

# Daily Discipleship

## Luke 7:11-17

**Stories of Discipleship:** A Dead Man's Story

**Focus Question:** *What is your story of God working in your life?*

### word of life

**"The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother."** Luke 7:15 (NRSV)

Read Luke 7:11-17

Chapter seven of Luke contains several stories of healing. First, Jesus heals a highly-valued slave of a centurion. (See Luke 7:1-10) But it is the faith of the centurion that is impressive. He believes if Jesus *speaks* a word of healing, his servant will be healed. Jesus admits, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." (Luke 7:9 NRSV)

Next, Jesus travels to Nain. As he enters the gates, Jesus sees a procession leaving the town and carrying a dead man, the only son of a mother who is a widow. Even though there is a large crowd to offer support, the mother's grief and sorrow is enormous.

1. *How do you picture this scene?*
2. *Compare and contrast this scene to a modern-day funeral.*

Jesus sees the grieving woman and has compassion, telling her, "Do not weep." (Luke 7:13 NRSV) Yet, how can she not weep? This is her only son. What could Jesus mean? Are these idle words of comfort? Jesus moves forward and touches the bier and utters words of resurrection, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" (Luke 7:14) The dead man sits up and begins to speak.

3. *What would it have been like to have witnessed this scene?*
4. *What might have gone through the mind of the mother?*
5. *When the dead man spoke, what do you think he said?*

The grieving mother does not request nor dream of a new life for her son. No one in that procession expects a miracle. Nothing prepares the mother or the crowd for the interruption of the procession and the critical change of events. It is grace upon grace. The depth of compassion found in Jesus is revealed as well as his willingness to respond to unspoken needs.

6. *What does this story tell you about Jesus?*

After witnessing the resurrection of this man, the crowd is filled with fear. Who can bring a dead man to life? Only God. Once they realize it is God at work, their fear is transformed into glory for God. By giving this blessing of resurrection, the crowd believes God looks favorably upon them.

7. *How quickly might people shift from fear to glory?*
8. *What does it mean for God to favor people?*

Later in the seventh chapter of Luke, Jesus is asked by the disciples of John the Baptist about his identity. Jesus responds "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them." (Luke 7:22 NRSV)

9. *What does the answer of Jesus mean for you?*
10. *How do you think the dead man described his encounter with Jesus?*

## **word among us**

A new pastor moved into town and began work at his congregation. He was well aware of the struggles for the church to grow, but he was determined to lead the congregation towards vitality. Immediately, he started to make some changes, especially in worship.

One Sunday, he announced the congregation was going to start having testimonies. He asked who wanted to come forward to share their story of faith. He asked the question, “What has Jesus Christ done in your life?”

Mouths dropped open. Everyone looked around at each other. Silence filled the room. Some crossed their arms. Frowns filled their faces. After worship, everyone was buzzing about these testimonies. “We have never shared testimonies and we are not going to start now!”

1. *Why might this congregation have had a problem with sharing testimonies?*
2. *If you were asked to share your faith story, would you be able to do so?*
3. *What prevents us from offering a testimony about Jesus?*

The pastor was sure the congregation would grow as it deepened its connection with Jesus Christ and God’s word. But first, the people needed to claim what God had done in their life. The more people could celebrate and talk about their faith, the more vibrant the congregation would become. But his congregation was not used to talking about their faith. Each person considered faith to be a private matter.

4. *Can you relate to this congregation?*
5. *Would your congregation be open to testimonies?*
6. *How might they be helpful?*

Jesus brought a dead man back to life. Our text indicates that he set up and began to speak. (Luke 7:15) That dead man had nothing to do with Jesus raising him from the dead. But from that day of resurrection, that man had a unique testimony, “I once was dead, but now I am alive. Let me tell you about Jesus.” His mother would have had a testimony as well, “My son was dead, but now he is alive. Let me tell you about Jesus.” And what of the other eyewitnesses? “This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.” (Luke 7:17 NRSV)

7. *What words might have captured such an event?*
8. *How could people not tell this story?*

We do not get to choose our testimony and how God is at work in our lives. In this life, each of us goes through trials and tribulations. Throughout it all, the Holy Spirit is at work encouraging us in faith and sustaining us. God brings resurrection to us in a variety of ways. Hopefully, we are open to see the work of Christ in our midst and bear testimony.

9. *Take a moment to share the story of how God is at work in your life.*
10. *What happens to us as we tell our stories of faith to others?*

### **Prayer**

Source of life, bring resurrection to those places in my life which have died. Transform my fears which keep me silent into testimonies of praise and glory. Amen

### **Dig Deeper:**

Luke 7: 18-35

## **last word**

Guide me to share my faith  
with one person this week.



*Daily Discipleship*

Written by John and Robin McCullough-Bade

Copyright © 2007 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

May be reproduced for local, non-sale use provided the above copyright notice is included.

[www.elca.org/evangelism/dailydiscipleship](http://www.elca.org/evangelism/dailydiscipleship)