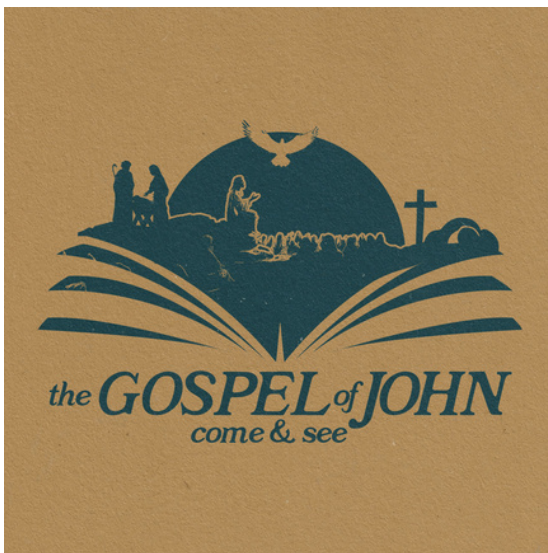


SERMON STUDY GUIDE



03.03.24 // Week 9 // "I AM the Resurrection"



He is the most written-about figure in history.
He is the most asked-about person on Google.
Who is He? Jesus.

John's Gospel account of Jesus certainly tells us about some of what Jesus did, but more than that, John wants us to see who Jesus is!

Here we will truly come and see who Jesus is and how He changes our lives!

ICE BREAKER QUESTIONS

- Did you ever make a wish at a wishing well, or a fountain? Did it come true?
- What has been your favorite Jesus miracle so far in the book of John? Why that one?

GOING DEEPER INTO THE MESSAGE

Let's read John 11:1-8, 17-36 (CSB)

1 Now a man was sick—Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair, and it was her brother Lazarus who was sick. 3 So the sisters sent a message to him: "Lord, the one you love is sick." 4 When Jesus heard it, he said, "This sickness will not end in death but is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." 5 Now Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus. 6 So when he heard that he was sick, he stayed two more days in the place where he was. 7 Then after that, he said to the disciples, "Let's go to Judea again." 8 "Rabbi," the disciples told him, "just now the Jews tried to stone you, and you're going there again?"

17 When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Bethany was near Jerusalem (less than two miles away). 19 Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. 20 As soon as Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, but Mary remained seated in the house. 21 Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. 22 Yet even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." 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?" 27 "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world." 28 Having said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." 29 As soon as Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. 30 Jesus had not yet come into the village but was still in the place where Martha had met him. 31 The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw that Mary got up quickly and went out. They followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to cry there. 32 As soon as Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and told him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died!" 33 When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled. 34 "Where have you put him?" he asked. "Lord," they told him, "come and see." 35 Jesus wept. 36 So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" 37 But some of them said, "Couldn't he who opened the blind man's eyes also have kept this man from dying?"

Point 1 – Bring our pain to Jesus.

Why did Jesus choose to take on human form, be born on earth and live for 30 years before even starting His ministry? One of the main reasons for Him to do this was so that when He tells us that we can come to Him and lay our burdens at His feet, because He understands what we're going through, He really does understand. He really went through what we're going through. He really was hungry and hurt and tired and lonely and frustrated and sad and happy and had good times with good friends and bad times with people. He went through it all.

We take some of the humanity out of what we think of Jesus because He was without sin. We need to be on our knees in thankfulness that He was without sin because that's what makes His death on the cross able to cover our sins. But we need to be very careful not to take away from all of the real, raw, human emotions and experiences Jesus did go through, so that when we come to Him with our hurts and pains, our agony and grief, we really do have a Savior who understands what we're going through. It's much easier to be comforted by someone who can truly say, "I've been there. I know what you're going through."

In John 11, we are introduced to a family that was going through a terrible time. In verse 1, we find out that Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, was sick. Very sick actually. So sick that their only hope for his survival was for Jesus to do one of his miracles again. The sisters sent a message to Jesus and informed him that "the one He loves" was very ill (vs.3). They knew that their ability to care for Lazarus and change his situation was beyond their abilities. They needed divine intervention and they knew that Jesus was the one who could do it.

Those sisters gave us a great example of what we should do with our pain too. Their call for help is exactly what we need to do with life's frustrations, sorrow, and hardship. Whether we have been battling this challenge for years or it just dropped into your lap like an unexpected summer storm, we must turn to God with it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is one challenge or past pain that you are struggling to bring to God? Where do you think the lack of trust comes from? What is it about that particular issue that makes it difficult to trust God?
- Can you think of any examples in the Old or New Testament when someone poured out their heart to God during their trying times? How does their honesty and vulnerability before God impact the way you approach God?
- If God knows what we think and feel already, why do you think He still invites us to share our pain with Him?

Point 2 – Jesus has a purpose that goes beyond our pain.

Jesus listened to Mary and Martha's call for help but instead of going over right away to help, He waited a few days (vs.6). That seems kind of an odd thing to do. I thought the Scripture said that Jesus loved this family (vs.5)? What would keep Him from going over right away and "fixing" the problem? He surely had the power to heal and had done many awesome things in the past that defied human logic.

After Lazarus died, both Martha and Mary asked Jesus the same question (vs.21, 32). The truth is that Jesus had purpose in waiting. He knew that Lazarus needed healing right away but His plans were much bigger than what the eye could see. Jesus wanted this miracle to happen but He wanted it to happen in His timing and for His glory (vs.4, 25-26).

When trials enter our lives, we can become weighed down by our stress and pain. When relief doesn't come in the way that we want it or in the timing that we need it, we can become jaded and disheartened. In times of waiting, our faith becomes tested and we discover a lot about our trust in God.

In our times of waiting, we must remember that God is perfect in His timing and always makes decisions based on His love for us (vs.5). This story is an incredible reminder to us that God is always working on our behalf and is working at the perfect speed. He sees things differently than we do and wants us to trust Him with His plans.

Jesus also meets us in our pain. In verses 33-35, we get a glimpse of the heart of God through the response of Jesus. In verse 33, we are told that Jesus was "deeply moved" and "troubled." We also see in verse 35 that Jesus wept in their presence. The truth we see in Jesus' response to suffering is that God is very aware of our suffering and enters into our brokenness. The Psalms are filled with reminders that God is near to the brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18) and keeps track of every single tear that we cry (Psalm 56:8).

We can take confidence and comfort in the truth that God deeply cares about the things that concern us. Like a Good Shepherd who is aware of the wounds of His flock, Jesus is deeply aware of what hurts us and He weeps with us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In your opinion, why does experiencing pain sometimes cause us to question God's love and His timing? What helps you to remain trusting God even when things aren't going according to your plan?
- Think back on a time when God's timing was later than how you would have timed things. How was His timing better for you?
- James 5:10-11 reminds us how much God blessed Job after Job faithfully persevered in the face of suffering. How do these verses encourage you to "be patient in the face of suffering?"

Continue reading John 11:38-45

38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 39 "Remove the stone," Jesus said. Martha, the dead man's sister, told him, "Lord, there is already a stench because he has been dead four days." 40 Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" 41 So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you heard me. 42 I know that you always hear me, but because of the crowd standing here I said this, so that they may believe you sent me." 43 After he said 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." 45 Therefore, many of the Jews who came to Mary and saw what he did believed in him. 46 But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

Point 3 - Jesus speaks life into dead places.

There may be areas in our lives that have been dead for so long that "there is already a stench" (vs.39). We may not want to open them to Jesus. We may be afraid of offending Him, of disappointing Him. This will never be true with Jesus. He loves us and He wants to bring healing and life to those areas that we think are too far gone to be fixed. He reminds us in vs.25-26 that He is the "resurrection and life." It's through Him that we can experience new life in our hearts.

What we need to remember while we're waiting for Jesus to speak life into areas of our lives is that He will do this in His time and for His glory. It's so important for us not to give up, or give in to those thoughts that Jesus doesn't care or doesn't hear us. He does care. He does hear. "The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them." Psalms 145:18-19, NIV.

Let's compare vs. 36 with vs. 45. How many more Jews came to a saving faith in Jesus because Jesus raised Lazarus, a pillar of the community, from the dead, as opposed to healing him from a great sickness? God is powerful and we get to be a part of Him showing that power to the world when we let Him use our lives as an example to those around us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What area of your life do you feel is too far gone for God to redeem? What would it look like for God to breathe new life into all areas of your heart?
- When has Jesus healed something in your life that you had lost all hope for? Who can you share that story with this week?
- How does the "I AM" statement found in John 11:25-26 provide you and your family with hope right now and in the future? What areas can you apply this truth to this week?