

- **Main Passage:** Luke 7:11-17, John 11:38-44
 - **Purpose:** To embody the compassion that Christ demonstrates by loving those in their moment of need.
 - **Session Snapshot:** As saddening as it is, grief is unavoidable in the world that we live in. Everyone who has lived long enough has experienced the brokenness of this world. Job losses happen, marriages fall apart, and loved ones get sick and die. In these moments, Christ compels us to have compassion. We comfort those who have been struck by tragedy just as we see our Savior doing so.
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GETTING STARTED

Kick-off your time together by reviewing what you did in the last session.

FIRST, remind the group that this is the last in your five-session study of what it means to pursue Christ-centered compassion as a man. You may want to reference any meaningful interactions or takeaways from your time in the study. If you are transitioning into another session of *The Pursuit*, consider providing a little overview of the next subject you'll be covering.

As always, consider spending a moment in review, asking men what they recall from the last session or what God has been showing them in their personal time of study.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

Then, when the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **What is your natural reaction to experiencing discomfort?**
- **How does leaning into the uncomfortable things we all experience grow your faith in Christ?**
- **What should a healthy view of God's sovereignty do for us when we are walking through a difficult situation?**
- **Do you have a personal testimony of a time where you saw God take your trials and suffering and turn it into good?**
- **How does Jesus being moved to tears due to the grief of Lazarus' death strike you?**
- **Why is your presence more important than your words at times?**
- **Is there anybody in your life that currently needs your compassion?**
- **What is our response to having experienced the compassion of Christ?**

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **Many believe that God is distant from them, removed from the cares and concerns that plague them. Knowingly or not, they embrace a theology where God is far more concerned with wrath and judgment than He is with mercy and forgiveness. However, the passage that we will look at today flips that idea. It shows Jesus intimately involved with the affairs of our messy lives. His compassion leads to a**

demonstration of His power. Let's go ahead and dig in!

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain that you're going to take a more in-depth look at Luke 7:11-17. As Rick taught in our video, Jesus is not hardened toward the grief that humanity feels. He feels the weight of it just as much as we do. When Jesus stepped back into Bethany to meet His friends, He was overcome with emotion, which prompted him to raise Lazarus from the dead. In our passage today, Jesus empathized with a widowed woman who lost her only son. Can you imagine what this woman would have been feeling? Her feeling of loss was intense, but that wouldn't last too long.

We must make sure your people have a good understanding of the context of the passage you'll be studying. Provide the context for the passage using the following bullet points:

- **Author:** Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian, and a companion of Paul.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 AD.
- **Purpose:** Luke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus to present Jesus as Savior, fully God and fully man. It is one of the synoptic Gospels, having much in common with the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

THEN, read or have a volunteer read Luke 7:11-17. When the volunteer has finished, direct their attention back to vs. 11. Lead the group in a brief discussion. Ask something like:

- **Do you know if there is anything significant about the town called Nain?**
 - Answer: Nain was a small neighboring town to Capernaum. It is not mentioned in any other gospels, nor anywhere else in the New Testament. In other words, Jesus had no business in Nain besides the work that His Father wanted him to do there.
- **In verse 12, we learn that the funeral being held was for a young man whose mother was widowed and did not have any other sons. What would you imagine the rest of her life looking like?**
 - Answer: First, she had lost her husband due to unknown circumstances. Next, her only son passed away. Not only would she deal with the grief of her losses, but she would also more than likely struggle financially because men were the primary financial providers of the day.
- **Later on in verse 13, Jesus tells the woman, "Do not weep." Is He stigmatizing weeping as a bad thing, or is there something else at play here?**
 - Answer: Jesus doesn't want her to experience another moment of pain because He knows the miracle he is about to perform. Likewise, in all things, He wants us to remember His promises and trust His plan even when the circumstances are dire. While it is inevitable that we will weep (even Jesus wept), we do not weep without hope.

Before transitioning to the next question, say something like:

- **Death can be a scary proposition. Ben Franklin once said, "But in this world, nothing can be certain except death and taxes." It's true, but many cheat on their taxes. However, no one has the opportunity to cheat death! Unless your name is Enoch and Elijah, but that's another story. Death is unnatural because we were never meant to experience the pangs of death. It was not in God's original design and came as a result of the Fall. For those outside of the family of God, death should be terrifying because it's the end of life as they know it. But for those who have put their faith in Christ, the sting of death has been taken away. We no longer fear death because Jesus holds the keys of death in His hands. Our hope is rooted in an unshakeable reality that death cannot touch.**

NEXT, direct your group's attention back to Luke 7:15 Then, ask:

- **In verses 15, the young man rises from the dead at Jesus' command. How should the knowledge of our Lord's power affect the way we pray?**
 - Answer: It should cause us to pray with great confidence and expectation! If we truly believe He is omnipotent, then we can ask for mighty things in His name. In Matthew 17:20, Jesus said, "For I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."
- **As a result of the miracle, people feared Jesus and began praising God. What place does fear have in our relationship with God?**
 - Answer: Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Fear should be a major component of who we understand God to be. When we look upon His immense holiness and our sinfulness, we echo the words that Isaiah muttered, "Woe is me. For I am a man of unclean lips, and I leave among a people of unclean lips." We are brought to our knees by how glorious God is. At the same time, because of Jesus Christ, we adore Him too. The fear of God is the combination of complete respect and heartfelt devotion toward Him.
- **Can you recall a specific moment when the fear of God was very real to you?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **What is the natural response to having witnessed Jesus perform a miracle? What does this mean for the Gospel?**
 - Answer: To go and tell it everywhere! The Gospel is the most miraculous news we could ever receive, so we should be on the front lines proclaiming its wonders and glories.

THEN, take some time to review John 11:38-44. Let's go ahead and dig in. Ask:

- **Although Jesus knew that He was about to raise Lazarus, verse 38 said that He was deeply moved in His spirit for a second time. What example does Jesus model when it comes to dealing with our emotions?**
 - Answer: He wants us to lean into them. C.S. Lewis says that pain is a megaphone to a deaf world. When we experience pain (or another's pain), it should drive us to the cross and help us live more in light of eternity.
- **In verse 40, Jesus asks Martha the question, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" What do you need to believe God for right now?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **In the video, Rick made the observation that Jesus gave attention to Lazarus needing to be unbound. How can we help others become loosened from the shackles of sin?**
 - Answer: We walk with them through their struggles. Jesus even said that the church should be a hospital for the sick. If that's the case, then we must not expect perfection. We care for one another so deeply that we provide accountability and encouragement. Just as Jesus' compassion prompted him to act, our compassion prompts us to do the same.

FINALLY, say something like:

- **Today we've seen how Christ's compassion was extended to those who were hurting. While we can't raise anyone from the dead, we are empowered to meet the needs of those around us. We can weep with those who weep, encourage the downcast, and lend a helping hand. Our goal is not to solely meet the physical needs, though. It's to point everyone we know to the Great Physician who has the power to heal the soul. Jesus is the only one who can unbind us from the sin of this world and roll the stone of death away for us to enter into His eternal joy.**

Ask if there are any questions, and if there are none, transition into *Accepting the Challenge*.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group's attention on one key takeaway from your time together.

FIRST, explain that you want to challenge the group to focus on one main takeaway from this session. Say something like:

- **It can be easy to look at Scripture and admire the way that Jesus lived but distance our lives from Him. At times, we settle for the answer, "He's Jesus! Of course, He can do that, but I'm not Jesus." You're right, you're not, but you do have the power of the Holy Spirit living inside of you. The word for power in Greek is the word *dunamis*, which is where we get our word dynamite from. God is calling you to go out into the world and cast a fireworks show in the darkness of this world. One of the main ways we do this is by praying for compassion and acting on that compassion when the opportunity arises.**

THEN, explain that whenever we're faced with a concept like we have been studying today, it forces us to respond in evaluation. As we wrap up our time here, there are three different questions we can ask to evaluate ourselves:

- 1) What keeps you from acting when you see a need?
- 2) How can you make sure God receives all the glory when you serve others?
- 3) Who in your life do you need to show more compassion to?

FINALLY, encourage men to process these questions in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them, and to respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.