

6. Compare and contrast between Jesus **giving** life (“I give them eternal life) and Jesus **being** life (“I am the life”)?

7. In what ways does the resurrection of Lazarus communicate the deity and sufficiency of Jesus? Why might this miracle have convinced them now more than other miracles up to this time? What security/assurance/confidence/peace in your relationship with Jesus do you derive from this account?

John 11:1-42

Lesson 18
For February 1, 2009

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LEADER'S GUIDE

*For discussion **following** the sermon on February 1, 2009*

Jesus and Lazarus

The eleventh chapter of the Gospel of John is not only the center of the book, it also represents the pinnacle of Jesus' ministry. For those who were present, this miracle is the tipping point of belief or scorn, trust or skepticism, death or eternal life. Jesus will continue to reveal his deity and glorify the Father. In this passage we will consider:

- Death: Sorrow and Finality
- Life: Resurrection and Hope
- Jesus: THE Resurrection and Life

While there are many things in this life that are uncertain, one thing is inevitable; we will all die a physical death. Death is the ultimate fear. It brings on the greatest sorrow and significantly changes the lives of those left behind. Death is final. It is irrevocable, and burial signifies the last hope of life returning. So when Lazarus was pronounced dead, we can only imagine the sorrow and grief, and perhaps even disbelief that Mary and Martha experienced. But the reality of the loss became evident once Lazarus had been in the tomb for three days. Any hope for a miracle was now gone, but hope in future resurrection remained.

In his final public miracle, Jesus resurrected Lazarus from the dead, displayed the glory of the Father, and angered the religious leaders to the point of premeditating Jesus' death. For Lazarus, life was not over. And yet, for Jesus, life was about to end. This miracle acts as the catalyst for the crucifixion. Eight days later Jesus would

die. But three days thereafter, the sting of death would forever change.

The grave will no longer be the final chapter for those who believe! If we believe, we will rise to eternal life. But the resurrection is not our source of salvation nor of future hope. Our belief is in Jesus! He not only raises people from the dead, Jesus IS the resurrection, and the life. It is not what Jesus does, but who he is, that becomes the object of our faith. We believe *him*. We trust *him*. Our faith is in *him*. In what and whom do you believe?

Leader's Guide

Personal Preparation

- Consider the response of Mary and Martha. Both of them said, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died". Rather than an accusation, it is a belief in Jesus that, if he had been present, their brother would still be alive. Their faith in Jesus is to be commended.
- Have you ever prayed for healing (or something just as important) and it didn't happen the way you had hoped for? How did God reveal his glory in spite of the circumstances? How did that experience grow your faith? Remembering God's faithfulness and ultimate glory in our lives is important preparation as you lead this week.

Group Preparation

This passage has many stories within the story and lends itself to a variety of applications. The sermon will undoubtedly surface additional points not discussed in this guide. It will be especially important for you to stay focused on what the text says and how it is supported by the sermon, not allowing your group to stray into other areas of discussion which may not be applicable.

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus didn't intervene in the death of Lazarus. He let him die that God's glory might be revealed four days later. Name the ways that this experience demonstrates the glory of God (v. 40).
2. How is God's glory demonstrated in, or as a result of, our difficulties?
3. Contrast Martha's response to Jesus in Luke 10 and in John 11. Describe the growth in Martha's faith and how it is like or unlike your own.
4. Put in your own words what Jesus means in vv. 25-26? "Jesus said to her (Martha), 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'" What does Jesus mean "you will never die"?
5. This miracle is a sign that prefigures what is going to happen a week later with Jesus' own death and resurrection. What is unique about this sign? What does it tell us about Jesus?