

The Shepherd's Heart

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

*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.

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

Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still.

He said, 'Young man, I say to you, get up!'

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

Luke 7:11-15 (NIV)

Once more we stop to remind ourselves of the definitions of two very important biblical terms – grace and mercy. Grace addresses us as needy, while mercy addresses us as miserable. Frankly we needed – and still need – a lot of both. We are "wretched, miserable, poor and blind" (Revelation 3:17 KJV) whether we know it or not. The Gospel must persuade us that we are desperately needy before we have any use for the cross and a Saviour.

One great preacher said, "We must use the ten-furrow plough of the law on the sinner's heart before we sow the good seed of the Gospel." Once convinced of sin people will be more willing to hear about the One who took our sins upon Him on the cross.

But the Gospel contains not only help (grace) for the needy but comfort (mercy) for those who are wounded by sin – sin of their own or the sin of

others. The widow spoken of in Luke 7 was suffering from the result of sin brought into our world by Adam and Eve. The result of our first parents' sin is death. Her son died, not because he or she sinned, but because of sin's consequences being the lot of us all. The Good Shepherd's "heart went out to her" (mercy) because of her broken heart. He raised her son from the dead (grace). Widows in our Lord's time depended on their firstborn son for their material needs. Jesus saw to her needs (grace) by raising her son. His heart "went out to her" as it does to all of us.

Marvel today at the extraordinary wonders of our great Saviour! Spend time lost in wonder, love and praise as you see His great heart toward all who seek Him, including you.

Come, you sinners,
poor and needy,
weak and wounded,
sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,

full of pity, love, and power.

Come, you thirsty,
come and welcome,
God's free bounty glorify;
true belief
and true repentance,
ev'ry grace
that brings you nigh.

Let not conscience
make you linger,
nor of fitness fondly dream;
all the fitness he requires
is to feel your need of him.

Come, you weary,
heavy laden,
lost and ruined by the fall;
if you tarry till you're better,
you will never come at all.

I will rise and go to Jesus!
He will save me from my sin.
By the riches of his merit,
there is joy and life in him.

- Joseph Hart

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