



ICEBREAKER: What is something you desired and got but not right away? How was the delay beneficial?

READ: John 11:1-44

“There is a great deal we don’t understand, and our hopes and plans often get thwarted. But if we go with Jesus, even if it’s into the jaws of death, we will be walking in the light, whereas if we press ahead arrogantly with our own plans and ambitions we are bound to trip up.”--Tom Wright, *John for Everyone*

CONTENT QUESTIONS

I. The Death :: Read John 11:1-16

“But Jesus must say clearly that Lazarus’s death...his delay serves not to promote the death, but to heighten the significance of his own miraculous work. Jesus is proceeding with his own sense of timing, in which he can say again and again that the urgency felt by others is not necessarily the same as the divine timing within which he works. His aim is to reveal the glory of God’s work in him and thereby promote the faith of his followers (11:15).”--Gary Burge, *John (NIVAC)*

1. What is the significance of Jesus going to Judea but not right away (11:6-8 and quote above)?
2. What does Jesus use the death of Lazarus to show (11:4) and hope for the disciples (11:14-15)¹? How has God’s work in hard circumstances increased (or challenged) your faith (belief)?
3. What are areas you struggle with not understanding how God works or God’s timing? What does it look like to have faith and hope without all the answers?

II. The Declaration :: Read John 11:17-27

“The local church was intended by Jesus to be a gathering of people full of faith--strong in their confidence in Him--not a gathering of religious folk who desperately need reassurance. Perhaps seeking personal comfort is not wrong in itself. But it is desperately wrong when it becomes the primary reason for the existence of the local church. When that happens the local church is no living fellowship at all, but a retreat center where anxious people draw resources that enable them merely to cope with the pains of life. The church then becomes a religious cushion.”--John Miller, *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church*

¹ See also Genesis 50:20-21

1. How does Martha acknowledge Jesus' power (11:21) and trust in him (11:22)? What is the significance of Jesus' promise to her (and others who follow Him) (11:25-26)?
2. Read Romans 6:1-14. How does Jesus overcome sin and death? What does Jesus being the resurrection and life result in for those who are united with him?
3. What would the difference be if the church functioned as an "instrument for righteousness" (Romans 6:14) as opposed to a religious cushion that merely copes with the pains of life (quote above)?

III. The Deliverance :: Read John 11:28-44

"It is only through his (Jesus') death, it is only through his sharing of the common fate of humanity, that the world can be saved. There is a line straight on from Jesus' tears in verse 35 to the death in which Jesus will share, not only the grief, but also the doom of the world."--Tom Wright, John for Everyone

1. How does Jesus respond to the pain others were going through in the death of Lazarus? What comfort does this bring to the pain you experience?
2. What does Jesus want to accomplish through this "sign" (11:40-42)? What is the pertinence of Jesus' having power over death in our culture (how do people live in fear of death etc.)?
3. What effects of sin (in the world) make you angry? Does your anger lead to frustration or redemption (complaining or trying to make it right)? What steps can you begin to take to bring redemption?

CONNECTING QUESTIONS

1. How can you relate to what Mary and Martha felt and were going through with the loss of their brother? How can you find comfort through the difficulty in the promises of Jesus?
2. Spend time praying and asking God to reveal to you the effects of sin in your neighborhood and city. As a community group, What can you begin to do to bring redemption to it and glorify God?
3. What is one passage, thought or idea that stood out to you in this lesson? Why? How can the group pray for you to apply it to your life?