

Luke 7:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

Analysis

Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. The collision of two crowds—Jesus' disciples and mourners carrying a corpse—sets the stage for divine intervention. The Greek *idou* (ἰδοῦ, behold) alerts readers to something extraordinary. The dead man was *monogenēs* (μονογενής, only-begotten/only son)—the same term describing Christ as God's only Son (John 3:16), creating poignant irony.

The widow's triple tragedy compounds: *chēra* (χήρα, widow) already bereaved of her husband, now losing her *monogenēs*, leaving her utterly destitute and alone. Ancient widows without sons faced economic ruin and social vulnerability. The large crowd (ὄχλος...ἱκανός) signifies community compassion but offers no real help. Only Christ can reverse death's finality and restore this woman's hope.

Historical Context

First-century Jewish widows without male relatives faced desperate poverty, having no inheritance rights or means of support. The Torah commanded care for widows (Deuteronomy 24:19-21), but reality often fell short. This widow's only son represented her sole security, making his death economically catastrophic as well as emotionally devastating.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the widow's utter helplessness illustrate humanity's condition before Christ—spiritually dead and without hope?
2. What does Jesus' intervention in this uninvited, unasked situation teach about His sovereign compassion?
3. How should Christ's concern for the most vulnerable (widows, orphans) shape your ministry priorities and social ethics?

Interlinear Text

ὡς δὲ ἤγγισεν τῇ πύλῃ τῆς πόλεως καὶ ἰδοὺ,
when **Now** **he came nigh** G3588 **to the gate** G3588 **of the city** **and** G2400
G5613 G1161 G1448 G4439 G4172 G2532

ἐξεκομίζετο τεθνηκὼς υἱὸς μονογενῆς τῇ μητρὶ αὐτῇ
carried out **a dead man** **son** **the only** G3588 **mother** **her**
G1580 G2348 G5207 G3439 G3384 G846

καὶ αὐτῇ ἦν χήρα καὶ ὄχλος τῆς πόλεως ἱκανὸς ἦν
and **her** **was** **a widow** **and** **people** G3588 **of the city** **much** **was**
G2532 G846 G2258 G5503 G2532 G3793 G4172 G2425 G2258

σὺν αὐτῇ
with **her**
G4862 G846

Additional Cross-References

Luke 8:42 (Parallel theme): For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

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