



HomeGroup **LEADER** Discussion Questions
Week 6: Feb 6th-12th

PICK 2-4 QUESTIONS FROM BELOW THAT YOU THINK WILL MAKE FOR A GOOD DISCUSSION.

Death is a topic we'd rather avoid. Who wants to think about something that makes us feel vulnerable or insecure?! Death can cause despair, but it just happens to also be the place of greatest hope for those who follow Jesus. Into the face of death, Jesus declares, "I am the resurrection and life." He doesn't only declare it, though, He also demonstrates it outside the tomb of a man named Lazarus.

Main Texts: John 11:1-44; see also 1 Corinthians 15

CONNECT

1. Is *death* a topic you'd rather avoid or is it easy for you to talk about? Why do you think that is?
This may be an intimidating question, but the sermon should introduce this well enough so that no one will be surprised by a question about death.
2. What did you find most significant in this week's sermon? What questions did it leave in your mind?

LEARN

3. Jesus doesn't seem to be in a hurry to get to Bethany once He hears that Lazarus is sick (see v. 6). Jesus' delay didn't cause Lazarus to die, but what does Jesus say is the purpose behind Lazarus' death in the first 16 verses?

Verses 4 and 15 are key spots where we see Jesus' perspective on what's unfolding.

This may be more than you need or care to know, but Jesus waits two days before going to the village of Bethany (v. 6). He's at another "Bethany" with the disciples—"Bethany beyond the Jordan" (see John 10:40 and 1:28)—a location that was about a day's journey away from the village of Bethany where Martha, Mary, and Lazarus lived. Altogether, it would have taken one day for the messenger to get to Jesus from Mary and Martha, Jesus then stayed two days longer where He was, then another day's travel to the village of Bethany, totaling four days. By the time Jesus arrives, Lazarus has been dead four days (see v. 17) since he would have almost certainly been buried the same day he died. In all, Lazarus was probably already dead by the time the messenger arrived to tell Jesus that Lazarus was sick. Jesus' delay, then, didn't contribute to Lazarus' death, but did serve to solidify the fact that Lazarus was REALLY dead! Lazarus' body had already started to decompose.

4. In v. 25, Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life.” What do you think Jesus means when He uses the term “resurrection” and “life”? How are these two ideas similar and how are they distinct? Verses 25 and 26 explain what Jesus means. “Resurrection” is tied to “Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.” Death is not end a person’s life, even if it does end the life of their physical body. The soul continues to exist and live. In the fullest sense, though, resurrection refers to the physical resurrection of a person’s body in a glorified state. The resurrected body will never die or decay.

“Life” relates to “everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.” It is a present reality for those who believe in Jesus that eternal life has already begun. It’s not something we look forward to, but something we already have.

5. Jesus is “deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled” in verse 33, but this phrase could also be understood as “*outraged* in spirit and greatly troubled.” From the sermon or from the text, what seems to make Jesus angry?

There are at least a couple of likely options. First, Jesus is outraged “When Jesus saw [Mary] weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping” (v. 33). Their weeping may have been without hope (see 1 Thes 4:13) as they grieved over Lazarus. Second, Jesus may be angry that death—the enemy—has claimed another victim and caused His friends so much distress.

6. What difference does it make that Jesus was able to raise Lazarus from the dead after He claimed to be “the resurrection and life”?

This may be obvious but it can be good to call it out. Jesus’ actions validate or certify His claim to be the resurrection and life.

APPLY

7. Martha and Mary both state, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” Maybe you can relate? When have you thought, “Lord, if you had been here, _____” (something tragic would not have happened)? Share how this passage gives you hope in or a different perspective on the situation, if it does.

8. If you believe in Jesus, eternal life has already begun (refer back to verse 26)! Think about that for a minute. Is there any way your perspective or attitudes on your life should change in light of this present reality?

This is an invitation to reflect on the significance of the present reality of eternal life. To prime the pump, here are a couple of ways someone could answer the question. It’s possible for us to live with a fear of death that prevents us from taking good risks. It’s possible for us to live with an unhealthy pressure to try to squeeze every last drop of significance, accomplishment, and significance out of life (e.g., our “bucket list”) before we die because we think death is “the end.”

9. Jesus’ act of raising Lazarus brought Jesus closer to His own death and resurrection (refer to verses 45-53). How does Jesus’ own resurrection give us the ultimate confidence in the face of death? Refer to 1 Corinthians 15 if you have time.

One verse to hone in on is 1 Cor 15:20. Christ's resurrection is the "firstfruits," meaning that there is more "fruit" coming! Jesus' resurrection is a kind of prototype for our own.

GOING DEEPER (a.k.a., Extra Credit!)

The Bible's most in-depth reflection on Jesus' resurrection is 1 Corinthians 15. Take time to slowly read through the chapter. (As a disclaimer, there are some potentially confusing verses, especially verses 29-34. We recommend consulting a good study Bible for help on these verses.)

Think through these questions as you read:

- What stands out as most significant to you?
- What from this chapter gives you hope?
- What from this chapter gives you confidence in the truth of the claims being made?

Finally, we know that memorizing can be hard, but we also think it's worth the effort with passages like 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. Most scholars—both believers and skeptics alike—believe that this is a very early creed that Paul was introduced to shortly after his conversion on the Damascus road. In other words, it was likely formed soon after Jesus' resurrection and passed along (i.e., memorized) among the communities of believers.