.

The word originally indicated the inner parts of the body and came to suggest the seat of the emotions--particularly emotions of pity, compassion, and love. This is the word used in the Gospels to speak of Jesus' having compassion on someone in need.

When Jesus' response is such that he is described as being moved by compassion, the occasion is often the turning point in someone's life."

-Larry Richards, Expository Dictionary of Bible Words

Now **read the main passage** for this study: **Luke 7:11-17.**

- Is this story recorded in any other gospel?
- Where is Nain?
- How many people does Jesus raise from the dead, and who are they?
- What do you think caused Jesus to do this miracle?
- We tend to think that, as followers of Jesus, we cannot do the things He did, such as walking into funeral homes and bringing dead people back to life. And yet in John 14:12,13 Jesus said, *"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."* What do you think he meant by that?
- Do you think Jesus was generally happy, or generally sad?

LIFE RESPONSE:

- Do you know anyone who spends a lot of their time, week in and week out, with people who are in pain, such as a nurse in a cancer ward, a counselor, a parole officer? How does it affect them? If you are in one of those professions, how do you deal with it?
- How do you tend to respond to people who are in some kind of pain? Are you "tuned in" to their experience, or do you tend to be oblivious? Do you naturally tend to be merciful, or do you have the spiritual gift of mercy?
- How has Jesus been merciful to you? What has it done for you to know that He understands your emotions, and feels your pain? What specific sorrow or grief has he helped you through? Do you struggle with wondering if God actually feels your pain?

God calls you and me to have compassion on others. That call is more than an appeal for us to feel with and for the needy. It is a call to care enough to become involved and to help by taking some action that will set others' lives on a fresh, new course."

- Larry Richards

