

Week 5: Love that Gives Life

John 11:1-46 Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead

Know: Review your names, and share whether you have had a close experience with a current day miracle.

Grow: Have a volunteer read John 11:1-16. (There are no parallel passages in the other Gospels.)

- What kind of relationship did Jesus have with the family of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus?

- How was Jesus notified of Lazarus' illness, and what did he do?

- How would you have been tempted to respond differently from the way Jesus did if you heard that a good friend was at the point of death?

- Why did Jesus say Lazarus was sick?
(11:4)_____

Read John 11: 17-44

Think Outside the Box Exercise: Draw a square box on a chalkboard or piece of paper. Write above it "Resurrection Power." Have your group members study John 11:20-27, and in the box write down Martha's concept of the power which she believed Jesus had.

Then outside the box, sketch Lazarus' tomb. Point out that Martha believed Jesus had the power bring life, but wrongly limited his exercise of life-giving power to the future.

Ask your group members to imagine something in their own lives that they have assumed lies outside the realm of Jesus' exercise of power. Then erase the box, and read Romans 1:4, which says Jesus was "declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead."

Even more than Lazarus' return to physical life, Jesus' own resurrection affirmed that he now has all power. Nothing in our lives is beyond his power to transform and to change. Give your group members time to meditate on this fact, and to praise Jesus that his power is available now.

- How has the power of Jesus given "new life" to you in the past?

- How is "new life" not necessarily physical life?

- What are the characteristics of "new life"?

For God's glory (11:40)

- What does scripture mean when it says something is revealing the glory of God?

- Look up "God's glory" in a Bible dictionary

- The glory of God is God's perfect goodness, power, and love. Read Hebrews 1:1-4 to determine what the Bible says about Jesus in relation to God's glory. _____
- How does "God's glory" show up in your life today?

Why wait?

- Why did Jesus not go immediately when he heard that Lazarus was deathly ill? Warren Wiersbe suggests that Jesus knew the very important witness that this miracle would provide. Wiersbe further states, "God's love for his own is not a pampering love, it is a perfecting love. There is no guarantee that we will be sheltered from the problems and pains of life. We must never think that love and suffering are incompatible. It is not important that we Christians are comfortable, but that we glorify God in all things." (Wiersbe, page 267)
- Under what circumstances have you doubted the power or the timing of God?

- When have you had faith in God's ability to work out an impossible situation?

The opposition mounts. Read John 11:45-57.

- Jesus knew that the Pharisees were plotting against him. The decision to go to Bethany (about two miles from Jerusalem) and raise Lazarus from the dead would almost certainly bring on consequences at the hands of these religious leaders. What do you think the disciples thought about going to Bethany? (reference 11:16)

- Summarize the turn of events immediately following this miracle:

- How was this part of God's plan?

Go: in verse 44 of John 11, Jesus says “unwrap him and let him go.”

- Lazarus’ grave clothes can be symbolic of the destructive elements in our lives today. What must you “let go of” in order to have “new life”? Share with your group one area of your life that you need to work on and ask for an accountability partner to walk with you in that journey.
 - Do you know someone who is struggling with “grave clothes” today? How could you be a compassionate accountability partner to them, and let the glory of God flow through your actions?
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