

HELP IN THE FACE OF LOSS

SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction

Luke 7: 11-12 – 11 ... a great crowd went with (Jesus). 12 ... a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her.

“Pain isn’t the worst thing. Being hated isn’t the worst thing. Being separated from the one you love isn’t the worst thing. The worst thing is failure to deal with reality ... We and everyone around are scheduled for death ... Get used to it.”

– Eugene Peterson, “Leap Over a Wall”

Resources Jesus offers to face life’s losses:

1. His care

Luke 7:12-14 - 12 As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. 13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.” 14 Then he came up and touched the bier... (A bier is a movable frame for holding a corpse, like a stretcher.)

1 Thessalonians 4:13 (NLT) - ... we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope.

1 Peter 5:7 (NLT) - Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

2. His power

Luke 7:14-15 - ... (Jesus) "Young man, I say to you, arise." 15 The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

1 Kings 17:21-23 (NIV84) - 22 The LORD heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him ... 23 Elijah ... gave him to his mother ...

Hebrews 7:16 (NLT) - Jesus became a priest (i.e., an intermediary between God and people)... by the power of a life that cannot be destroyed. (See 2 Tim. 1:10.)

1 Corinthians 15:49 – Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Ephesians 1:19-20 (NLT) - 19 I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power 20 that raised Christ from the dead...

3. Himself

Luke 7:16 - Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has arisen among us!” and “God has visited his people!”

Luke 7:19 – calling two of his disciples ... (John the Baptist) sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” (See also (See Luke 7:49; 8:25)

Luke 9:20 (NIV84) - (Jesus) asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

Luke 7.14 - (Jesus) ... touched the bier

Numbers 19:13 (NIV84) - Whoever touches the dead body of anyone and fails to purify himself defiles the LORD's tabernacle. That person must be cut off from Israel.

Purposeful reflecting...

• Silence helps us develop the skill of paying attention to the Lord. Ask Him to speak, then spend five minutes in silence. (Start with less if that helps.) When your mind wanders, gently re-direct your attention to God’s presence. Be patient with yourself. This takes practice.

Experience

• When you reflect on the notion that Jesus cares for you, what emotions, if any, surface? Does the idea that He personally cares for you ring true or feel hollow? What would you like from Him? What do you expect?

• Can you remember a time when you sensed the Lord’s care for you during some loss or grief? What happened? How did this make you feel? What difference did it make?

Transform

• 1 Peter 5:7 counsels “Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.” Do feel able (comfortable and safe) expressing your real needs and honest emotions with the Lord? If so, do you take time for this, especially during times of loss? If not, what changes do you need to make? Are you willing to make them?

• Christians are called to “Bear one another's burdens...” (Galatians 6:2) and “...weep with those who weep...” (Romans 12:15). Nevertheless, many of us hesitate to burden others with our pain for fear of being too needy or bothersome. If you tend to hesitate, ask God to help you trust His plan for your comfort through others and to help you adopt a new attitude (i.e., repent).

Share

• If you’re in a season of loss right now, take the risk of asking a good Christian friend for help, support and prayer.

• One of the main ways for us to be like Jesus is to offer ourselves to others, even when it’s inconvenient (that’s a sacrifice). Do you know someone in a season of loss who needs your support, help or just a listening ear? Even the smallest gesture can be helpful. Look for a way to do that.