



# Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

## Examining the text & our hearts:

*Bible Reading: John 11:38-45*

Jesus Raises Lazarus (Jn. 11:38-45)

### 1. The Opening of the tomb (vv. 38-41a)

- “The Greek word underlying **deeply moved**, *embrimaomai*...means **to feel something deeply & strongly**. Jesus was **moved with profound sorrow at the death of his friend & at the grief that his other friends** had suffered. In addition, this sorrow was intermixed with anger at the evil of death (1 Cor. 15:26; Rev. 21:4), & also with a deep sense of awe at the power of God that was about to flow through him to triumph over death.” (ESV Study Bible)

a. Jesus takes charge (v. 39a) *“Remove the stone.”*

b. Martha objects (v. 39b) *“Stench”*

c. Jesus reminds Martha (v. 40)

a. See the glory of God, the character of God

- “The word glory sometimes connotes honor (5:41), but in John’s gospel **glory also has to do with the way God is revealed to human beings.**” (Craig Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John’s Gospel*, p. 120)
- “**God sends Jesus to perform actions that give life & reveal who God is**...The gospel [of John] says that...**signs reveal power in ways that give life**. Jesus feeds people, heals the sick, & calls Lazarus out of the tomb. This exercise of **creative & life-giving power reveals the character of God** (11:4, 40).” (Craig Koester, *Opcit*, p. 35)
- “Biblical writers sometimes use the term **glory for the way the power of God is brought within the realm of human experience**. Jesus made divine power visible by the miraculous signs he performed...by turning water into wine (2:11); &...by calling...Lazarus back to life (11:40). **John’s account of Jesus’ career encompasses these & other miraculous acts, which reveal divine glory by revealing divine power.**” (Craig Koester, *Opcit*, p. 121)
- “**“Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”** must...be taken as a summary of what was promised in vv. 23–26...Jesus’ question should not be taken to imply that...he was somehow promising that he would indeed raise Lazarus immediately, but that if, as Martha herself confessed (v. 27), Jesus the Messiah is the resurrection & the life, then **even in the face of this death he is to be trusted, for**

**he will do nothing other than that which displays the glory of God.**" (D. A. Carson, Pillar NT Commentary: John, p. 324)

b. Believe

d. The stone is removed (v. 41a)

2. Jesus calls Lazarus out of the tomb (vv. 41b-45)

a. Jesus thanks the Father (vv. 41b-42)

- "Jesus' prayer is remarkable for several reasons. **First**, his direct reference to God as '**Father**' is **characteristic of his praying** (17:1, 11, 25). **Second**, the prayer **assumes that Jesus has already asked for Lazarus' life, & that all he must do is to thank his Father for the answer...** **Third**, the public nature of his prayer is not a matter of 'playing to the gallery'. Quite the reverse, for (1) the prayer seeks to **draw his hearers into the intimacy of Jesus' own relationship with the Father**; & (2) the prayer **demonstrates the truth that Jesus does nothing by himself**, but is totally dependent on and obedient to his Father's will." (D. A. Carson, Opcit, p. 324)

a. For always hearing him – speaks to the intimacy of their relationship

b. Displaying his dependence on the Father

- "**John consistently depicts Jesus as dependent on the Father** & concerned for his glory. He is not like the run-of-the-mill popular wonder-workers who sought to magnify themselves. So **here Jesus acts not of his own volition but in dependence on the Father** to whom he addresses his prayer. The prayer, publicly uttered, would make it clear to all who heard that he depended on the Father." (Leon Morris, NICNT: John, p. 495)

c. So belief may occur

- "We should distinguish between his prayer (presumably that Lazarus be raised) that is not recorded, & his thanksgiving that was uttered so that people could hear. As Wright puts it, 'The Evangelist does not say that **Jesus' prayer** was for the sake of the multitude; but that **His thanksgiving** was for their sakes. Jesus, in other words, would always have people know that He did nothing of Himself.'" (Leon Morris, Opcit, p. 495)

b. Jesus calls Lazarus out of the tomb (vv. 43-44)

- "...**Lazarus is a purely representative figure**. The raised Lazarus who emerges from the tomb **represents Jesus' life giving power & the anticipation of the end-time resurrection** (5:28, 29)... **Lazarus is a representative of those followers who die in the period of Jesus' delay or absence** (vv. 21, 32)." (Andrew T. Lincoln, "The Lazarus Story: A Literary Perspective", p. 225)

a. Jesus cried with a loud voice: "*Lazarus, come out!*"

- "**Come out. The voice of the omnipotent Creator** (1:3, 10) **speaks**, & even **Lazarus's dead body obeys** (4:50; 5:8)." (ESV Study Bible)
- "**The loud voice was not because a loud voice was needed to make the dead hear**. [But]...so that the crowd would know that this was no work of magic, **but the very power of God**. Wizards muttered their incantations & spells (cf. Isa. 8:19). Not so the Son of God." (Leon Morris, Opcit, p. 495)

b. Lazarus came out of the tomb bound and wrapped

- "Remarkably, **John does not record Lazarus' reaction** or any of the aftermath of his raising, except for the fact that 'many of the Jews...believed in him' as a result of seeing this miracle (11:45). **The focus is on Jesus, not Lazarus.**" (ESV Study Bible)
- "The corpse was customarily laid on a sheet of linen, wide enough to envelop the body completely & more than twice the length of the corpse...The feet were bound at the ankles, & the arms were tied to the body with linen strips. The face was bound with another cloth...**A person so bound could hop & shuffle, but scarcely walk**. Therefore when Jesus commanded Lazarus to come forth, & he came out, Jesus promptly gave the order, 'Take off the grave clothes and let him go.'" (D. A. Carson, Opcit, p. 325)

c. Jesus commanded that he be unwrapped

c. Many standing by believed (v. 45)

## Resurrection Explored

1. What resurrection is not

a. Not just an End-Time event (11:24; 5:21, 25-29; 6:39-44, 54; Dan. 12:2)

- “Martha’s affirmation of **end-time resurrection** was in keeping with the beliefs of the Pharisees (Acts 23:8) & the majority of first-century Jews, as well as the teaching of Jesus (John 5:21, 25–29; 6:39–44, 54). Martha misunderstood the full import of Jesus’ promise (11:23), thinking he was merely speaking of the final resurrection, while Jesus meant much more.” (ESV Study Bible)
- “**Many people already believed that there would be a resurrection at the end of the age.** Those who mourned the loss of family members or friends could take comfort in the hope that they would return to life on ‘the last day’, when the present world of sorrow would end & the blessed age to come would dawn (11:24).” (Craig Koester, Opcit, p. 109)

b. Plato’s Dualistic approach is not the Bible’s approach

- “Resurrection’s holistic sense of death & life differs from the common idea that a person can be neatly divided into a body & a soul. According to this **dualistic approach, the soul is encased in the body during a person’s lifetime, & death is what releases the soul from the body.** The mourners place the dead body in the tomb, where it decays, while the soul ascends to enjoy spiritual life in heaven.” (Craig Koester, Opcit, p. 131)

2. The intermediate state before resurrection (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:1-4)

- “When the Ancients spoke of resurrection...they were referring to a **two-step narrative in which resurrection, meaning new bodily life,** would be preceded by **an interim period of bodily death.** Resurrection wasn’t, then, a dramatic or vivid way of talking about the state people went into immediately after death.” (N. T. Wright, *Surprised By Hope*, p. 36)
- “The **intermediate state** is something the believer experiences upon death but **before the final Resurrection.**” (M. Bird)
- “To ‘**be with Christ**’ (1:23) does not refer to a resurrection of the body immediately at the individual’s death...Paul envisions a condition of **disembodied existence in the very presence of Christ immediately after death.**” (NLS Fryer, “Intermediate State in Paul,” HTS, V. 43/3 p. 471)
- “In [2 Cor.] 5 Paul speaks of the **new tent**... that is waiting for us. This is... **a new body**,...ready for us to put it on over the present [body] so that what is mortal may be swallowed up with life.” (N. T. Wright, *Surprised By Hope*, p.)
- “2 Cor. 5 [contrasts] the **Parousia** (2 Cor. 5:1, 10) **to the [intermediate] state** of the dead. Although this state involves an incomplete or [‘naked’] existence, it is nevertheless a form of ‘being at home’ with the Lord (5:8)...For the ‘dead in Christ’ (1 Thess. 4:16), death seems to have lost its character as ‘the last enemy,’ because their **communion with Christ is not interrupted by death.**” (J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle*, p. 227)

3. Resurrection brings hope (Jn. 11:24-26) – READ 11:25-26

- “Some day you will read in the papers that **L. Moody is dead. Don’t you believe a word of it!** At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now; I shall have gone up higher, that is all...” (Dwight L. Moody)
- “The focus of v. 25b is the effect that **believing in Jesus has on the believer’s death**; the focus of v. 26a, **the effect it has on the believer’s life.**” (Gail O’ Day, NIBC: John, p. 585)
  - “...[F]or Jesus to be the resurrection and the life...are not synonymous. **For Jesus to be the resurrection** means that **physical death has no power over believers**; their future is determined by their faith in Jesus, not by their death (5:28-29; 6:39-40, 44, 54). **For Jesus to be the life** means that **the believer’s present is also determined by Jesus’ power for life**, experienced as his gift of eternal life (3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:47; 10:28; 17:2).” (Gail O’ Day, NIBC: John, p. 585)

a. Entering into relationship with Jesus and the Father

- “As Jesus extends the hope of resurrection, he also brings the promised future into the present. Having said, ‘I am the resurrection,’ he adds, ‘& the life’ (11:25). Then he says that ‘everyone who lives & believes in him will never die’ (11:26)...**Having made clear that people of faith do die in the ordinary bodily sense, he can say that there is another sense in which they do not die...**[L]ife & death have relational as well as physical aspects. **Those who come to believe in Jesus enter a relationship with him & his Father that is true life. This relationship does not end with the person’s final**

- breath.** The person remains in relationship with God & **in this sense does not die.** The relationship will extend into the future through resurrection.” (Craig Koester, Opcit, pp. 181-2)
- “Physical death remains a reality for people of faith, yet **the life that faith brings is called ‘eternal’ because it is a life lived in relationship to God who is eternal.** It begins now in faith & continues beyond the death of the physical body through the power of resurrection (11:25-26).” (Craig Koester, Opcit, p. 45)
- b. Death is real, but not final
- **“A theology of resurrection** means confessing without qualification that **death is real.** It also means believing that **death is not final.** The gospel understands that **neither Jesus nor his followers are exempted from death.** For all of them, resurrection means **fully experiencing death & then overcoming it.**” (Craig Koester, Opcit, p. 181)
  - “The Gospel makes it clear that **death is real but not final.** Jesus died & Jesus rose, & what happened to him will happen to those who follow him.” (Craig Koester, Opcit, p. 180)
- c. Being called out of death on the Last Day (Jn. 5:28-29) – ALL who are in the grave – READ 5:28-29
- a. The general resurrection of all the dead
- “The death of Lazarus is described by Christ as ‘sleep’ (11:11, 13-14), while his awakening from this ‘sleep’ of death is called a resurrection from ‘the dead’... (12:1, 9, 17). The picture seems to be that the dead are those who may be awakened whenever Christ chooses to do so (11:11), & when so awakened they are restored to life (11:44). Thus, **in a yet future day the dead (‘all who are in the tombs’) will respond to his voice (5:28-29).**” (W. Robert Cook, “Eschatology in John’s Gospel,” Criswell Theological Review, Vol. 3.1 (1988), p. 88)
- b. Lazarus’ resurrection symbolizes the resurrection of believers
- **“The raising of Lazarus is a sign of a resurrection that is yet to come.** It points to the future life rather than fully bringing it about. **The way Jesus calls Lazarus out of the tomb anticipates ‘the last day,’ when ‘all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out’** (11:44; 5:28-29). The difference is that Lazarus is restored to bodily life – & the prospect of dying again – whereas the final resurrection involves the transformation of bodily life... **Resurrection means that God is unwilling to limit his work to a purely spiritual form of salvation.**” (Craig Koester, Opcit, p. 181)
4. Resurrection of the whole person – Jesus gave his whole being in death (body & soul) – In Rez he’s resurrected as a whole person (body & soul) – U & I follow Jesus’ pattern
- a. “By dying Jesus gave himself completely, not partially, for the sake of others. By rising he also defines the promise of life in the way that is complete, not partial.” (Craig Koester, Opcit, p. 181)
- b. **“The early Christian future hope centered firmly on resurrection.** The first Christians did not simply believe in life after death; they virtually never spoke simply of going to heaven when they died. When they did speak of heaven as a postmortem destination, they seem to regard this heavenly life as a temporary stage on the way to **the eventual resurrection of the body.**” (N. T. Wright, Surprised By Hope, p. 41)
- c. “Resurrection...[isn’t] a way of talking about life after death. It [is] a way of talking about **a new bodily life after whatever state of existence one might enter immediately upon death.** it was, in other words, life after life after death.” (N. T. Wright, Opcit, p. 151)
5. In resurrection receiving a transformed body
- “...[W]ithin early Christianity it was built in as part of the belief in resurrection that **the new body, though it will certainly be a body in the sense of a physical object occupying space and time, will be a transformed body,** a body whose material, created from the old material, will have new properties.” (N. T. Wright, Opcit, p. 43)
  - “The Gospel...assumes that **resurrection means the transformation of the whole person.** It is not the same as bringing a corpse back to life. **Resurrection of the body means transformation of the body into another kind of existence. It is not a restoration of the body to its previous condition of mortality...**Resurrection brings a new mode of embodied life, not a resumption of mortal life as it was.” (Craig Koester, Opcit 132)

## Resurrection Today:

1. Not living under the power of death

- o “Verses 25b-26a are **the most far-reaching promise** anywhere in [John’s] Gospel of **what relationship with Jesus offers those who embrace it**...They offer a vision of life to the believer in which **their days do not need to be reckoned by the inevitable power of death, but instead by the irrevocable promise of life with God**...A vision of life in which **one remains in the full presence of God during life & after death. The physical reality of death is denied power over one’s life with God**...” (Gail O’Day, NIBC: John, p. 590)
  - o “The problem of death is most vividly treated in the story of Lazarus...**The painful truth is that those who are loved by Jesus do become seriously ill...Sickness & death are simply a given**...The gospel responds by exploring the significance of resurrection, since **resurrection does not mean avoiding death but going through death to life**.” (Craig Koester, Opcit, 180)
2. Living in the hope of resurrection (1 Cor. 15:58) – READ 1 Cor. 15:58 (after an in-depth teach on REZ)
- a. “[T]he robust...Christian doctrine of the **resurrection...gives more value, not less, to the present world & to our present bodies**...Paul speaks of the future resurrection as a major motive for treating our bodies properly in the present time (1 Cor. 6:14), & as the reason not for sitting back & waiting for it all to happen but for working hard in the present, knowing that nothing done in the Lord,...in the present time will be wasted in God’s future (1 Cor. 15:58).” (N. T. Wright, Surprised By Hope, p. 26)
  - b. “...**[W]hat we can & must do in the present,...if we are following Jesus,...is to build for the kingdom**... You are not oiling the wheels of a machine that’s about to roll over a cliff. You are not restoring a great painting that’s shortly going to be thrown on the fire. You are not planting roses in a garden that’s about to be dug up for a building site. **You are accomplishing something that will become in due course part of God’s new world**. Every act of love, gratitude, & kindness; every work of art or music inspired by the love of God & delight in the beauty of his creation; every minute spent teaching a severely handicapped child to read or to walk; every act of care & nurture, of comfort & support, for one’s fellow human beings & for that matter one’s fellow non-human creatures; & of course every prayer, all Spirit-led teaching, every deed that spreads the gospel, builds up the church, embraces & embodies holiness rather than corruption, & makes the name of Jesus honored in the world – all of this will find its way, through the resurrecting power of God, into the new creation that God will one day make...**What we do in Christ & by the Spirit in the present is not wasted. It will last all the way into God’s new world. In fact, it will be enhanced there**.” (N. T. Wright, Surprised By Hope, pp. 208-209)
3. Jesus Calls You Out of Your Grave – shame/guilt (weight), lust, power, anxiety, addiction
- o “There’s...more to Jesus’ meaning than a literal transition from death to life. **A figurative rising is meant also...Lazarus’ rising [is] an acted parable of Christian conversion**: ‘The pattern of the life of all Christians is determined by the movement from death to life experienced by Lazarus. Christians have already risen with Christ (Rom. 6:4f; Col. 2:12; 3:1). This movement to be completed only at the last day, has already taken place with regard to sin; **the resurrection of Lazarus therefore is an acted parable of Christian conversion & life**’ (Barrett)... [So,] the anticipation of the [Endtime] resurrection is already in some sense present now in the believer. Where Jesus is the resurrected life is also, & thus he says, ‘I am the resurrection & the life’ (11:25)...**‘The powerful cry with which Jesus calls Lazarus out of the grave (11:43) is only an external echo of the call with which [Jesus,] God’s messenger, calls all men who believe in him to God’s life** (cf. 5:24-25)’ (Schnackenburg).” ]” [James L. Resseguie, Opcit, p. 49]