

2023



IT'S NOT OVER

IT'S NOT OVER SERIES

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

What is it about God that allows situations to look worse before it gets better? Sometimes it almost makes us forget that resurrection is coming and that it is not over until it looks like what God promised. He always leaves us better than He found us.

Jesus teaches us the predictable pattern of how God moves. The Bible shows us that KING Jesus (being God in the flesh) knew ahead of time the things He was going to suffer before they happened (Jn 18:4, Mt 26:36-42, Mk 14:34-37, Lk 22:39-44). In the middle of knowing what He had to endure, Jesus asked if there was any way to get around it.

Before Jesus goes to the cross, He illustrates that the promise is always the predictor. On the road to the resurrection, a week prior, the miracle of Lazarus gives us a preview of a coming attraction. We see that even in suffering, *it's not over*.

THIS WILL BE A RECORD BREAKING YEAR.

STRESS

Luke 22:44 NIV - And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, **and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.**

BETRAYAL AND ABANDONMENT

Matthew 26:56 - He was betrayed, arrested, and deserted by the disciples.

SLAPPED

John 18:22 - He was **blindfolded**, then **beaten and spit** upon by the men around Him (Mt 26:67-68, Mk 14:65, Lk 22:63-65), and had his beard pulled out (Isa 50:6).

BACK AND FORTH

Sent back and forth between Herod and Pilate, then giving into the crowds' wishes, ordered Jesus to be crucified (Mt 27:22-26, Mk 15:12-15, Lk 23:23-24, Jn 19:15-16).

BEATEN AND STRIPPED

Pilate ordered that Jesus be **flogged** (Mt 27:26, Mk 15:15, Jn 19:1). **Stripped of all clothing**, then tied to a post with his hands about his head (to stretch the skin making the wounds worse).

CROWN OF THORNS

John 19:2 And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head and put a purple robe on Him (Mt 27:29-30, Mk 15:16-20, Jn 19:2-3).

A CARRIER

A man named Simon from Cyrene was told to carry Jesus' cross for Him (Mt 27:32, Mk 15:21, Lk 23:26).

NAILED

Nails in his hands "hands" really mean "wrists." The hands could not have been nailed to the cross because they could not support the weight of a man's body hanging on the cross. **Jesus was on the cross for 6 hours** (Mk 15:25, 33-34, 37).

HIS DEATH SAVED MY LIFE.

John 19:30b NIV - Jesus said, "It is finished."

*John 11:1, 4-6 NIV - [1] Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. [4] When he heard this, Jesus said, "**This sickness will not end in death.** No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." [5] **Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.** [6] **So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.***

- You have to learn how to handle bad news.
- It's in the wait that God teaches you something.
- They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength (Isaiah 40:31).
- Just because God makes your wait doesn't mean He's late.

What is God currently making you wait on? What have you learned while you are waiting? Are you actively or passively waiting?

GOD WILL USE PAIN TO POSITION YOU FOR PURPOSE.

*John 11:11 NIV - After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "**Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.**"*

- Jesus was talking in the language of faith.
- You have to differentiate between what "they" said and what He said.

Does your language typically reflect what you see naturally or your faith?

*John 11:14-15 NIV - [14] So then he told them plainly, "**Lazarus is dead,** [15] and for your sake I am glad I was not there, **so that you may believe.** But let us go to him."*

- You have to say what God says even when others don't hear it.
- God is making you a witness for somebody else. This had to happen to make believers out of the people watching.

How do you continue to trust what God said in the process despite how it looks? How did God use a situation to impact your witness?

DELAY SHOULD NOT BE A DETERRENT.

John 11:17 NIV - On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

- The situation has gone from bad to worse.

Can you recall a time God allowed something to get worse before He stepped in?

John 11:20 NIV - When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

- Don't get mad with the only One that can fix your situation.

Does your attitude ever get in the way of an assignment? What are some measures you can take to prevent your attitude from messing things up?

DON'T GET AN ATTITUDE WHEN GOD IS ON ASSIGNMENT. GET IN ALIGNMENT AND AGREEMENT WITH GOD.

John 11:21-22 NIV - [21]"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died." [22] But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

- No matter how you feel you must know God can still do it.
- Sometimes God makes you wait because your version of better isn't big enough.

How do you shift past your attitude to get in alignment with God?

John 11:23-24 NIV - [23] Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." [24] Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

- Our God doesn't flinch in the face of fear. We must stay in faith even when we don't understand.

John 11:25-26 NIV - [25] Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; [26] and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

- What you have been waiting for is here. Things that were unseen are about to be seen.

What does believing Jesus is the resurrection and the life mean to you? Do you believe what you are waiting for can happen right now?

John 11:35 NIV - Jesus wept.

- If you stay in your feelings, you cannot get in your faith.
- When you need a miracle, you need your faith.

How do you distinguish between moments that need weeping and moments that need faith?

John 11:37 NIV- But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

- This miracle is to show you what it looks like to get up.

How can you focus on what God is doing versus what you thought He should do?

IT LOOKS BAD BEFORE BETTER WHEN GOD IS DOING SOMETHING BIGGER.

1. REMOVE WHAT BLOCKS YOU

John 11:38-39 NIV - [38] Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. [39] "Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."

- Remove everything that has been blocking you

What has been blocking you? What can you do to remove the blockage?

2. REVEAL WHAT YOU BELIEVE

John 11:40-42 NIV - Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" [41] So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. [42] I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

- Thank God for your history with Him. You cannot behave beyond your belief. Your praise is going to reveal what you believe.
- It's not your job to fulfill the promises of God. It's your job to believe them.

Where do your beliefs stand right now? How does your praise reflect those beliefs?

DON'T LIMIT GOD BY WHAT IS KNOWN. BELIEVE GOD FOR THE UNKNOWN.

3. LEAVE YOU BETTER THAN HE FOUND YOU!

John 11:43-44 NIV - [43] When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" [44] The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

- God is resuscitating your promise. He can reach inside your grave and call you out.
- So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed (John 8:36).

In what ways has God left you better than He found you?

THE PROMISE IS THE PREDICTOR.

QUESTION

Do your faith, attitude, and belief align with God's purpose and promises?

DECLARATION

It's not over! I have more power than pressure. God is bringing me from bad to better and bigger!

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your promises that were fulfilled in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ. We thank You that we can look to Him as an example of how to endure for Your purpose. Show us how to trust that Your plan is moving us into bigger and better. Help us to stand firm in our faith and remove all blockades that hinder us. Thank You, Lord, that You always leave us better than You found us. In Jesus' name, Amen!