

Early Summer - Cycle C - Revised Common Lectionary
Pentecost through Proper 10
May 27, 2007 - July 15, 2007

We remain Easter people, now with the wind of the Holy Spirit in our sails. Our task for the months ahead, in this season of Ordinary Time, which extends to the end of November, is to look at what Jesus so tenaciously taught his disciples and see what is in these teachings for us, as we carry out the work we have been given to do. Jesus promised his disciples a helper, an Advocate, who would stand with them making the work possible. This same helper, the Holy Spirit, hovers over us, still eager to quench the fire of fear and replace it with the powerful energy of love.

Proper 5
June 10, 2007
Luke 7: 11-17

A notation for this week's Gospel

Luke focuses on the powerful gentleness of Jesus. A young man is about to be buried. Jesus knows the devastation this man's death will bring to the man's widowed mother. A stunned crowd watches as Jesus gives the, now, obviously alive son back to his mother.

Lesson Plans for Adults

Theme: Unexpected healing.

Before Class. You will need copies of the Bible for your group.

Beginning. If it seems appropriate offer something like this to the group: "Some of us have had the experience of holding a deathly ill child in our arms – and then knowing that blessed relief when the child turns the corner and begins to get well. Let's hold that gratitude as we look at today's passage."

Opening Prayer. Thank you, God, for the miracle of healing. Amen.

The Scripture. **Luke 7: 11 – 17.** You will need volunteers to read the parts of the narrator: verses 11-13a, 14a, 15-16a, 17; Jesus: verses 13b, 14b; the crowd: 16b.

Some Questions.

The death of a son is always an indescribable tragedy, but what made this death even more devastating? (The man is young and is the widow's only son. She has no other source of support than this son.)

What is Jesus' response to this event in verse 13? How would we define "compassion?" (Not only being able to identify with the person's distress, but empowered to do something about it.)

What does Jesus do? (Verses 14-15).

Jesus heals many people in the gospels, but can anyone remember other times he raised a person who was dead? (Luke 8:49-56; John 11:1-44)

What was the response of the people who witnessed the healing of this man? (Verse 16)
Luke says that "fear" seized all of them. If we do not think they were suddenly afraid, what do we think this means? ("Awe" is a good paraphrase. Also the powerful conviction that God was with them.)

Option. Speculating on results of Jesus healing. Tell the group that we do not, of course, **know** why Jesus chose to heal this young man. The compassion of Jesus is obviously one reason. What might have been some of the other outcomes Jesus could have anticipated? (People who witnessed this healing were now grounded in their faith in Jesus; the testimony of the witnesses would bring others into believing; the inevitable confrontation with those who were invested in their own power structures was now in motion; the dawning belief that God cares for individual people; the accessibility of God to each of us, etc.)

Getting Closure. Discuss how we manage the apparent disconnect between believing that "with God all things are possible" and the times we have earnestly prayed for healing in a person and the person did not get well.

What would our world be like if God DID intercede in every potential danger in the world? Where would God then stop? What would become of our freedom?

Closing Prayer. Thank you, God, for showing us how to grow in our faith. Amen.