



# OUR GOD OF COMPASSION

## THE WIDOW AT NAIN

*Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has looked favorably on his people!" This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.*

*--Luke 7: 11-17*

When I was eighteen years old, I set foot onto the second-biggest university in the United States. There were 65,000 students; we were our own city. At this university I was registered under my name, but once classes began my name was no longer necessary. I was a number: #1200045547. I wrote it on all my exams - my name was not even needed on assignments or tests. I sat in stadium-seating classrooms of 300 or more students. I did not know my professors. I was just another person among the masses, just another face in the crowd.

Do you ever feel as though God must have so many people to care for, with troubles so much bigger than yours, that you must be very far down on His list? I wonder if the widow at Nain ever felt this way. At the moment we meet her in Scripture, this woman's future looks incredibly lonely.

Her husband died, leaving her a widow, and she was left with her one son. During this time, upon his father's death, her son would have been the main caretaker of his mother and the home. In an unfortunate circumstance, her son - her only protector, provider, and companion - dies as well. You can imagine the excruciating grief she felt at the reality of having to live alone with no family to care for her in her progressing age. She walked along in this procession with a heart broken beyond measure.

When Jesus, the Savior of the world, looks upon this crowd of people, He does not see a crowd. He sees her. *Our God is a God of intimacy.* In our culture, intimacy has become synonymous with sexual experiences, but when we refer to intimacy with God, we use the word by its true definition - the existence of closeness between two beings. God desires this close, personal relationship with each of us. As Jesus stands witnessing the procession for the widow's son, He knows the personal needs, sorrows, and joys of each person in the crowd with this woman. He knows the heart of each person He has ever brought into existence. In approaching the widow, Jesus shows us with great clarity that none of us is or will ever be a number or a face in the crowd to Him. You are not just another person in the world - you are His daughter, precious and beautiful in His sight. The prayers you speak to God the Father are not simply added to His list of things to attend to. When you attend Mass on Sunday, you are not just a speck in the congregation to the Lord. Your presence in His house is individually recognized and rejoiced in by the Heavenly Father. Christ cares for each of us in the deepest, most personal way imaginable.

It is an astonishing truth which can take your breath away when you really reflect on it...

*You are of utmost importance to the God of the universe because you are His creation.*

He fashioned you with greatest attention, with deep love and a divine purpose in the masterpiece of the world He has composed with supreme care. He gave life to the world, the oceans, the stars and trees and mountains. God breathed life into you. *Sister, your life is significant.*

As you will find with many of the women in this book, the widow at Nain is in serious pain. However, in a stark contrast to the hemorrhaging woman and the sinful woman, the widow at Nain does not go to find Jesus. She does not seek Him. He comes to meet her exactly where she is.

She is broken-hearted. Sorrowful. Lonely. And Jesus Christ finds her right in the middle of it all.

He approaches her - in the storm of this unexplainable ache, in the midst of burying her only child - and He meets her with compassion. He stops for a woman without a name. His heart, both human and divine, is deeply moved for her.

When we open our hearts to intimacy with our Creator in the midst of suffering, we can find profound comfort that we will never find in earthly things.

Christ knows your suffering. He holds the sun and the stars at the same time that He holds your needs and sorrows. He wants to reveal His presence in your life,

hold your face in his hands and speak peace, “Weep no more.” *He wants to meet you right where you are.*

And in His great power and omnipotence, you are always number one on the list. It is a truth that extends past our comprehension, but is a truth that stands for each one of us. There is no person with problems, struggles, or pain more important to God than yours.

He knows you. He loves you. He is keeping your heart beating and keeping the earth in motion all at the same time. What reality will ever be more spectacular than this?

## PRAYER

Lord, I know you are a God of intimacy and that you have counted every hair on my head (Matthew 10:30). When I feel as heartbroken, discouraged, and lonely as the widow at Nain, help me to know and remember that you care deeply about my pain and my struggles and you are present to meet me in them. In the moments where I cannot fathom just how important I am to you - help me to remember that you fashioned the oceans and the sky and fashioned me with your very own hand, and that you never stop thinking of me for one second. Amen.

## REFLECTION

- Has it ever seemed as though you've been forgotten or as though you were just another face in the crowd? Maybe in your family, in your group of friends, or at your school? How did that make you feel?
- What has the widow's experience with Jesus taught you about your importance to your