

LIFE GROUPS	TEACHING PLAN	
	FW	<i>Study of John</i>
	JULY 4	21

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

JOHN 11:1-57

JULY 4, 2021

TEACHING PLAN

PREPARATION

- > Spend the week reading through and studying John 11:1-57. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools (such as a concordance or Bible dictionary) to enhance your preparation.
- > Determine which discussion points and questions will work best with your group.
- > Pray for your pastors, the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, your group members, and their receptivity to the study.

HIGHLIGHTS

TAKEAWAY: BECAUSE OF JESUS, OUR SADNESS IN THIS LIFE—EVEN OVER THE DEATH OF LOVED ONES—IS NEVER WITHOUT HOPE.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT: JESUS ALONE HAS THE POWER OVER LIFE AND DEATH.

GOSPEL CONNECTION: JESUS DEFEATED DEATH THROUGH THE CROSS SO WE CAN HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to help get the conversation going.

Notes:

- 1 When someone you're not all that close to is sad or hurt, do you give them space or try to help? Why?

- 2 When someone you're close to is sad or hurt, what is something you do in your attempt to help them (i.e., make them dinner, tell them you'll pray for them, pray with them, try to make them laugh, etc.)?

- 3 When you are sad or hurt, are you more likely to reach out to others for love and support, or to withdraw? Why?

It's hard to know how to help yourself when you're sad or hurt, and sometimes it's even more difficult to know how to help someone else. Some of us do whatever we can to address the problem and move forward, while others withdraw into themselves for a time. Regardless of our personalities, ultimately we can know that Jesus is the Victor over death and the Giver of eternal life. We can trust in His never-changing, never-ending love for us and find great hope in the midst of our sadness.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Notes:

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 11:1-16.

- What did Jesus do after He received the message Lazarus was sick? Does that surprise you? Why or why not? Look at verses 5 and 6 again.
- Mary and Martha probably expected Jesus to come by the end of the second day. Instead, they had to wait two more days, not knowing when or if He would come at all. What might have been going through their minds during those long days? What might have they questioned about Jesus?
- Why did Jesus say He was glad they weren't present when Lazarus died? What did He want His disciples to learn from this event? How are God's plans sometimes different from our own?

Facing the sickness of their brother Lazarus, Mary and Martha turned to their beloved friend Jesus for help. Jesus loved this family, and because of this, His decision to delay may seem confusing to us as it certainly was to Mary, Martha, and the disciples. But there was a reason Jesus did things in the order He did them; Jesus delayed so that God would receive glory. Mary and Martha were dealing with a problem to which only Jesus had the solution. By delaying, Jesus provided Himself the opportunity to teach a lesson. Though God's order may not be our own, we find our best life when we embrace His order.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 11:17-37.

- Do you think Martha's first words to Jesus conveyed disappointment, criticism, or recognition of fact? How did Martha misunderstand Jesus' response?
- What does Martha's response to Jesus' questions indicate about her understanding of His power over death? In what way was her understanding incomplete?
- Can you think of a time when God's plans and timing turned out to be better than your own? What are the dangers of expecting and demanding that God act according to your own understanding?

Notes:

Everyone wants to see Jesus do something impossible, but very few people want to be in the place where something impossible needs to be done. Even though Martha knew God would eventually make all things right, it didn't necessarily help her in the moment of pain. We expect our path on the resurrection life to be easy, but very often it is filled with highs and lows. Looking to Jesus helps us persevere and allows us to experience more of God's grace.

- How was Mary's response different than Martha's? How did Jesus respond to each sister? What does that teach you about Jesus?
- What did Jesus know that Martha and Mary did not? When has God's purpose been better for you than the one you would have chosen on your own?

- Why is it important for us to trust Jesus when His plan doesn't make sense to us?

Notes:

Jesus had told His disciples (v. 4) and Mary (v. 23) that He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead so that they would believe. But instead of going directly to the tomb, Jesus chose to seek out Mary and weep with her. This tells us something very important about Jesus and what He came to do. In weeping with Mary, Jesus demonstrated personal care for her. Jesus' response to each sister validated her pain and natural reaction to that pain. In other words, Jesus met them where they were and helped them come to where He was. Clearly, the sisters did not fully understand Jesus' plans, but Jesus showed them that He could be trusted with the heartache of their lives. Embracing God's purpose is not always easy or natural for us, but it is through His purpose we find resurrection and life.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 11:38-44.

- What shows us that Lazarus was really dead? Why was it important for everyone there to know that Lazarus was truly dead?
- How did this miracle point to the greater coming miracle of the cross and resurrection?
- What did Jesus do to raise Lazarus from the dead? Why was this significant?
- What did the disciples gain from the order in which Jesus decided to heal Lazarus? What would have been lost if He had gone when Lazarus was just sick?

- How did Jesus' waiting (vv. 5-6) demonstrate His love for this family?

Notes:

If we look back to the beginning of this situation in Jesus' ministry, the order is not one that really makes a lot of sense to us. However, when we see the end result, we know that Jesus' order was best for His disciples and this family. Jesus raised Lazarus through the power of His words. Though we may not always understand Jesus' words or His purpose, we can trust that they bring life. Because Jesus loved this family, He used them to demonstrate His incredible power and purpose. All of Jesus' plans are done out of love for us.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 11:45-57.

- Why might the events of John 11 have lead the Jewish leaders to move from discussion about stopping Jesus to making plans to forcibly stop Him, even if it meant killing Him?
- John 12:10 tells us that the leaders also sought to kill Lazarus. Why would the leaders want Lazarus dead?
- What was the ironic truth of Caiaphas's statement in John 11:50?

Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus continually crossed paths with the Jewish leaders as He increasingly revealed His identity as the Messiah. In John 11, Jesus gave the most undeniable evidence of this reality. Every day that Lazarus lived after these events, He was a walking testimony to the reality of who Jesus is. The leaders made plans to kill Jesus, but they also sought to kill Lazarus to put a stop to this walking, talking evidence of Jesus' power and authority.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Notes:

- Where are you right now in terms of this story: hiding away at home instead of going to see Jesus; bitter at what might have been had Jesus been around; spiritually dead and in the tomb; alive, but bound by “grave clothes”; or alive, and free of “grave clothes”? Explain.
- What promise of God do you need to believe more fully in order to “see the glory of God”?
- How can we help one another maintain hope in God’s goodness, sovereignty, and love, even when our situations aren’t dramatically resolved on earth?

PRAY

Thank God for sending Jesus, whose death and resurrection overcame sin and death on our behalf. Ask Him to help us turn to Him in our sadness, knowing that He loves us and is the hope we need.

FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following information:

Notes:

- > Questions to consider as they continue to reflect on what they learned this week:
 - Has there ever been a time when God's order and timing only made sense to you in hindsight? What did God teach you through that experience?
 - Why is God's order best for us? How does the way God has ordered the church maximize our opportunities to serve Him?

- > A note of encouragement, following up on any specific prayer requests mentioned during your group gathering.

- > The challenge to memorize John 11:25.

- > The text for next week's study, so group members can read it in anticipation of next weekend: John 12:1-50.

JOHN 11:1-57

Dying with Jesus (11:1–16)

Lazarus was the brother of the sisters Mary and Martha. Mary had poured perfume on the feet of Jesus and wiped them dry with her hair (12:3). Jesus loved all three of them. His two-day delay was probably to ensure that the miracle He was about to bestow would be clearly understood to be a resurrection from the dead, not a resuscitation from a severe illness. His disciples urged Him not to go, for there were individuals there who desired to seize and kill Him. Thomas, often known as the doubter, here revealed the depth of his personal commitment to Jesus when he said to his fellow disciples: “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

Notes:

Emotions of Jesus (11:17–37)

One of the most moving scenes in the life of Jesus is the death of Lazarus. Here we see not only the power of Jesus to raise the dead, but the emotions of Jesus moved by the grief of those around Him. Martha’s faith is evident as she approached Jesus, four days after the death of Lazarus, and professed belief that He could save her dead brother. When Mary came as well and Jesus saw her grief and the grief of those with her, he was “deeply moved in spirit and troubled.” Scripture then tells us that Jesus wept.

Resurrection and Life (11:38–44)

What could testify more to the divine nature of Jesus than to exhibit the power needed to raise someone from the dead? Wishing to teach an important truth about how God hears and answers the prayer of belief, Jesus prayed aloud. Note that the raising of Lazarus serves as something of a foreshadowing of the power to resurrect all believers one day to fellowship and eternal life in Christ. Unlike Lazarus, who was raised only to die again, Christians will be raised to eternal life.

One Man for the World (11:45–57)

The resurrection of Lazarus caused many to place their faith in Jesus. It also led to a meeting of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the high court of the Jews. In the New Testament period, it was composed of three groups: the chief priests, the elders, and the teachers of the law. Its membership reached seventy-one, including the high priest, who served as the presiding officer. Under Roman jurisdiction the Sanhedrin was given great power, but it could not impose capital punishment (18:31).

Notes:

Their concern was self-preservation. If Jesus continued as He had, then people would continue to place their faith in Him as the Messiah. If the Romans then heard that a Messiah was being heralded by the Jews, they would come and destroy the threat, including the Sanhedrin. Therefore much of the opposition to Jesus was sociopolitical in nature.

The remark by Caiaphas about their ignorance was one of rudeness. He understood the political dimension more fully than the others, who were actually thinking in terms of guilt or innocence. For Caiaphas it did not matter whether Jesus was guilty or innocent of wrongdoing. What was important was that the death of one man was worth the viability of the Jewish nation under Roman rule. Historically, Caiaphas was in error; for despite the death of Jesus, the Jewish nation perished in a.d. 70.

The prophecy of Caiaphas was truer than he could have imagined. He prophesied the death of Jesus for the Jewish nation in order to alleviate political tensions, not knowing that Jesus' death would be for the spiritual salvation of the Jewish nation and for the world.