

"GOD HAS VISITED HIS PEOPLE!"

MAIN POINT.

When we face the reality of physical death, we can cling to the hope of eternal life.



CHRIST CONNECTION

When Jesus raised the widow's son from the dead, He showed that He has power over death. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Because Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, we have full assurance that Jesus will one day defeat death forever and resurrect us from the dead.



POWER OVER SIN AND DEATH

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to read all of the content on the timeline as you prepare to teach.

Luke 7

DEATH IS THE EFFECT OF SIN

LUKE 7:11-13

11 Afterward he was on his way to a town called Nain. His disciples and a large crowd were traveling with him. 12 Just as he neared the gate of the town, a dead man was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow. A large crowd from the town was also with her. 13 When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said, "Don't weep."

JESUS HAS AUTHORITY OVER DEATH

LUKE 7:14-17

14 Then he came up and touched the open coffin, and the pallbearers stopped. And he said, "Young man, I tell you, get up!" 15 The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. 16 Then fear came over everyone, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us," and "God has visited his people." 17 This report about him went throughout Judea and all the vicinity.

BEFORE YOU TEACH

MAIN POINT.

When we face the reality of physical death, we can cling to the hope of eternal life.

Leaders: You and your students have likely walked through grief. Take comfort in knowing that Jesus is moved by our grief and cares for our sorrow (Luke 7:13).

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

DEATH IS THE EFFECT OF SIN

LUKE 7:11-13

“Since Jesus addresses the son as ‘young man’ (v. 14), we may assume that the woman has been left alone at a relatively young age. She lived in a man’s world in which a woman had no legal rights. The testimony of women and slaves was unacceptable in judicial proceedings. Thus a woman without a man to represent her was particularly helpless and defenseless. The Gospels testify that Jesus had ‘compassion’ on people like this.”⁵

LUKE 7:12

“She has already buried her husband. Perhaps the son’s tone of voice, physical appearance, and gestures were reminders of her dearly departed spouse. So now all that existed of that former life heads to the grave. And, with no husband and no son, she had no way of providing for herself in that culture and time. She’ll soon be alone. Perhaps that’s why ‘a large crowd from the city was also with her.’ It’s like the entire community knew what grief and difficulty lay ahead.”⁶

JESUS HAS AUTHORITY OVER DEATH

LUKE 7:16

“Some commentators have seen a close link between this story and a similar one in the Old Testament where a non-Israelite widow at Zarephath had her son restored to life by the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 17:8-24). At the end of that account, the widow told Elijah: ‘Now I know for sure that you are a man of God, and that the LORD truly speaks through you’ (1 Kings 17:24). The successful prophetic intervention had convinced her of the prophet’s authenticity. Similarly, in the Gospel story, the people declared, ‘A mighty prophet has risen among us’ (7:16).”⁷

CONTEXT



When Jesus met this widow in the town of Nain, women had little rights and few choices to earn a living. Men not only provided financially for the women in their lives, but they also provided physical and legal protection. A woman's testimony wasn't accepted in court, so if facing legal accusations, widows were completely defenseless. Once her husband died, the widow's son would've cared for, provided for, and protected her. So, when Jesus stepped onto the scene, the widow in this passage was mourning so many losses: the death of her son, the death of her security, and the death of life as she knew it—again. The townspeople would've known her situation and likely had sympathy for her, but they could do nothing to make it better. Thankfully, Jesus could and did. And this isn't the only place we see Jesus care for the women in His day: He offered hope and forgiveness to a Samaritan woman who was looked down on and treated as an outcast by the Jews (John 4); He stood up for a woman caught in adultery, keeping her from being stoned to death and offering grace instead (John 8:2-11); He included women in His ministry and even appeared first to a group of women after His resurrection. Once again, we see that Jesus often discarded cultural norms in favor of loving people and inviting them to experience salvation.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

Resurrection

Both the Old and New Testaments teach that one day believers will experience a resurrection of the body from the dead (Isa. 26:19; Ezek. 37:12-14; John 11). The promise of the resurrection is found in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and it will take place at the future return of Christ. Because Christ was resurrected, Christians can be assured that their resurrection will be similar in nature, meaning it will be both bodily and glorious (Phil. 3:20-21; Rom. 8:22-23). The hope of the future resurrection gives believers confidence that death has been defeated in the death and resurrection of Christ.

LEADERS' PRAYER

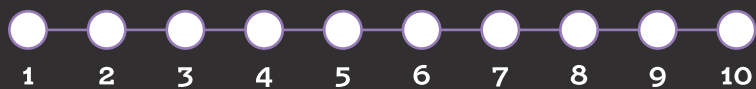
LORD JESUS, WHEN WE'RE HURTING OVER LOSS AND GRIEF, REMIND US OF THE HOPE WE HAVE IN YOU. HELP US TO SUPPORT ANY STUDENTS WHO MAY BE GRIEVING, OFFERING THEM THE SAME HOPE AND COMFORT YOU HAVE GIVEN US.



KICK STARTER

RATE IT!

On a scale of 1-10 (1=Not at all; 10=Completely), how much of a rule follower are you?



These optional activities are designed to help your students interact. You'll find a Discussion Activity and a Cultural Connection, which touches on a relevant topic in today's teen culture. Each group is different, so adapt these activities to fit your group's needs. The goal is for students to connect more to the lesson as they connect to the topic and to one another.

1

CONSEQUENCES AND LOSS

SUPPLIES LIST: NONE

Ask the following questions, allowing time for students to share responses:

- **WHAT KINDS OF CONSEQUENCES DO YOUR PARENTS OR GUARDIANS GIVE FOR BREAKING THEIR RULES?**
- **WHEN HAVE YOU LOST SOMETHING YOU VALUED—EVEN A DREAM YOU HELD?**
- **WHEN HAVE YOU LOST PEOPLE YOU LOVED, EITHER THROUGH BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS OR DEATH?**

When we break rules, we face consequences. This reality is just as true today as it was for Adam and Eve in Genesis. When they broke God's rules for living with Him in Eden, sin entered the world—and so did disorder, sickness, and death. But the biggest loss that day was their close relationship with God. Thankfully, because of Jesus, who has power and authority over everything, we have hope that sin and death are not the end.

2

CULTURAL CONNECTION

None of us fully understand why bad things happen. We ask, "If God is good, why does evil exist? Why hasn't Jesus come back already? Why do people die—'good' people, young people, and those who still have so much to give to the world?" Knowing the answers wouldn't take our pain away, but we struggle with these questions anyway because we want a reason for the pain. Ultimately, we want to know God's heart. While God's mind and plans are so far above anything we can understand (Isa. 55:8-9), we can trust a few general truths about God: God is good. Since God is good, He allows us free will, and sometimes we choose sin and evil. Since God is good, His timing seems slow because He wants more people to experience His grace, mercy, and forgiveness (2 Pet. 3:9). Since God is good, He invites us to trust Jesus for salvation and promises that we'll spend eternity with Him—and all other believers who have died before us. He is good. And one day, all that is wrong and evil will come undone because of His goodness.

DISCUSSION

MAIN POINT.

When we face the reality of physical death, we can cling to the hope of eternal life.

DEATH IS THE EFFECT OF SIN

READ LUKE 7:11-13

WHAT DETAILS DOES LUKE GIVE US ABOUT THE WOMAN IN NAIN (V. 12)? HOW DO THEY HELP US SEE THE EFFECTS OF SIN ON THE WORLD?

Leaders: Share context on widows. Can you imagine this woman's grief? Not only had she buried her husband, but now she was burying her only son. She was alone, despite being surrounded by several people from her town. **Sin's effect means that we all eventually know what it's like to grieve or to feel completely alone, even when we're with other people.** Their presence is helpful but doesn't take away the pain. The people from the widow's town could mourn with her, but they couldn't give her what she needed—only Jesus could. Thankfully, He was already moving toward her.



WHICH TITLE DID LUKE USE TO REFER TO JESUS IN VERSE 13? WHY DO YOU THINK HE CHOSE THAT TITLE HERE?

Because of sin, death is a part of life for everyone, so Jesus passing this funeral procession isn't surprising. But for the widow, everything changed on this day. Life kept moving while she grieved, but Jesus didn't. Jesus saw her, stopped for her, and showed that He is Lord. **"Lord" indicates someone who has authority or power over something, so Luke's use of this title was a fitting acknowledgment that Jesus could do anything because He is Lord over everything—including death itself.** Her seemingly hopeless situation changed when she encountered living Hope—Jesus.

HOW DOES JESUS SHOW US WE CAN HOLD ON TO HOPE, EVEN WHEN WE GRIEVE?

Before Adam and Eve chose their own way over God's way, they enjoyed a home untainted by death and grief. All pain, sickness, and death are the result of sin's presence in the world. So, in life after the fall, our stories are often colored in the shades of gray that follow unthinkable hurt, tragedy, and loss. But Jesus steps into our moments of deepest pain, as He did for the widow in Nain. When Jesus saw her, His heart was filled with compassion, and He reached out to offer hope. He does the same for us. **His offer of salvation not only gives us the hope that comes with freedom from sin and spiritual death but also carries the hope of reuniting us with other believers who have already died. While we experience the heartbreak of living without them on this earth, we can rest in the unshakable truth that because of Jesus, we won't have to live without them forever.**

JESUS HAS AUTHORITY OVER DEATH

READ LUKE 7:14-17



WHAT DID JESUS DO TO BRING THE WIDOW'S SON BACK TO LIFE? HOW WOULD YOU HAVE RESPONDED IF YOU SAW THIS MIRACLE?

Telling a dead man to get up and actually having it work seems impossible to us. Death seems so final because we don't have power over it, but we know the One who does. Jesus's words alone held the power to raise the dead. That's why He simply commanded a dead man to get up. The man sat up and spoke, and the people were filled with wonder and awe for what Jesus had done. **With words, God gave life to the world and everything in it (Heb. 11:3). And with words, Jesus gave life to this widow's son.**



WHAT DID JESUS'S POWER OVER DEATH DO FOR THE PEOPLE WATCHING? WHAT DOES IT DO FOR US?

The people who witnessed Jesus raising the widow's son were amazed and gave glory to God. They believed God had "visited" them, referring to the powerful work Jesus did, not seeing He is God. **They saw Jesus the prophet, not Jesus the Savior—Immanuel, "God with us" in the flesh. Yet, their words held a truth they completely missed: God was with them.** Here, Jesus proved to them and us that He has the authority to speak and erase death's power, replacing it with the gift of life. He is more than a great prophet or good teacher; He's the only One with the power to save us from sin and death.

WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT JESUS FROM HIS MEETING THIS WOMAN'S NEED (AND OURS) BEFORE SHE KNEW HIS IDENTITY?

The widow didn't ask Jesus for a miracle, but He offered one anyway. He gave her the one thing she desired most, that only He could give: life. **Before we knew we needed Him, Jesus came to us while we were trapped in sin and offered us something even greater: eternal life in Him (Rom. 5:8).** We have no power to save ourselves, no matter how "good" we are. We can be saved from sin and eternal separation from God only through faith in Jesus and because of His grace toward us. He loved us first. He died to save us. And He "always lives" to intercede for us before the Father (Heb. 7:25). **Even when we hadn't asked for a miracle, Jesus saw our need and stepped in to give us the greatest miracle we never knew we needed: forgiveness from sin, a restored relationship with God, and freedom from spiritual death to live forever in His presence.**

WRAP-UP



WHAT ARE SOME WAYS THIS PASSAGE TEACHES US TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE WHO ARE GRIEVING? HOW CAN YOU HELP THEM KNOW JESUS SEES AND CARES?

Especially if you haven't experienced grief, trying to comfort someone who's hurting after a heartbreaking loss can seem intimidating. Even if you're no stranger to grief, every person handles grief differently, so you still might struggle for the right words to say or the right ways to support your friend. But Jesus shows us some simple ways to help people who are grieving: We can show up; just offering our presence helps. We can see our friends with compassion by providing a safe space for them to talk about their hurt. And instead of letting difficult emotions turn us away, we can come close to offer any practical support they might need (like coffee dates, walks outside, or even a good cry on the couch). **If they're believers, when they're ready to hear it, we can also gently remind them of the hope we have in Jesus: One day we will be reunited with our loved ones who love Him too. And if they're not believers, we can lovingly share the hope of the gospel and pray for them and with them.**