

LIFE GROUP LESSON

John the Life-Giving Gospel • Week of June 21

Introduction

In a flash, life can spiral out of control. Any number of things can send us reeling – an unexpected diagnosis, a lock-down at school or the office, an unforeseen change at work, an automobile accident, a pandemic, an argument or disagreement between friends. John, chapter eleven, is about a brother and two sisters who are precious to Jesus – suddenly experiencing trauma, the deadly illness of the brother. His name is Lazarus, and due to the seriousness of his sickness, the sisters send an urgent message to Jesus, who is with his disciples ‘beyond the Jordan’ (Jn 10:40). Yet, when Jesus gets the news, he stays where he is for two more days. Why doesn’t he hurry to the sisters and their dying brother?

Read John 11:1-6

Discussion:

- Have you experienced a time when you asked the Lord to show up and *do something* for a loved one and he delayed? Why is it hard to wait on the Lord when he delays?
- Are you waiting on God to do something now? Sometimes the Lord ‘waits’ because he is about to do something greater than we asked or expected. Imagine stepping into the shoes (sandals) of the sisters, Martha and Mary. What might have been going through their minds?

Read John 11:7-16

- When Jesus announces: *Let’s go back to Judea*, what are the disciples thinking, according to v8? Why are they fearful? (see Jn 10:31-33)
- What does Jesus mean in his explanation found in vv9-10, also v11?
- After a certain point, Jesus knows Lazarus is dead, yet says: *‘Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him’*. Since the disciples think Lazarus is simply sleeping and resting, they are hopeful Lazarus is also on the mend. What else are they hoping to avoid?

The disciples are hoping Jesus will not return to the vicious crowd in Jerusalem who want him silenced. In the preceding chapter, the crowd had picked up stones to kill Jesus (Jn 10:31) and then, tried again to arrest him (John 10:39). Yet, Jesus is focused. He is in control. Not frantic or bewildered ... or reeling over fear or panic. Jesus’ focus is on finishing the work assigned him by his Father. Much like his words regarding the man born blind (Jn 9:3b), Jesus explains to his disciples that Lazarus’ illness will not end in death. It is for the glory of God *and* so that the Son of Man would receive glory (v4).

- What is freeing about knowing Jesus is always in control? Are you willing to go with the Lord’s plan, even if you do not understand? Perhaps you have experienced this. What brought you to a point of surrender and childlike trust?
- What is freeing about being willing to die with Jesus (like Thomas in v16)?

Read John 11:17-29

When Jesus arrives at Bethany, he is told Lazarus has been in the tomb four days. Martha goes out to meet him: “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask” (v21-22). Jesus declares her brother will rise again; to which she responds, “Yes, he will rise *when everyone else rises, at the last day*” (v24). It is at this point, Jesus pierces through Martha’s human understanding of *rising at the last day* and announces: “I AM the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?” (v25-26).

- Imagine Jesus speaking your name. *Do you believe this _____?* How does Martha respond? Who does she tell? What do the girls do, according to vv27-29?
- Jesus is Resurrection and Life! ... and has authority over every challenge we face, including the grave. Reflect on this question: *If I really believed that Jesus is resurrection and life, how might my story be different if I place my trust in him?*
- Notice Jesus’ resurrection and life is for all who believe, not a select few. What do his words say about him being the source of life and his authority over death?

Read John 11:30-44

What do you make of the ‘deep anger’ that wells up in Jesus in v33)? Use your senses and imagine being one of the persons helping to roll aside the stone, as commanded by Jesus. You see the sisters mourning; you hear loud wailing; you reach out and touch a cold stone covering over the mouth of the cave; as you take a deep breath to employ every muscle in your body to press into the weight of the stone, you smell the stench of death and decay, maybe even taste it. Through the confusion, and though horrific mayhem is escalating, you know something is about to happen as Jesus raises his voice—

“Didn’t I tell you that you would see God’s glory if you believe? ... Father, thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me” ... then Jesus shouts:
“LAZARUS, COME OUT!”

In Closing

When Lazarus walks out of the grave bound in grave clothes, the first thing Jesus says is: “Unwrap him and let him go!” If you believe and have publicly professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is time to step out of your grave clothes. What binds you today? Notice it takes others (at Jesus’ word) to help set Lazarus free from the wrappings. Many of us need a do-over today and we need each other. We need to COME OUT! ... of the grave and live in freedom. Jesus is the I AM and has authority to redeem your past, present and future. But know this: not every-one may be happy about your new life in Christ.

Read John 11:45-57

One Year Bible Reading

- June 21: 2 Kings 1:1-2:25, Acts 13:42-14:7, Psalm 139:1-24, Proverbs 17:19-21
- June 22: 2 Kings 3:1-4:17, Acts 14:8-28, Psalm 140:1-13, Proverbs 17:22
- June 23: 2 Kings 4:18-5:27, Acts 15:1-35, Psalm 141:1-10, Proverbs 17:23
- June 24: 2 Kings 6:1-7:20, Acts 15:36-16:15, Psalm 142:1-7, Proverbs 17:24-25
- June 25: 2 Kings 8:1-9:13, Acts 16:16-40, Psalm 143:1-12, Proverbs 17:26
- June 26: 2 Kings 9:14-10:31, Acts 17:1-34, Psalm 144:1-15, Proverbs 17:27-28
- June 27: 2 Kings 10:32-12:21, Acts 18:1-22, Psalm 145:1-21, Proverbs 18:1



Text: John 11

PLAIN TRUTH:

The _____ Jesus wants to
_____ our _____.

1. Waiting does not mean God is _____ nor _____.
2. Following Jesus gives us courage to face our _____, even _____, with _____.
3. A believer _____ Jesus even when the ending looks _____.
4. Jesus stands at our graves with _____ in his _____ and a _____ in his _____.
5. _____ people _____ out of our _____ and out of their _____ clothes.

June 21, 2026