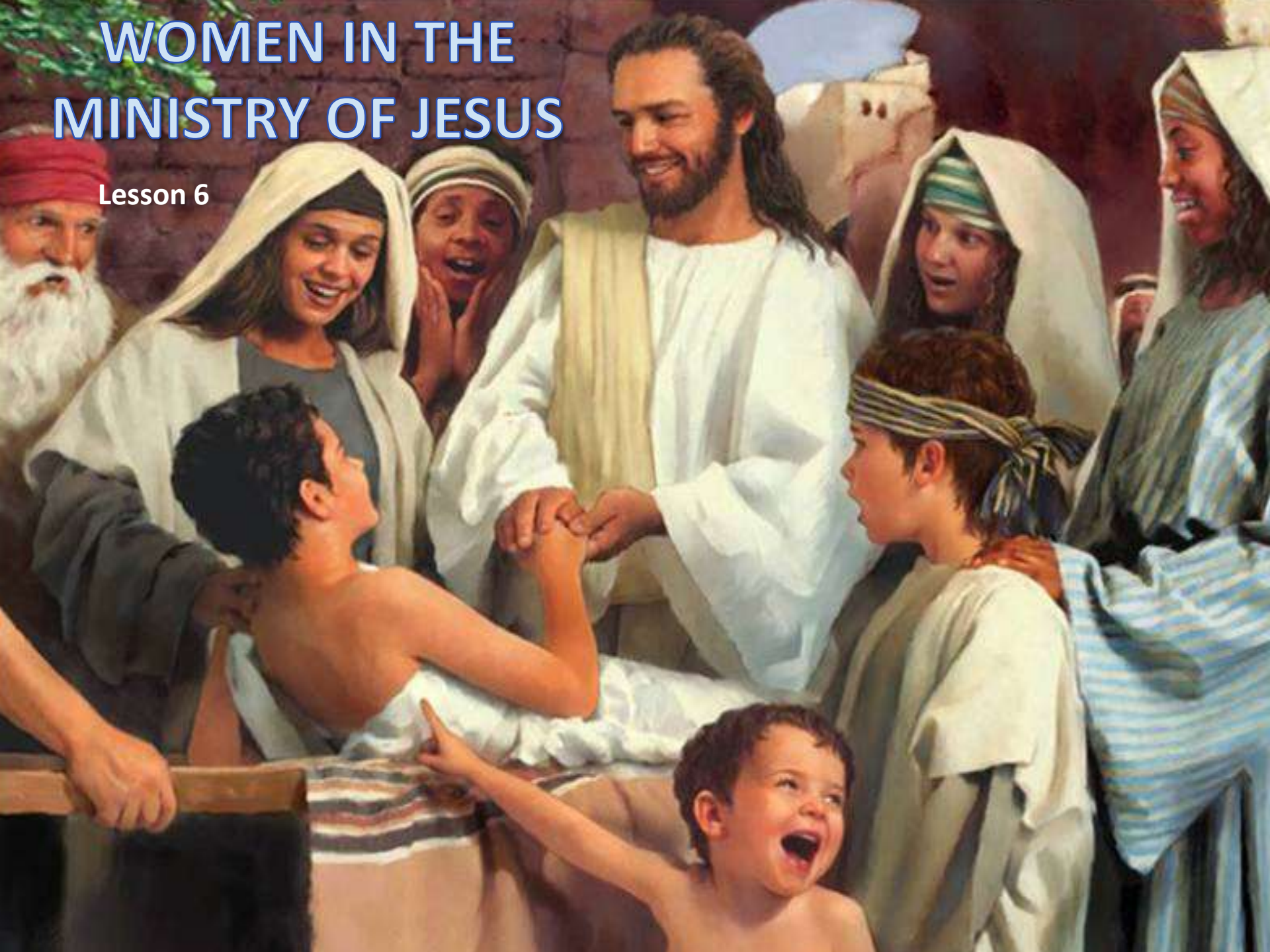


WOMEN IN THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

Lesson 6



Luke's Gospel is sometimes called ***“the Gospel of Women”*** because, more than any other one, it makes special mention of how caring Jesus was to the needs of women and also of how involved women were in His ministry.

In the time of Jesus, as in some cultures today, women were deemed of little worth. Some Jewish men in that time thanked God that they were not created a slave, a Gentile, or a woman.



Greek and Roman society sometimes treated women even worse.

Roman culture developed its permissiveness to an almost unlimited licentiousness.

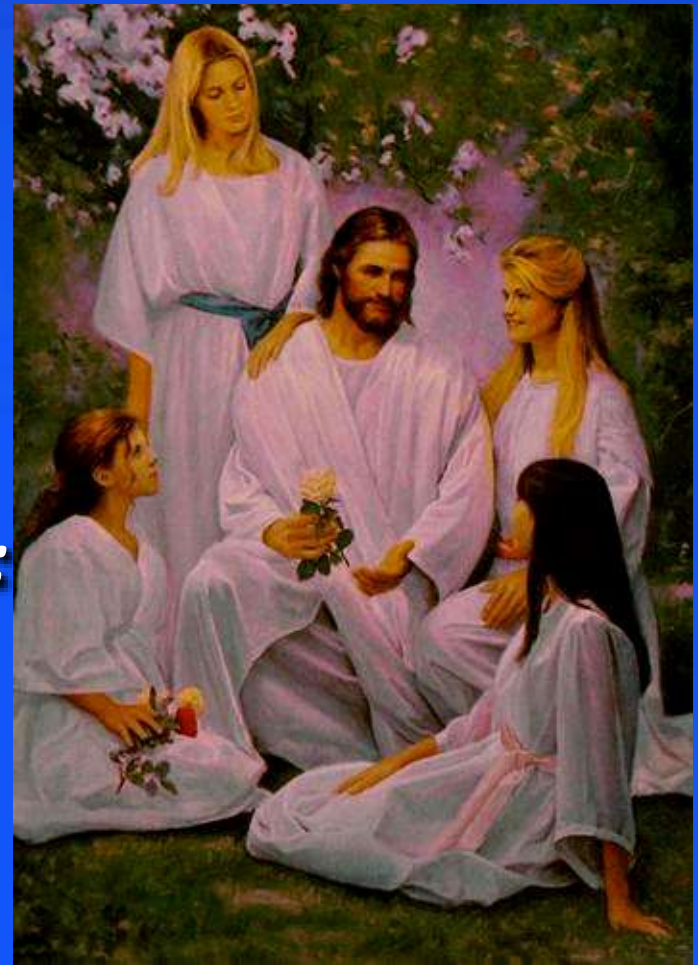
A man often had a wife only in order to produce legitimate children who would inherit his property, and he had concubines for his own sinful pleasures.



Against such a backdrop of women being treated so badly, Jesus brought the good news that women are, indeed, daughters of Abraham (see Luke 13:16).

How happy the women of those days must have been to hear that, in Jesus, they are children of God and of equal worth with men in the sight of God.

The message today for women of all nations remains the same: we are all, men and women, one in Christ Jesus.



What role did women played in Jesus' life and ministry?

Gratitude (Mary Magdalene)

Faith (the woman who touched Jesus' garment)

Prayer (the widow who asked for justice)

Generosity (the widow and her two mites)

They took part in His birth (Mary, Elizabeth and Anna)

Jesus valued them (the widow of Nain)

They served Jesus during his ministry and death (Martha, Joanna...)

An example of...

WOMEN



WOMEN WHO WELCOMED JESUS

How did Elizabeth proclaim Jesus as the promised Messiah?

"Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?'" (Luke 1:42-43)



Mary's glorious Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) predicted the four revolutions of Jesus.

1. A spiritual revolution (v. 46-50)
2. A moral revolution (v. 51)
3. A social revolution (v. 51-54)
4. A prophetic revolution (v. 55)



The old prophetess Anna was the first female evangelist: "[she] spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem." (Luke 2:38)

Read *Luke 1:39–45*, the encounter between Elizabeth and Mary. *What does Elizabeth say that reveals her understanding, however limited, of the great events that were taking place?*

After Elizabeth spoke, Mary then followed with her own words (*Luke 1:46–55*). Often understood to be a song, these words are full of fragments from the Old Testament, attesting that Mary was a devoted student of Scripture and thus a fit mother for Jesus.

Mary's song is rooted not only in Scripture but deep down in her relationship with God. An identity emerges between her soul and her Lord, and between her faith and Abraham's hope.



Read *Luke 2:36–38*. What important truths are brought to light in the story of *Anna* in the temple?

Expectant hope finds its radical fulfillment in Jesus.

An old widow recognizes the miracle, and from then on she made it her compulsive mission to proclaim the Savior to all those who came to the temple.

She became the first woman evangelist of the gospel.



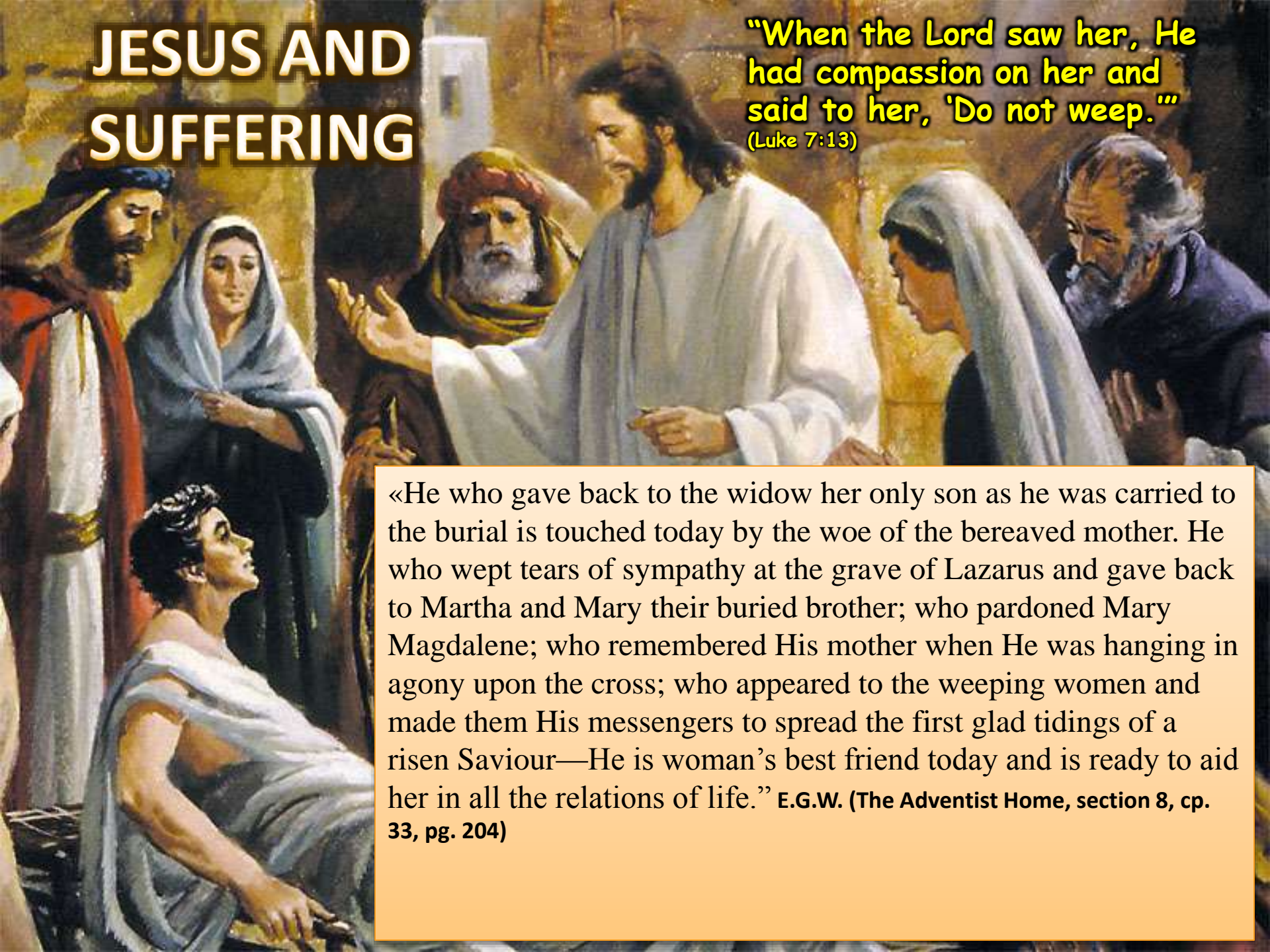
REFLECTION

Try to imagine the wonder and astonishment of these women at the events unfolding around them.

What can we do to help keep alive in our own hearts the wonder and astonishment of the great truths that we have been called to proclaim?

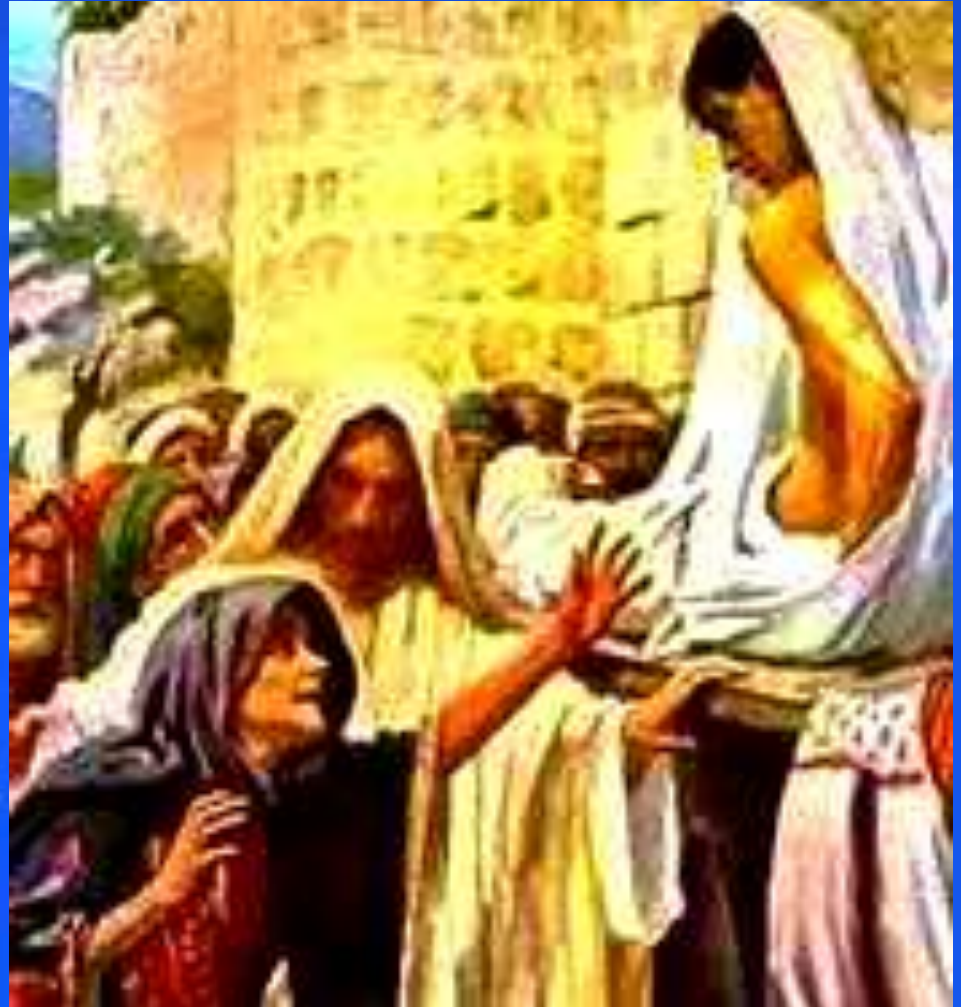
JESUS AND SUFFERING

"When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep.'"
(Luke 7:13)



«He who gave back to the widow her only son as he was carried to the burial is touched today by the woe of the bereaved mother. He who wept tears of sympathy at the grave of Lazarus and gave back to Martha and Mary their buried brother; who pardoned Mary Magdalene; who remembered His mother when He was hanging in agony upon the cross; who appeared to the weeping women and made them His messengers to spread the first glad tidings of a risen Saviour—He is woman's best friend today and is ready to aid her in all the relations of life.» E.G.W. (*The Adventist Home*, section 8, cp. 33, pg. 204)

But the funeral procession going out of the city met with another procession entering into it. At the head of the outgoing procession was death in a casket; at the head of the incoming procession was life in the majesty of the Creator. As the processions met, *Jesus saw the widow, hopeless and full of grief. "When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, 'Don't cry' "* (Luke 7:13, NIV). The plea not to cry would have been meaningless had it not come from Jesus, the Lord of life.



For behind the command *“Don’t cry!”* was the power to remove the reason for her crying: *Jesus reached forward, touched the coffin, and ordered the young man to arise.* The touch was considered a ceremonial defilement (*Num. 19:11–13*), but to Jesus, compassion was more important than ceremonies. Meeting human needs was more urgent than adhering to mere rituals.



The village of Nain not only witnessed a great miracle but also received a marvelous message: *in Jesus there is no difference between the emotional pangs of men and those of women.* And His presence confronts and confounds the power of death.

Read also *Luke 8:41, 42, 49–56.* Jairus was an influential person—a ruler of the synagogue, an officer in charge of the care and services of the synagogue. Each Sabbath he would choose the person who would lead in prayer, Scripture reading, and preaching. He was a person not only of eminence and influence but also of wealth and power. *He loved his daughter and did not hesitate to approach Jesus for the healing of his child.*



REFLECTION

In these stories, it was the power of Jesus' words that brought a dead son back to his mother and a dead daughter back to her father.

Think about how incredible these acts must have been to those who saw them, especially to the parents.

What do these accounts tell us about the power of God? What do they tell us about just how limited we are in understanding that power? (After all, science at present doesn't have a clue about how this could happen.)

Most important, though, what must we do in order to learn to trust in this power and the goodness of the God who wields it, regardless of our present circumstances?

WOMEN WHO SERVED JESUS

“...Mary called Magdalene... Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance.” (Luke 8:2-3)

Luke mentioned some other women who didn't just hear Jesus' teachings but were also an active part of His ministry. They served Jesus.

Some other women Luke mentioned are Mary the mother of James (Luke 24:10) and Martha (Luke 10:38-42).

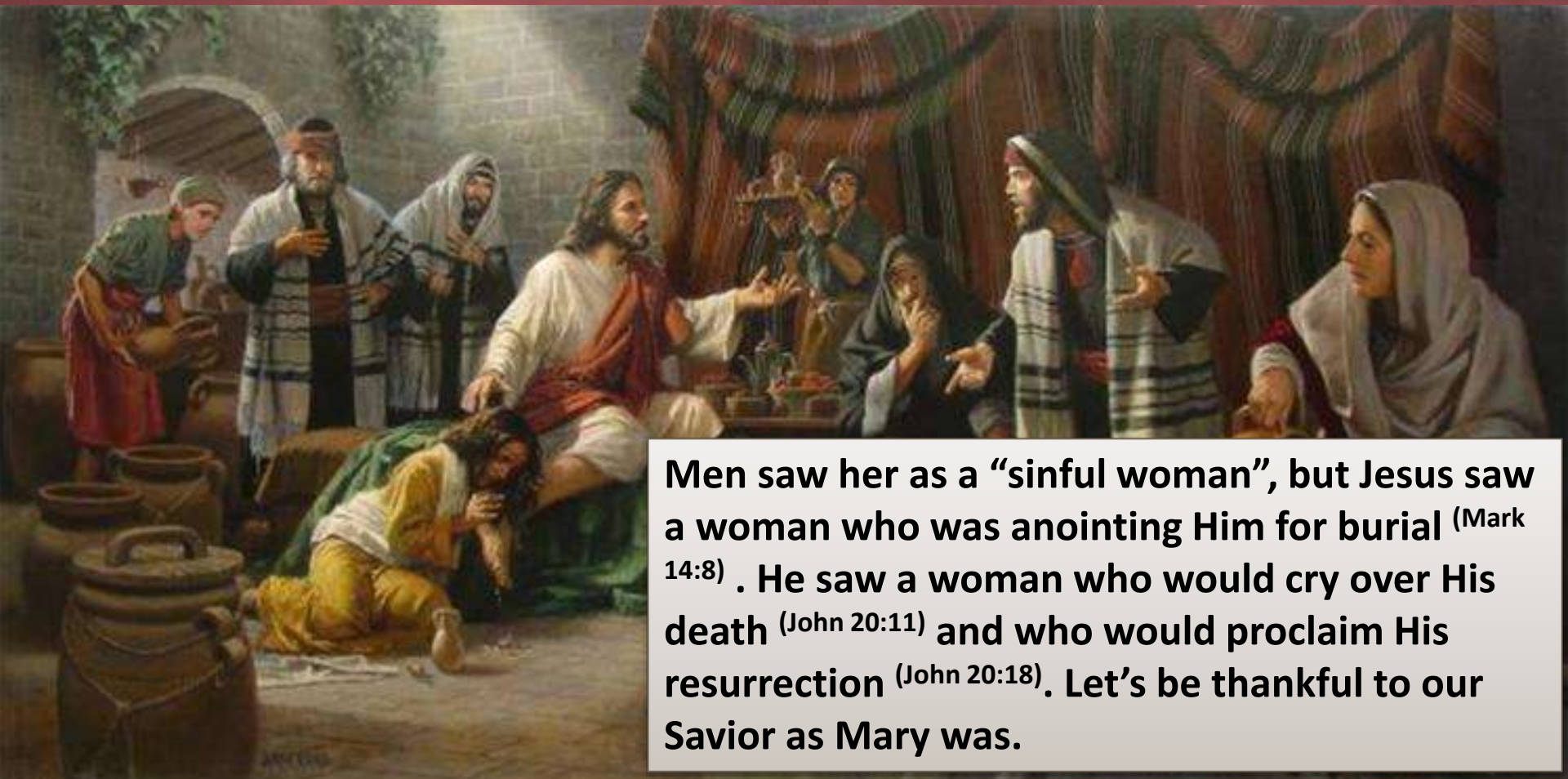
Jesus had to reprimand Mary once so she could put her affairs in order. Service is very important, but it shouldn't come before learning “at the feet of Jesus.”



GRATITUDE

“And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.”
(Luke 7:37-38)

Pouring out such an expensive perfume on Jesus ^(Mark 14:5) was an expression of gratitude. That was the act of a thankful heart in response to what Jesus had done in her life.



Men saw her as a “sinful woman”, but Jesus saw a woman who was anointing Him for burial ^(Mark 14:8) . He saw a woman who would cry over His death ^(John 20:11) and who would proclaim His resurrection ^(John 20:18) . Let’s be thankful to our Savior as Mary was.

FAITH

“The crowd pressing upon Christ had no living union with Him by genuine faith. But a poor woman who had been many years a great sufferer and had spent all her living upon physicians but was made no better, but rather worse, thought if she could get within reach of Him, if she could only touch the hem of His garment, she would be made whole. Christ understood all that was in her heart, and He placed Himself where she could have the opportunity she desired. He would use that act to distinguish the touch of genuine faith from the casual contact of those who were crowding about Him.”

“And He said to her, 'Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.'" (Luke 8:48)



E.G.W. (In Heavenly Places, April 11)



Casual contact with Jesus isn't going to save us; only our faith will do when we accept Him as our Savior.

PRAYER

“yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me... And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?”
(Luke 18:5, 7)



Jesus told the story of a widow persistently asking for justice in this parable. We can learn three important lessons on prayer from this parable:



**Pray always.
Never lose heart.
(1 Thessalonians 5:17)**



**Prayer changes things
(Colossians 4:3)**



**A faithful persistent
prayer overcomes
everything (Luke 18:7)**

GENEROSITY

“and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, ‘Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all.’” (Luke 21:2-3)

Jesus compared the motivation of the rich Pharisees to the motivation of the poor generous widow.

The Pharisees “devour widows’ houses” (Luke 20:47), but the widow is offering all she has to God.

Our Creator sees everything. How much we give is not important to Him, but how we give it. God sees the greatness of our sacrifice.



“It is the motive that gives character to our acts, stamping them with ignominy or with high moral worth. Not the great things which every eye sees and every tongue praises does God account most precious. The little duties cheerfully done, the little gifts which make no show, and which to human eyes may appear worthless, often stand highest in His sight. A heart of faith and love is dearer to God than the most costly gift. The poor widow gave her living to do the little that she did. She deprived herself of food in order to give those two mites to the cause she loved. And she did it in faith, believing that her heavenly Father would not overlook her great need. It was this unselfish spirit and childlike faith that won the Saviour’s commendation.”

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