

## Devotional for the week of Vision and Prayer 2023:

All the Scriptures for the week are taken from Luke 7:11-17 (NLT), and all have some thoughts for you to consider whilst you pray.

We hope that these are useful for you in your Journey of Hope throughout the week.



### Monday: A Journey of Hope

*Soon afterward Jesus went with his disciples to the village of Nain, and a large crowd followed him.*  
v11

*Thought:* If you read the passage before this in Luke 7:1-8, we find that Jesus healed the centurion's son, and now He travels to a town called Nain (which means 'lovely!'). It must have been quite a sight, full of expectation and hope. If Jesus was to come to your lovely village/town/city what would your hopes be for the children and young people in your community?

*Do:* If it is nice weather ...why not go for a walk around your locality and talk to Jesus about the hopes you have.

## Tuesday: Two crowds collide



*A funeral procession was coming out as he  
approached the village gate.  
The young man who had died was a widow's only  
son and a large crowd from the village was with her.  
v12*

*Thought:* A large crowd following Jesus in expectation and hope, wondering what He would do next, meet a large crowd from the village who were full of loss, despair, questions and hurt. We aren't told of what happens as they meet, but my experience of humanity is that we respond very quickly to such tragic circumstances. I wonder how long it took, and how many of the crowd with Jesus felt hope disappear and felt their own questions rise as the reality of the situation demands their attention.

*Do:* What is the reality of the lives of the children and young people in your community? If you asked questions in your neighbourhood, would you find children and young people full of hope, or struggling with the realities of life? Why not spend some time today praying for your situations- that Jesus would turn up.

## Wednesday: Being noticed and being seen



*When the Lord saw her, his heart overflowed with compassion. "Don't cry!" he said.*  
v13

*Thought:* I don't know if Jesus went to Nain because He knew that He needed to be there for this widow, or whether He went with other intentions and simply dealt with this on His way. Either way, Jesus not only notices what is going on, but He notices the widow, and more than that He sees her. He doesn't carry on with 'His' large crowd, giving them a wide berth, so that it doesn't interrupt His 'glory parade'. He doesn't just see the situation, or just see her, He sees her in the situation and His heart overflows with compassion.

*Do:* Sometimes we might not feel we have enough faith to see God come and change the reality of our situations. But today, as you see the tears and hurt of those around you, let your compassion inspire you to ask Jesus to come and work in your community. He is still saying "Don't cry!"

Thursday: Walk to, touch and talk



*Then he walked over to the coffin and touched it, and the bearers stopped.  
"Young man," he said, "I tell you, get up."  
v14*

*Thought:* Jesus then does something very inappropriate- He touches a coffin. This was a really strict 'no, no', a command from God, and in the very least He would have been unclean for 7 days and have to be apart from people. If He was considered a priest, He was simply not allowed to touch anything dead, and yet Jesus does step forward, He does touch, and in the silence of shock that ensues we hear Him says "*Young man, I tell you, get up.*"

*Do:* Jesus had no problems in walking over to touch the dead, to talk to them, and give them an opportunity to rise up. How do you and your church interact and meet the children and young people in your community who don't know about the Hope in Jesus? Spend time today praying for yourselves that your church would find ways to become effective in reaching out and touching the broken and spiritually dead young people around you.

## Friday: The widow's might



*Then the dead boy sat up and began to talk! And Jesus gave him back to his mother.*  
v15

*Thought:* In another parable Jesus talks about the 'mite' that a widow brings as more than the wealth of the rich, and here we see Him restoring a different type of 'might'. In restoring the young man's life Jesus is bringing back some of the widows' strength: her ability to provide for herself, her 'might'. But also renewing her 'might have been's'. Loss is usually a very complex issue, the 'might have been's' without her son would have provided a deep level of anxiety and practical difficulties at a time when the widow was consumed with grief. In this most touching moment, we see Jesus giving the son back to a 'mother'. We see Him restoring a boy and a widow to their place in a family, restoring life in the present and hope for now and the future, restoring might and dignity, *and* relieving anxiety for what might have been.

*Do:* Today as we think of children and young people, let us also pray for the 'mothers'- the parents and carers who may be living with fear and anxiety over decisions that their children are making. Don't forget that as we have read the story, we fully accept that the dead boy sits up and starts to talk. However, can we believe this for the young people and children in our communities? That when they hear Jesus' call of life, that they too will rise up above their situations and come to life again restoring them back to families of life, hope, dignity and might.



**Saturday: Two crowds become one**



*Great fear swept the crowd, and they praised God, saying,  
“A mighty prophet has risen among us,”  
and “God has visited his people today.”  
v16*

*Thought:* Did you notice that we now only see one crowd? And not only that, but they are praising God! When I consider the wonder and beauty of these verses, I cannot help but think ‘what was the greatest act’ we see here? There were a few great acts in these few verses:

1. Jesus turning up at Nain, just as the funeral is in process.
2. The fact that He stops His walk and on top of that...
3. He notices a woman in her deepest hour of need.
4. He raises a dead boy to life.

That is quite a day! It is no wonder people were praising God.

However, the greatest act of wonder for me, is stated at the end of the verse, that Jesus would even be here on earth in the first place and that God would ‘*visit his people today*’. Selah!

*Do:* Let us truly thank God in our prayers today. Thank Him for coming. Thank Him for giving His life that we could have God come and not only visit our communities, but *live* in our communities- bringing hope and life to our children, young people and families. Praise God!

## Sunday: Our Journey of Hope



*And the news about Jesus spread throughout  
Judea and the surrounding countryside.  
V17*

*Thought:* Re-reading through this passage, it is really clear as to why the news spread about Jesus. Have you ever wondered how that news spread? It wouldn't have been a viral social media post, or on the TV. Nor would it have been in the papers, or even on the radio. It would have been simple people (like me...and maybe you) who chose to tell the people around them about who Jesus is, and what he had done...even for other people in another village miles away! And yet the news spread...

*Do:* Today is Sunday, and you have a great chance to tell others in your church family about your prayers and life with Him this week, for example, you could tell them the story of a 'lovely' little village in the middle of nowhere called Nain, and how Jesus came to the people to help a boy and his mother. Perhaps in that telling you could inspire them to read this devotion next week for themselves, and join you and us in praying for the children and young people that the news of this Jesus would spread into their lives, and that they would find their own Journey of Hope with Jesus.