

Small Group Guide: The Resurrection and the Life

Based on John 11 - The Raising of Lazarus

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Begin your time together by thanking God for the hope of resurrection and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and application.

Icebreaker Question (5-10 minutes)

If you could have a conversation with any historical figure who has passed away, who would it be and why?

This connects to the sermon's opening question about what we'd do with power over death and helps group members engage with the topic in a lighthearted way.

Key Scripture

John 11:25-26 - "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?'"

Sermon Recap (5 minutes)

- Jesus performed seven signs in the Gospel of John to reveal Himself as the Son of God
- The raising of Lazarus was the seventh and final sign
- Jesus intentionally waited two days before going to Lazarus to demonstrate His power over death
- This miracle was performed publicly so people would believe Jesus is the Christ
- The central question: "Do you believe this? And does this belief affect how you live?"

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text (15-20 minutes)

1. **Why do you think Jesus waited two extra days before going to Lazarus, knowing his friend was dying?** What does this teach us about God's timing versus our timing?
2. **The sermon mentioned that Jesus used His miracle-working power "sparingly."** Why do you think Jesus didn't heal everyone or raise all the dead? What does this reveal about His mission?
3. **Martha's initial response to Jesus was, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died."** Have you ever felt similar disappointment with God's timing or actions? How did you work through it?
4. **Jesus became both angry and sad at Lazarus's tomb (verses 33, 35, 38).** What do you think caused these emotions? What does this reveal about Jesus's character?

Personal Reflection (15-20 minutes)

5. **Jesus asked Martha, "Do you believe this?"** How would you answer that question today? What doubts or questions do you still wrestle with?
6. **The sermon emphasized that "living for Christ is just as important as dying with Christ."** What does it practically look like to live in light of the resurrection hope we have?
7. **The crowd had "mixed motives" for being at the tomb—some believed, some were skeptical, some saw Jesus as a "sideshow."** Which category do you most identify with in your current spiritual journey?
8. **Jesus said this miracle was performed "for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it" (verse 4).** How does this challenge our expectations when we pray for miracles or healing?

Application (15-20 minutes)

9. **The sermon asked: "What good is a healing if that does not change the way the person lives after the fact?"** How has your belief in Jesus's resurrection power actually changed the way you live day-to-day?
10. **Jesus knew this miracle would lead to His own arrest and crucifixion, but He did it anyway.** What risks might God be calling you to take for the sake of revealing Him to others?
11. **Many people saw the miracle but still didn't believe (verse 45-46).** What barriers prevent people today from believing in Jesus, even when they see evidence of His work?

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Jesus has authority over both life and death** - He is "the resurrection and the life"
- ✓ **God's timing is not our timing** - Jesus's delays are purposeful, not neglectful
- ✓ **Miracles point to something greater** - Physical healing is temporary; spiritual transformation is eternal
- ✓ **Belief should impact behavior** - Our hope in resurrection should change how we live today
- ✓ **Jesus performs signs so we might believe** - Every miracle was designed to reveal His identity as the Son of God

Practical Applications

Choose one or two to focus on this week:

1. **Reflect and Journal:** Spend 15 minutes this week writing your honest answer to Jesus's question: "Do you believe this?" Include your doubts, questions, and convictions.
2. **Live Differently:** Identify one area of your life where fear of death, loss, or failure controls your decisions. How would you live differently if you truly believed in resurrection power?
3. **Share Your Hope:** Have a conversation with one person this week about the hope you have in Jesus. Share how belief in resurrection impacts your daily life.
4. **Trust God's Timing:** Identify one situation where you're frustrated with God's timing. Pray specifically for trust and patience, remembering how Jesus waited before going to Lazarus.
5. **Examine Your Motives:** Are you approaching Jesus as a "miracle worker" who should perform for you, or as Lord and Savior? Confess any wrong motives and ask for a transformed heart.

Prayer Prompts (10-15 minutes)

Break into groups of 2-3 and pray for each other:

- **Confession:** Areas where we've doubted God's goodness or timing
- **Belief:** That our faith would deepen and impact how we live
- **Boldness:** To share the hope of resurrection with others
- **Trust:** In situations where we're waiting on God to act
- **Gratitude:** For Jesus's power over death and the hope of eternal life

Closing Challenge

This week, when you face difficulty, loss, or disappointment, pause and ask yourself: **"Am I living like someone who believes in the resurrection?"**

Additional Resources

- Read John 11:1-44 in its entirety this week
- Memorize John 11:25-26
- Consider how the resurrection of Jesus (coming next in the church calendar at Easter) connects to the raising of Lazarus