

God in more than one place

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June 2, 2016

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My friend Laura Kelly Fanucci, a blogger and writer, recently lost her twin baby girls. She wrote [a blog post](#) about the experience, and then [a follow-up](#) as she continues to process her grief. She writes:

Think about your own stories. The light and the dark. The ones you tell and the ones you never share.

I used to believe that certain stories told about God and others did not. Now I see how God appears in light and in shadows.

God holds all things together: the life and the death and the tensions between that we cannot resolve.

This is not to say that the good-that-comes-from-bad justifies the tragedy or explains the evil. Neither does this mean that every joy must be tinged with sadness.

But it means that we cannot expect to find God only in one place or another. There is holy bursting with light and there is holy cursing the darkness.

And our stories can carry both.

As a mother of three healthy children, I can only imagine the loss--the color of the grief and the flavor of the tears, all the heaviness and ache of heart, mind, and spirit.

Another good friend lost her oldest son two years ago, and as she approaches the anniversary of his death she makes preparations to visit her younger son at college so they can be together as they remember him. I remember the shock of the story of his death, and how miraculous it seemed to me that she was standing on her own two feet.

In Luke 7, Jesus encounters the funeral procession of a widow's only son. I can hear her wailing and sobbing. I can see her body hunched over, her feet shuffling along the dirt road as she follows the body being carried to the cemetery. Then, I imagine a hysteria and collapse of a different kind as her son suddenly sits up and speaks to her. Her world has turned upside down.

Some commentators point out that Jesus restores life not only to the son, but to the widow: she will now have a means for survival in her aging years. In other words, Jesus has saved two people--the son from death and the widow from poverty.

It's an important point, but in a way it also diminishes the impact of a mother reunited with a child who seemed lost to her forever. Yes, she will now be cared for as the years go on. But she can also now hold her child in her arms again. She will walk with him to the market, share meals with him, and hear his voice as he tells stories of his work that day.

The measure of compassion Jesus shows this widow has multiple outcomes. We cannot expect to find God only in one place or another.