



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Community Group Material:

Bible Reading: John 11:21-26, 38-44; 5:24-25, 28-29

- 21 Then Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died...”
- 23 “Your brother will rise again,” Jesus told her.
- 24 Martha said to him, “I know that 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, even if he dies, will live. 26 Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:21, 22-26)
- 38 Then Jesus...came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 39 “Remove the stone,” Jesus said...”
- 41 So they removed the stone... 43 After... this, he shouted with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” 44 The dead man came out bound hand and foot with linen strips and with his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unwrap him and let him go.” (John 11:38-39, 41, 43-44)
- 24 “Truly I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.” (John 5:24)
- 25 “Truly I tell you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.” (John 5:25)
- 28 “Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice 29 and come out— those who have done good things, to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked things, to the resurrection of condemnation.” (John 5:28-29)

SUMMARY:

• Jesus’ raising Lazarus is a profound ‘sign,’ pointing to deeper truths. Martha, a devout Jew, firmly believed in the bodily resurrection of the dead on the ‘last day.’ However, God’s intervention through Christ dramatically shifted her perspective. Jesus proclaimed, ‘I’m the Resurrection and the Life,’ bringing God’s promises from the distant future into our present reality. John’s Gospel contrasts with

the Old Testament and the other Gospels as Jesus extends to believers the offer of eternal life, resurrection, and exemption from divine judgment in the present through faith. He boldly asserts, 'the coming hour is now here!' This means God's eternal life isn't a far-off future event but the immediate possession of believers. Resurrection commences today through spiritual rebirth, and they've already transitioned from death to life, standing acquitted by divine judgment. This is what baptism testifies. Christians can confidently lay claim to God's eternal life, the initiation of a process guaranteeing future bodily resurrection, and exemption from God's final judgment. Let's wholeheartedly embrace these promises, dispelling anxiety about our current status and eternal state, thereby transforming our lives today.

QUESTIONS:

1. Jesus' raising of Lazarus is specifically called a 'sign' — Jesus 'had done this sign.' (12:17-18). As a sign, this miracle points beyond itself to something greater. What are the significant items to which Lazarus' raising points? Discuss.

2. In both the OT (Daniel 12:2) & the Synoptics (Matt., Mark, Luke), 'Eternal life' is presented as the life of the coming age that begins at the future resurrection. But, in John's Gospel Jesus promises 'eternal life' in the immediate present — 'now' — to those who believe.

- Where in John's Gospel do we see such specific promises?
- What is the significance of this particular emphasis of John's Gospel? What does it mean for you? Discuss.

3. "Jn. 3:18 says 'Those who believe in the Son are not judged,' so, believers are exempt from the final judgment." — Discuss

4. In Jn. 5:24 Jesus makes promises to anyone who "hears my word & believes him who sent me (God the Father)."

- What items (plural) does Jesus' promise to those who "hear & believe"?
- What do each of these items mean?
- Are the items Jesus promises available in the present, or only in the distant future (the 'last day')? Discuss.

5. In Jn. 11:38-44 Jesus commands Lazarus to 'Come Out!' of the tomb (grave). Previously, Jesus made declarations about people hearing his voice & responding. (Read Jn. 5:24-25, 28-29)

- In John 5:25, 28-29 where are there 'echoes' of the raising of Lazarus?
- In each case: (i.) what are the echoes of Lazarus' raising? (ii.) What are the (predicted) responses to Jesus' voice?

6. In Jn. 5:25 Jesus uses the phrase "an hour is coming, & is now here." In 5:28 the phrase used is "a time is coming."

- Is this difference significant? If so, what does the difference imply?
- Compare 5:25 with 5:28-29; does one statement refer to the more distant future & the other (more) to the present?
- If so, what are those indications (hints)? Which statement refers more to the distant future & which more to the present?
- Does this suggest that one is a literal (bodily) resurrection & the other a present (spiritual?) resurrection? Which? Discuss