

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 17

Luke 7:11-17

¹¹ Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him.

¹² As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out -- the only son of his mother, and **she was a widow**. And a large crowd from the town was with her.

¹³ **When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her** and he said, "Don't cry."

¹⁴ Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!"

¹⁵ The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

¹⁶ **They were all filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people."**

¹⁷ This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country. (NIV)

INTRO - Have you had a family portrait made? I have a couple here from recent family weddings, one from last year, and from a couple of years ago. Like most photos, there is the mom and dad and the kids.

I. Now look at the picture of the family in our lesson for today.

A. One crowd, following Jesus, is met by another crowd coming from the city.

1. We have a picture of a family.
2. There is the mom, and the son. But where's the Father?

B. Our lesson says in verse 12, **'She was a widow.'**

1. We sort of pass by this tragedy, that the Father and husband was missing, and now the mom is alone with the son, who is dead himself at least in the first part of our story.
2. The death of the son is a horribly great tragedy.
3. But, the death of the son is made worse because the Father is dead.
4. Who will care for this widow?

A. Women did not work in Jesus' day the way they do today.

B. And, this young man seems to have been an adult, so she was elderly and working would have been hard.

C. To have the Father missing was a tragedy.

C. When a Father is missing, it is difficult on everyone.

1. By God's plan, Fathers are an important part of our lives.
2. But, it is not uncommon for Fathers to be missing.

A. Painfully, we continue to have many widows today. It may have been more prevalent a couple of generations ago. My grandmother was one of 5 sisters. Only one of them had a living husband. My grandfather died when my mom was 5 years old. When a dad is missing, it can cause trouble.

B. Fathers are often missing through divorce, or single parent hood. This is not God's plan, but it is a reality of life that God's Word recognizes. When I was pastor in inner city St. Louis this happened a lot. It happens here too. When a dad is missing, it can cause trouble and pain.

C. There are times that dads are in homes, but perhaps in some ways the dad is still missing, through too much work, through difficulty in communicating with the family, through distraction with other interests. I wonder how often I have been present, but missing. God has a plan for fathers, so, when a dad is missing, it can cause trouble.

II. However, I want you to look again at this story, and please realize with me that a Father really was present.

A. No, the husband of the widow, and the father of the man who was dead, that human being was not there.

1. But listen to the Words of our Bible lesson.

A. First we are told, in verse 13, **¹³When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her .**

1. This is talking about Jesus. But Jesus is the Son of God, SENT by . . . THE FATHER.
2. Through Jesus the heart of God went out for this woman and cared for her.

B. Then, in verse 16 we are told, **¹⁶They were all filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "GOD HAS COME TO HELP HIS PEOPLE."**

1. God the Father sent Jesus.
2. Through Jesus, God not only cares about the woman, but helps her.
3. Amazingly, He brings her dead son back to life!

2. Surely, there is a father present in this account from the town of Nain. God the Father was present, even if there was not an earthly Father.

C. But, consider this warning. If there are problems when Fathers are missing in this world, imagine how much more trouble it means in people's lives when their Creator, their heavenly Father is missing.

1. This never happens because God leaves us.
2. But, we sometimes leave or forget our heavenly Father.
3. Do you see how we miss the caring heart of God that goes out? How we miss the powerful help of our heavenly Father that raises the dead? Do you see how we miss the love and presence of our Father God, not just now but eternally?

III. Today is Fathers' Day, and I want for you, what God always wants. He wants you to leave worship strengthened and fed for the week to come.

A. God cares for you and helps you by forgiving you and coming to help you in the Lord's Supper. But, in this reading God also teaches us two important lessons for today.

B. First, for all those who are missing a Father, you still have a heavenly Father.

1. If your dad has died, God is there.
2. If your dad is gone for some other reason, God is there with His heart going out to you, and He is there to help you.
3. When you feel like something is missing, know that God the Father is there for you. That after all, is why the Father sent the Son.
4. Know that in Jesus, whom the Bible calls our brother, in Jesus' dying and rising, God has given His fatherly love forever which we receive, as a gift, by faith.

C. Secondly, earthly Fathers, here is a lesson for us.

1. I confessed earlier that I am sure I have failed at times as a Father, because of my selfishness, my sinfulness, I haven't always been there for my kids, even though I want to be there.
2. In Scripture, the first job of the earthly father is always a teacher, one who teaches about God. Go home and read Ephesians 6:4, and Proverbs 22:6.
3. But, in our lesson today God gives us an example of how Fathers should love, and His love for us helps us.

A. First of all, A Father is to care for his children, as the heart of God went out to this woman and son.

1. That doesn't always happen. Look sometime at Luke 1:17, one of the prophecies about John the Baptist is that he will turn the hearts of Fathers to their children.
2. Dad's, love your children.

B. Secondly, a Father helps His children.

1. Do you know helping means spending time.
2. It means hurting with them. It means listening and advising.
3. Fathers can't fix things, but they help their children.

CONCLUSION - I showed you my family pictures, but, you know there was someone missing. In all honesty each picture of my family should have pictures of other family members. The pictures do not show our heavenly Father, or His son, our brother and Savior, Jesus. It is the love of our heavenly Father that goes out to us, and helps us, that strengthens our hearts to go out to one another, and that helps us so we can help one another. Amen.