

The Resurrection and the Life (John 11:1-46)

It doesn't get much more desperate or agonizing than seeing someone you love suffering with sickness, barely hanging onto life. Feelings of helplessness to do anything to change their situation colors everything. This is the scene we enter in John 11. Mary and Martha's brother Lazarus is dying, they've run out of options and turn in desperation to Jesus. In a wholly unexpected way and time, Jesus reveals far more than anyone could have imagined. Death and sickness won't have the final word in this story. Jesus' words and actions reveal it doesn't need to have the final word in your story either.

1. A Desperate Situation | God's Love while suffering

This is a dark scene. Lazarus is ill and dying. His sisters are caring for him.

Jesus loves this family, yet they are still suffering. Often we can believe that if God loves us we won't have suffering, sickness, or pain. God's love for us doesn't mean we won't suffer. It means He'll be with us, has a plan for us, and can use this suffering for His glory and our ultimate good.

2. A Unique Approach | God's wisdom and love

Jesus waited 2 days before coming because he loved them. Sometimes God's timing and love don't make sense initially. Jesus encounters two sisters in the same situation with the same question in two very different ways. Jesus speaks the truth to Martha while he weeps with Mary.

3. An Unexpected Outcome | Resurrection from the dead.

Jesus asks of us more than we expect but gives far more than we imagine. Mary and Martha believed Jesus was unique and could heal. Jesus asks them to believe he is the Resurrection and the life. They asked for healing, but received a resurrection. The purpose was for them (and us) to see and know Jesus for who He really is. Their faith and Jesus' glory was the end goal. Lazarus would die again but knowing and being forever connected to the one who has power over death is eternal life.

QUESTIONS (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide)

1. What is a time when you've experienced loss? When you felt desperate and in need? Where have you seen God in your loss/ desperation?
2. What is Jesus' response when he first hears that Lazarus is sick? Why is this surprising? How does this show God's wisdom?
3. How has God's plan and will surprised you in your life? What is a situation that you thought should turn out in a certain way, but didn't? How does this story encourage you towards endurance and hope when things don't make sense?
4. We see Jesus respond differently to the same question from 2 sisters in the same situation. How does Jesus respond to Martha's questions? How does he respond to Mary's questions? How is this instructive for us?
5. How does this passage show us both Jesus's divinity and his humanity? Why is it important to understand both of these truths in relation to each other?
6. What does Jesus mean when he says, "I am the resurrection and the life"?
7. Why did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead vs. just heal him? How does this reveal God's glory? How does it deepen their faith?
8. We cannot help but see the similarities between Lazarus' fate and Jesus. What are some of the similarities you notice between these 2 stories? What are the differences?