



READ LUKE 7:11-17

As Jesus and his disciples were traveling, they met a funeral procession. A widow's only son was being carried out for burial. When Jesus saw her, his heart broke. He told her not to cry, and went over and touched the bier, or stretcher, they were using to carry the woman's dead son. Jesus told him to get up, and he did. Jesus presented him to his mother. The people realized that they were in a place of holy mystery, and that God was at work among them. They were worshipful and grateful, and the news of Jesus spread throughout the country.

REMEMBER: Luke 7:16

They all realized they were in a place of holy mystery, and that God was at work among them.

MORE THOUGHTS

The woman in this story has lost her husband, and now her only son is dead, too. In the ancient world, this would have left her destitute as well as deeply grieved. It appears that her life is over, too. But Jesus sees the widow's grief and his heart aches for her. He touches the stretcher that carries her dead son, and in doing so he breaks a law, making himself ritually unclean. Jesus raises the boy to life and "gives him back to his mother." Jesus doesn't just bring the boy back to life; he brings the widow back to life, too.

Here is another story of Jesus leading with compassion and love instead of religious rules and law. Are we like that? Or is the religious conversation about any of the hot topics in this country (LGBTQ rights, abortion, women's health, religious freedom, and more) weighted down in judgment and law rather than compassion and love? Do we see only the issue, and not the person it affects? Why? How can this story speak into, or redirect, our lives?

NEXT WEEK: Luke 7:18-35

 RESURRECTION

DAY 1: What is it about the woman in this story that is in desperate need of coming to life? How is this woman already dead? Is there any way to bring her back to life?

 SURPRISE

DAY 2: Do you ever feel like you're walking, but not fully awake? Have you noticed that despite being the wealthiest, most powerful society to ever inhabit this planet, we seem to be an increasingly unhappy people? Is that why we're also the most over-medicated, debt-ridden, sleep-deprived people ever? Do you ever feel like your calendar, cupboards and closets are ridiculously filled, but your soul seems empty? Why is that? [For more, google Bréné Brown's TED Talk called "The Power of Vulnerability."]

 LOVE

DAY 3: How does this story reveal Jesus' compassion? Does Jesus restore the boy's life for the boy's sake, or for his mother's sake? Why?

 RESURRECTION

DAY 4: From Pastor Jeff's sermon: "Jesus ruined a perfectly good funeral because Jesus is in the business of awakening people, bringing them to new and abundant life." What does this mean? Is it difficult to believe in a God of new life in a country that's sinking into political unrest? Is Jesus in the business of awakening people, of bringing new life, even in the midst of the crises in this country? How? Where can we find new and abundant life here? What part do we play?

 RESURRECTION

DAY 5: How awake are you? What's dead in you, in need of new life? How can you personally find more aliveness?

 RESURRECTION

DAY 6: How awake is your community of faith? Is there anything dead there that's in need of new life? Do you ever feel like you're just going through the motions at church? How can you be more awake, alert, mindful or passionate in your community of faith? Can God breathe new life into relationships and gatherings? What would change if your church shared a new sense of aliveness?

 PROGRESS

DAY 7: How awake are we as a community, a state or a nation? Are we just going through the motions? What would it take for us bring a new sense of aliveness to the world? What would happen to our nation if we were all suddenly consumed with Jesus' compassion, stopping at nothing to bring new life? Can we be Jesus' hands and heart in this country, instead of bystanders? How?