

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. *Enjoy discovering more about Him!*

## "FACING LIFE'S TWO GREATEST FEARS" | JOHN 11: 17-27 | PASTOR BRIAN

### WARM-UP QUESTION:

What is a silly phobia you had at one point in your life (or still do)?

### *"Fear of Dying" - (John 11: 17-27)*

Martha and Mary are both struggling in different ways with the death of their brother. How are people in our culture today impacted by the fear of death?

Jesus asks Martha if she believes that He is the resurrection and the life. How does the belief in life after death impact people when they are faced with the loss of someone?

### *"Fear of Living" - (John 11: 17-27)*

Pastor Brian makes the point that Jesus' resurrection shows we can trust God's promises to give us meaning, hope, strength and job (purpose). Which one of these have you experienced recently? Which would you like to experience?

### REFLECTION QUESTION:

Death is something we all face, yet all struggle with in different ways. Yet the Bible claims Jesus conquered death with his resurrection, changing how we can approach death. Looking at your personal feelings and thoughts, do they reflect a belief in the power of Jesus' resurrection? Have you asked God recently to give you a better sense of the meaning of Jesus' resurrection?

# Facing Life's Two Greatest Fears

3-21-21

## Fear of Dying - Fear of Living

### I. Announce:

- A. Slide1-6 Lar: C@R. Outreach. Children Ch. Missions Prayer. Good Fri. Easter.
- B. Slide7-24 Share on: Nepal/Rohingya Trip updates.
- C. Prayer

### II. Slide25 Intro: Facing Life's Two Greatest Fears

- A. Leading up to Easter 2 teachings reminding us of *the importance of the Resurrection in our lives today*. [No Bones About It]
- B. Christ's resurrection helps us in *facing life's two greatest fears*: The fear of dying. The fear of living. Recap Jn.11.
  1. Slide26 Read Jn.11:17-27.
  2. The res of Jesus equips you to **die**. The res of Jesus equips you to **live**.
- C. Jesus explains, instead of looking at the **past**, he invites her to look to the **future**. *Then, having look to the future, He asked her to imagine that the future is suddenly brought forwards into the present.*
  1. He points her to the **future**. *Your brother will rise again*. Martha believes this, **but** her flat response in vs.24 shows that it *isn't* at the moment **very comforting**. [**but** she wasn't prepared for Jesus's response]
  2. Slide27a The **future** has burst into the **present**. The Resurrection has come forward from *the end of time* into *the middle of time*. *I **am** the resurrection & the life...not I **will be** the resurrection & the life.*
  3. Slide27b Resurrection *isn't* just a **doctrine**. It *isn't* just a future **fact**. It's a **Person**. And *here He is standing in front of Martha, coaxing her to make the huge jump of trust and hope.*
  4. He is challenging her, to exchange her **if only** ... **for** an ... **if Jesus**.

- a) **If Jesus** is who she is coming to believe He is. **If Jesus** is the Messiah, the Promise One, the One who was to come into the world. **If Jesus** is God's own Son. **If Jesus** is *resurrection-in-person, life-come-to-life*. Wright
- b) The story breaks off at this point, keeping us in suspense, **while Martha goes to get her sister**. **Maybe it's God giving us space to think the same questions through ourselves?**

D. **Right now** Jesus is in the business of *changing lives* by equipping people to **die & equipping people to live**.

E. **Slide28** Jn.11:25,26 *I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he **die**, yet shall he live, and everyone who **lives** and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?*

1. I put the same question do you. **Do you believe this?** Is Jesus Christ risen as far as you're concerned? Does it make a difference to you today?
2. **Christianity is not just a temporal, ethical system that helps us survive in this world**. The fact is Jesus Christ is **risen**. **And it makes a tremendous difference**.

F. **See, something happened** that transformed this *broken, beaten, downcast group of followers*, who ended up giving their lives for Jesus, after they had witnessed **His Resurrection** & its **power**.

### III. **Slide29,30a FEAR OF DYING**

- A. **Phobias are real**. Some seem *silly*: Pogono-phobia (fear of beards). Omphalophobia (fear of belly buttons). Phobo-phobia (fear of fear). **And my favorite ... Slide30b** Hippopoto/monstroses/quipped/alio-phobia (fear of *long words*).
- B. In psychology **death anxiety** is also called **Thanatophobia**, the fear of one's own death. [differing from *Necrophobia* the fear of others who are dead or dying]
- C. **Death**, the last thing we want to talk about. It makes us uncomfortable, awkward, painful, **so** emotional. We've medically learned to **postpone** it, even **tame** its violence, **but** death is still there waiting for us. **Death always waits**.

D. **Slide30c** The resurrection of Jesus equips us to **Die**.

1. We are **only** equipped to **live** when we are **prepared** to **die**.
2. We come to accept the death of elderly parents or spouse in their 70s, 80s or 90s. What troubles us is what we see as a premature death of a brother, sister, child or grandchild, either by disease, by calamity, like a hit and run drunk driver.
3. **Slide30d** We were **all in the process of dying**. And we all bet our turn will come up **later**. We all need to confront the inevitability of our own death.

E. **Is it it is also very normal to mentally walk through the different stages of death.**

1. **We experience our denial** (yes some day, **buuut** way into the future). **We lash out in anger at God and each other**. We shout, *I don't want to die! It's not fair!* We walk through the anger/hurt of never being able to hold this child/grandchild, watch him/her grow up, play sports, or attend his/her wedding). **We make our vain attempt at bargaining** (*God if you heal me, I promise to serve you faithfully*). **We experience depression** (melancholy settles in. You crawl inside yourself. Thoughts are introspective). **Finally, we get to a place of acceptance** (then the facts settle in as reality)

F. **Slide31** The *resurrection of Jesus from the dead* releases us from having to **deny** the reality of death. In fact, it **equips** us to die, because God's word tells us some things about the future. It doesn't tell us everything, **but** it does share **3 specific promises** which will **equip** us to die:

1. God promises there is **life beyond this life**. Jn.14:1-3 *Let not your hearts be troubled...* Jesus's resurrection stands as evidence that **life** does not end with **death**. Paul said, Jesus is *the first fruits of them that are dead*.
2. **God promises hope**. We are not bogged down with sorrow as those who have *no hope*. We understand that for a person of faith, death is simply a **transition** into the presence of Jesus for eternity. **And** there is the **hope** of being **united with them** in heaven.
  - a) As promised, hope includes **a new body** in heaven. That we will be **recognizable**. We will be **with Jesus**, whom we **will see** face-to-face and

experience joy and a quality of life that goes beyond anything we can imagine. We will be reunited with our brothers and sisters in the faith. It will be a different existence than here on earth. We will be free from *pain and sorrow* that we know here.

3. God promises we *need not face the dark shadow, threat & danger of hell*. It is a real place. If you believe in heaven then you must believe in hell as we get both concepts from the Bible. It is eternal alienation and separation from God for all those who refuse God's love, who are unwilling to repent of sin, and turn down the free gift of salvation. For us as believers the *sting of death* is removed. The notion of *punishment*, of *condemnation*, is canceled by what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

#### IV. Slide32,33 FEAR OF LIVING

- A. What fear is the fear of living? *Auto-bio-phobia* the fear of *ones own life*.
- B. The resurrection of Jesus equips us to **live**.
- C. The resurrection of Jesus has *cataclysmic implications* for our existence right now in this world. *Sometimes we struggle with not wanting to be here*. Even Paul wrestled with this, struggling through his desire to *be with Jesus*, and on the other hand *remaining here* to serve his Lord.
- D. Slide34 How does the resurrection of Jesus **equip you and me to live?**
  1. God promises us **meaning**.
    - a) Are you aware that **grief** is not a word restricted to the dying process? **Grief** in its ultimate sense involves *the loss of meaning*. Therefore, **bereavement** is *a crisis of meaning*. Grief is an expression of an exhausting effort to reintegrate *the jumbled pieces of life's puzzle* into a picture that makes sense - as much emotional, as practical.
    - b) I am convinced Jesus Christ is the missing piece in the puzzle called life. Without **Him**, you almost can get it back together, **but then** it shatters into the confusion of a million pieces. Jesus said, *I am come that you might have life and have it more abundantly*. *He knows best how you are to live*.

## 2. God promises you authentic forgiveness.

- a) Sometime ago, the New York Times Magazine included in its lead headline - an article about crime these words: *Intellectuals Do Not Wish to Be Caught Saying Anything Uncomplimentary About Humankind. But Wicked People Exist.*
- b) The resurrection of Jesus Christ potentially takes the **wickedness** out of you.
- c) *O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin & death through our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1Cor.15:55,56
- d) The resurrection of Jesus Christ takes the sting out of death and exposes us to the freeing **catharsis/releasing/cleansing of confession**. **Your guilt is removed.** You have acknowledged you are a sinner who needs forgiveness. **There is nothing you have done that cannot be forgiven.**

## 3. God promises you strength.

- a) Jesus said we will **receive power** when the Holy Spirit comes upon us. **This divine energy is yours.** You have the strength to live. You are not alone. You are special to God. He wants to help you. His guidance is available. His direction is with you. *Your confidence is in the risen Lord, who wills to walk with you as an intimate Friend!*

## 4. God promises you a job.

- a) Don't just focus on God's **forgiveness** in this life **and heaven** in the life to come. **Salvation** is much more than clutching a **one-way ticket** to heaven. We must remember that we are saved for **a purpose**. **We are in a joint venture with God in building his kingdom here on earth.** He has made us his ambassadors and has empowered us to do his work in the most creative ways possible. **This is our privilege. This is our opportunity.**

E. If you have **received** Jesus and are a **follower** of him you have been **equipped** to face **the two biggest fears in the world**: the fear of **dying** & the fear of **living**.

- F. If you **wandered away from** Him after once knowing His provision. I invite you to *come back* to him, *reestablishing* a relationship with Him, that will *reaffirm* his provision.
- G. If you're on the **outside** looking in. I invite you right now to receive **Jesus** as your **Savior**, as your **Lord**, and respond to **His invitation** to ***Come and Follow Him***.
- H. **Keywords:** Two greatest fears, fear, phobia, life, death, resurrection, equipped, power,