

We empathize best with those we know well, and we only truly know people if we see them with through God's eyes and with God's heart.

### 3. Bring Forth Life out of Death

*Romans 8:11 NLT - 11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.*

The power of God that raised Jesus from the dead and Lazarus from the grave is alive in you. The world around us faces suffering, death and decay, but we offer hope in the power of the resurrection to those around us.

*What are some opportunities that we have that bring life out of death for the prisoners, the poor, the widows and orphans and others we see suffering around us?*

#### WRAP-UP

God's heart is broken by the pain and suffering of his children. When Jesus saw his friends grieving, he wept. If we allow God's heart to touch ours, we will empathize with those who suffer, and take action to bring them the hope of the resurrection power of God that can bring forth life out of death.

#### Memory Verse

*The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.*

- Romans 8:11 NLT

#### PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members' needs: \_\_\_\_\_

*Challenge- If God prompts you to do so, take time to speak with someone who seems to be in a desperate situation, listen to their story, and allow God's heart of love for them to touch you.*

## "Why Do We Weep" "We the People" #3

### INTRODUCTION

For some of us tears flow easily, for others they don't. Do you know what moved Jesus to tears? In the Gospel of John, we find the shortest verse of the bible, just two words; Jesus wept. This happened as He was on his way to raise Lazarus from the dead. He was surrounded by Lazarus' family and friends, grieving over the loss of their loved one. What was it that moved Jesus to weep? He knew what would happen when he called Lazarus forth from the grave, so why was He crying? And do we allow our hearts to be broken the way God's heart is?

#### Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

What was the last movie you cried over?

### STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

#### 1. Jesus Wept

After hearing Lazarus was ill, Jesus was delayed in going to his friend's house. And as Mary and Martha both recognized, Jesus had the power to heal Lazarus. But Jesus was bringing even more than healing power.

*What did Jesus ask Martha to believe? How is that different from believing, as Martha already did, that Lazarus would rise again in the "last day"?*

*John 11:21-26 NIV - 21 "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

In Christ we have eternal life. That doesn't start after our bodies die, but on the day we surrender ourselves to Jesus and begin to live our lives for Him. We see that symbolized in baptism, when we are immersed as a symbol of dying to our old lives and emerge a "new creation" in Christ. Eternal life is not about a body that never dies, but a spirit that lives by the power of God.

*John 11:32-35 NIV - 32 When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34 "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. 35 Jesus wept.*

Jesus knew that Lazarus' body would soon come to life. So, it wasn't his death that moved Jesus to tears.

*What did Jesus see that moved Him to weep (v.33)?*

The truth of what is to come may not be enough to take away the pain of the present. We take comfort when we know believers who die are in heaven, but the loss we feel is still painful.

*If you have lost a loved one, what was it that others did that gave you the most comfort in your grief?*

## **2. Our Calling to Empathize**

We see from the passage in John 11 that Jesus was deeply moved by the suffering of those around him. But what was it that caused his deep sorrow in this situation? There were certainly many others suffering around Him, and we don't see it noted elsewhere that Jesus wept, so why was this different? Jesus had a close relationship with those who suffered over the loss of Lazarus. He'd spent time in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus; they were His friends.

*Share with the group a time when you were moved to help someone who was suffering some kind of loss or pain. What were the circumstances? How well did you know them in advance of your involvement? What was it that moved you take action?*

*Micah 6:8 ESV - 8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

Micah 6:8 says God requires us to "love kindness". The word for kindness is *cheved* which means "zeal towards anyone, love, especially benevolence."

Here are a couple of steps we can take to help us express this type of kindness to others.

- Recognize all people as "created in God's image". Even those who are different from us are an expression of God's creation, His children, loved by the Father.

*What are some of the things that make it difficult for you to see someone as a child of God? What groups of people do you find it most difficult to feel empathy towards, and why?*

- Know their stories. Part of seeing others as God sees them is not just knowing who they are now, but how they got there. Those who are marginalized by abuse, incarceration or poverty are no less the children of God than we are.

*Hebrews 13:3 NIV - 3 Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.*

*Do you know the story behind someone in a desperate situation? Can you imagine how you would respond under those circumstances? What impact does that have on how you view them or how you respond to their suffering?*

Paul appealed to the church in Rome to do the will of God and then proceeded to give them a list of how to go about that.

*Romans 12:15 NIV - 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.*

*What does verse 15 tell us about having empathy for others?*