

Episode 12: God in Disguise

I recently read a statement by Paula D'Arcy, a Christian writer and speaker. Here's what she wrote: "God comes to us disguised as our life." I'll repeat that. "God comes to us disguised as our life." As I read it, I thought to myself, that sounds really profound. But what does "disguised as our life" actually mean? Then I learned that she wrote those words shortly after her husband and one-year-old child had been killed in a traffic accident with a drunk driver. At the time, Paula was just 27 years old and three months pregnant. The more I thought about it, the more I understood how true her words were. God really does come to us disguised as our lives. This morning, let's consider together a passage taken from Luke's Gospel account that can help us to see those words more clearly:

Soon afterward Jesus went to a city called Nain; and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a large crowd. Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her and said to her, "Do not go on weeping." And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise!" And the dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him back to his mother... (Luke 7:11-15)

The widow in this account was from a tiny village in Galilee. We don't know her name. But when we encounter her, she is walking in a funeral procession. She's watching a coffin bearing her deceased son, her only son, carried along by men from the village. At that moment, possibly the worst moment of her entire life, Jesus approaches her. He stops the procession, raises the dead young man to life, and then returns him to his mother. What appeared to be a sorrowful tragedy became a moment of rejoicing. I recall a conversation my wife Pam had several years ago when a friend told her through tears, that her daughter—a high school student from a very religious family—was unmarried and pregnant. Pam listened quietly and then told her, "I know this seems like something horrible but someday you will discover that this situation will turn into one of the greatest things that has ever happened in your life." It's true! Today, like every grandmother, she dotes on that grandchild! Sometimes, God comes to us disguised as the weary, sorrowful and even tragic parts of our lives. He arrives in the midst of our pain, and afterwards, we discover that we have come to know Him more deeply and love Him more intensely. When we find ourselves in a situation that looks hopeless, may we learn to trust in His goodness, believing, that in the long run, we will know Him better, having gone through the painful time with Him, as Paula D'Arcy did.

I trust I am speaking to someone in our audience today. I encourage you, in the midst of your trial, to look to your Heavenly Father with an open heart.

Even when you don't know what to do, God loves you, is with you, and He *always* knows just what to do. And that's always Good News.