

Lazarus had died four days earlier, but Jesus had life-giving power from God the Father. Nothing is beyond His authority. At his command the dead came to life.

What are the things in your life that seem to have died? Is there a dream, a relationship, plans that you've lost any hope of seeing come to pass? Jesus has the power of resurrection. Are you ready to give it to God and let Him resurrect new hopes and dreams in your life?

When Lazarus emerged from the grave he was still bound in graveclothes. Jesus told those around him to loose him. They became eye-witnesses that Lazarus was alive. They also helped him to shed the bindings of death. We might be alive in Christ but limited by the things associated with our old life.

What sorts of things are still clinging to you from your life before following Jesus? Who are the eye-witnesses to your new life who can help release you from those things? Ask God to open your eyes to anything that's keeping you bound. It might be habits, unforgiveness, attitudes or sins. Whatever it is, let those who care about you help as you shed your graveclothes and experience living fully alive.

WRAP-UP

When Jesus was told his friend Lazarus was sick, he delayed long enough for him to die. And when Lazarus' sisters saw him, they both greeted him with "If only ...". But Jesus' power and authority wasn't limited to healing sickness, He had power over death itself. When Jesus told Martha He was the resurrection and the life Martha struggled between the hope of eternal life and the sting of death. But Lazarus' death was an opportunity to demonstrate that Jesus was the Messiah and that believing in Him we can live fully, vibrantly, genuinely alive. Jesus has the power to move us from death to life.

MEMORY VERSE

Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying." -John 11:25 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

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

Challenge- Continue reading John this week in chapters 10 -11.

"Death to Life" **Believe and Have Life #4**

INTRODUCTION

In our study of John's Gospel this summer, so far, we have seen six signs or miracles performed by Jesus. He turned water into wine, healed an official's son, healed a lame man, fed the 5,000, walked on water, and restored sight to a blind man. But the seventh and the most compelling sign that Jesus is Messiah was raising Lazarus from the dead.

Ice Breaker

Do you have some favorite item you've kept long past its life-expectancy? Favorite clothes, shoes, car, furniture, sports gear???

Key Passage

John 20:31 NLT - 31 But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. If Only ...

John 11:1, 3, 21-22 NLT - 1 A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. ... 3 So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick."

Let's set the scene for this final miraculous sign. Mary and Martha sent word that Lazarus was sick. Although Jesus is told that Lazarus is sick, he doesn't leave for two more days. John doesn't tell us they asked Jesus to come, nor does it say they asked Jesus to heal Lazarus.

Do you ever pray this way; telling Jesus what is troubling you before you ask Him for something specific?

What do you think Mary and Martha expected Jesus to do?

John 11:4, 21-22 NLT - 4 But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this." ... 21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask."

Jesus' response was that the sickness wouldn't end in death but that it was going to glorify the Son of God.

We can feel the tension in Mary's greeting. She knows Jesus as Lord, and believes God responds to His prayers. But we also see grief and disappointment. Jesus allowed Lazarus to die, and Martha believes he would still be alive if Jesus had been there. Even when Jesus assures her of Lazarus' eternal life, she struggles between hope in eternal life and the sting of death in this world.

*John 11:23-24 NLT - 23 Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 "Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day."
John 16:33 NLT - 33 I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."*

When has Jesus not responded to your prayers as you expected or hoped He would? In those circumstances how would you have filled in the blank "Jesus if only you would have _____."?
How did Jesus offer consolation to His disciples and to us in the midst of trials and sorrows?

2. Life in Jesus

John 11:25-26 NLT - 25 Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. 26 Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?"

When we think of eternal life we may view it in two ways. The life Martha referred to (v. 24) when she told Jesus "he will rise when everyone else rises at the last day" refers to the resurrection of the dead to final judgment. This belief was in keeping with the Jewish

faith. But Jesus took that idea to a different level when he said "I am the resurrection and the life." Now eternal life was linked to belief in Jesus as Messiah. This is eternal life that begins when we accept Jesus as Lord (Eph 2:5).

Ephesians 2:1, 4-5 NIV - 1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ... 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.

Many times John states that Jesus is our source of life. (e.g. Jn 1:4, Jn 10:10, Jn 10:28, Jn 20:21) And the word he uses for life is *zōē*, which is defined as a vigorous, genuine, vital and full life.

What is it that characterizes a fully alive, zōē life? What are some of the changes you saw in your life after becoming a Christian? What spiritual practices help to breathe new life into you?

3. Death to Life

When we read through chapter 5 a couple of weeks ago, you might have passed right over these verses, but take a second look.

John 5:25-26, 28-29 NLT - 25 "And I assure you that the time is coming, indeed it's here now, when the dead will hear my voice--the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live. 26 The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son. ... 28 Don't be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God's Son, 29 and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment.

John 11:43 NLT - 43 Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!"

How does this passage refer to what happens to Lazarus and how does it apply to resurrection of believers in the future?

John 11:44 NLT - 44 And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him go!"