

THE SAINT PAUL'S BAPTIST CHURCH
GROW | PRAY | SERVE



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Welcome!

Series: Rhythms of Grace

Today's Message: Staring Death in the Face
Dr. Lance D. Watson, Senior Pastor

PRAYER: Gracious God, thank You for the many lessons we learn from scripture. Thank you that sickness, sin, death, and hell, hold no fear for us, because we trust in you. Thank you that because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ—we can stare death in the face unafraid. Thank you that just as Mary and Martha's period of misery was turned into laughter and joy, so our nights of weeping will be turned into mornings of joy through faith in Christ our Redeemer. Thank you that because He lives, we too shall live. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

ICEBREAKER: What is the most difficult funeral you have ever attended?

INTRODUCTION: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, three adult siblings from Bethany, are friends and followers of Jesus. Lazarus becomes gravely ill, and his sisters Mary and Martha send for Jesus. Jesus' response to their situation seems surprisingly nonchalant and remains where he was for days. Jesus expresses confidence that Lazarus' illness will not lead to death, but rather to the glory of God, yet by the time Jesus finally gets to Bethany, Lazarus is already dead and buried. Jesus then has to stare death in the face. How would this confrontation culminate?

BIBLE STUDY: Read St. John 11:43-44 (NLT)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. **What was your biggest takeaway from the message?** What's one thing you learned? What questions came to mind as you listened to the message today? What points did you find most insightful? How did the message challenge you?
2. Some people doubt the existence of God, but more often, we doubt his goodness towards us. How do you suppose this story of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus help us to see God's goodness in new ways?
3. After Lazarus died, Jesus began his trek to be with Mary and Martha. In other words, Jesus moved towards the sorrow instead of performing a miracle at a distance. Why is this so important for those who suffer in our time?
4. Have you ever shared in Mary and Martha's question, "God, where were you?" How is the hope of resurrection more compelling than a simple answer to our questions?
5. Jesus said to Martha in v. 40, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" This promise is significantly more comprehensive raising Lazarus from the dead. How does this promise resonate with you?

GPS is a study guide based on the weekend message. The purpose of this guide is to assist small groups in study.
Previous GPS Guides are available online at www.myspbc.org.

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6. In v. 43, Jesus ordered, “Lazarus, come out!” In the 4th Century, Basil the Great wrote that if Jesus would not have specified Lazarus by name, all the dead would have risen from the grave. Jesus offers sympathy, but it is more than that, he has ultimate authority over death. How is it comforting that Jesus can offer us more than well-wishes and sympathy?

CHALLENGE: In what areas of faith and practice are you feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit to act as a result of this study?

SERVE: Pray over St. John 11 this week. **Praise** God for the courage and confidence that God provides. **Listen:** when you are quiet before God, it is amazing how clear things become. **Respond.** Write it down, live it out, give Him praise!

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Take this time to share group announcements. Church wide and campus specific announcements can be found at www.myspbc.org. You can also “find, follow and like” our Facebook page at facebook.com/myspbc. Turn on your notifications.

CELEBRATIONS: Take this time to share praise reports (e.g. answered prayers, birthdays, anniversaries, promotions).

PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAYER: Take this time to share prayer requests. Close with prayer.

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NOTICE: PLEASE BE PATIENT AS WE REOPEN OUR CAMPUSES IN THE SAFEST MANNER POSSIBLE. As a small group leader, we depend on you to show members that we care. Here's a list of resources to help you.

FOR PRAYER:

CALL: 804.463.2472
EMAIL: prayer@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST A HOSPITAL VISIT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (For Emergencies)
EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO FIND A SUPPORT GROUP:

CALL: 804.643.6177
EMAIL: Barnabas@myspbc.org.

TO CONTACT MY LIFE STAGE PASTOR:

CALL: 804.643.4000 and Press 1 for the Dial By Name Directory

EMAIL:

- Imagination (0-10): Vernita Williams: Vernita.Williams@myspbc.org
- SMB (11-19): Martina Jones-Smith: Martina.Jones-Smith@myspbc.org
- Dreamchasers (20-29): Juan Shackelford: juan.shackelford@myspbc.org
- Aspire (30-39): Lance Watson, Jr.: lance.watsonjr@myspbc.org
- Fusion (40-49): Michelle Townsend: michelle.townsend@myspbc.org
- Encore (50-59): Jamie Duncan: Jamie.Duncan@myspbc.org
- Prime Time (60-69): Maceo Freeman: maceo.freeman@myspbc.org
- Refiners (70+): Roscoe Jones: roscoe.jones@myspbc.org

FOR COUNSELING:

CALL: 804.643.6177
EMAIL: Barnabas@myspbc.org

TO REQUEST FUNERAL SUPPORT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (Pastor On Call)
EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:

CALL: 804.643.4000
EMAIL: emergencyassistance@myspbc.org.



Small Group Leader Guide

Would you like to START or JOIN a Small Group at Saint Paul's?

Most existing groups are open to new group members, and new groups begin on a regular basis. If you have friends in a small group, ask about joining their group. If you are new to Saint Paul's and are looking for a place to connect, please feel free to contact us and we will do our best to help you find the right group.

Leader Tips:

The GPS document is a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you must use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through while others will be over in a few seconds!

1. Don't teach the lesson. The sermon was taught on the weekend. Just ask questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our small groups. So, have fun with the people in your group.

Agenda for a Small Group Gathering

Gathering Time

Take 5-10 minutes to welcome everyone, catch up and if planned, share some food!

Discussion Time

Here's a suggested format:

1. **Ice Breaker** – Lighthearted icebreaker question (5-10 min.)
2. **Discussion** - Discussion time, Bible study, application challenge (30-40 min.)
3. **Prayer** – Prayer requests and praying for one another (10-20 min.)
4. **Planning** – Remind the group of how we serve together (e.g. usher, sing, greet, pray, etc.)