

RESURRECTION AND LIFE

MAIN POINT.

Because Jesus has authority over life and death, we can trust Him entirely.



CHRIST CONNECTION

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He showed that He has power over death. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). Because Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, we have full assurance that Jesus will one day defeat death forever and resurrect us from the dead.



This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to read all of the content on the timeline as you prepare to teach.

John 11

DEATH STINGS NOW

JOHN 11:17-37

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?"

DEATH HAS LOST

JOHN 11:38-44

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."

BEFORE YOU TEACH

MAIN POINT.

Because Jesus has authority over life and death, we can trust Him entirely.

Leaders: The Lord of lords entered our suffering to abolish it forever. What hope we have to share!

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

DEATH STINGS NOW

JOHN 11:17-21

“You need to learn to ask, no matter the situation, ‘How can I glorify God in this?’ Our normal response is to ask, ‘What’s the fastest way out of this situation?’ Christian maturity is learning to look at a situation and knowing that, whatever you face, you face it so God can be glorified through you. Does that make it feel like your life is insignificant and you’re a pawn in God’s global chess game? On the contrary, this passage shows that the glory of God and the love of God are not at odds. Jesus stayed for two reasons: the glory of God (v. 4), and His love for the family (v. 5). God’s glory and His love for you are not enemies. Reject the temptation to pit the two against each other. God’s glory is displayed chiefly in His bottomless love for His people. Was it unloving for Jesus to stay two extra days? If you were Mary and found out Jesus delayed, would it have felt unloving? It would have felt like betrayal. But your feelings are fallible. They are pathological liars. Your feelings say, ‘Jesus doesn’t love you. See? He won’t come. He won’t act.’ Don’t trust your feelings. Let the truth shape your emotions, not your emotions the truth.”¹²

JOHN 11:25-26

“Death is not a natural extension of life, though many psychologists and thanatologists argue that point today. Death is an enemy, created as a result of sin, and ultimately to be destroyed by God.”¹³

JOHN 11:35

“Oh, to be more like Jesus. Oh, to willingly enter others’ suffering. The most remarkable part is that Jesus is going to do something that takes their suffering away, but before He fixes their problem, He joins their pain. He enters their grief before He exiles it.”¹⁴

DEATH HAS LOST

JOHN 11:39

“It appears to the casual reader that Martha had climbed on board theologically and would no longer have any question about what Jesus could do. Yet a few minutes later she heard Jesus call for the removal of the stone and objected, ‘But, Lord . . . by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days’ (v. 39). So again Martha reminds us of ourselves—a willingness to verbally proclaim biblical truth without applying it in our lives.”¹⁵

CONTEXT

Ancient Near Eastern Jews believed that one's soul lingered around the body for three days after death. Because Lazarus had been dead four days, his loved ones had lost hope; they believed Jesus was too late. Today's passage contains a short verse: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). Scholars debate why Jesus wept, and though the text doesn't say, we can consider several causes: (1) Jesus wept because He was human and felt sorrow over death, in a general sense and in a personal sense, with the loss of His friend; He felt compassion for Lazarus's loved ones; (2) Jesus wept over sin's effects on humanity—both physical and spiritual death; (3) Jesus wept over the people still not understanding His identity and authority. Even after observing Jesus heal diseases and cast out demons, His closest friends didn't have faith that, though He didn't arrive within their three-day timeframe of hope, He was capable of restoring life. Jesus had not failed them. For the people to understand His authority, Jesus performed His most astounding miracle: He raised Lazarus from death. Whether or not Jesus wept in grief or over the people's lack of faith and understanding, one thing is clear: He displayed His power over death.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

Resurrection

Both the Old and New Testaments teach that one day believers will experience a resurrection of the body from the dead (Isa. 26:19; Ezek. 37:12-14; John 11). The promise of the resurrection is found in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and it will take place at His return in the future. Because Jesus was the firstfruits of the resurrection, Christians can be assured that their resurrection will be both bodily and glorious (Phil. 3:20-21; Rom. 8:22-23). The hope of the future resurrection gives Christians confidence that death has been defeated in Jesus's death and resurrection.

LEADERS' PRAYER

**LORD, BECAUSE YOU HAVE ALL AUTHORITY, WE HAVE
HOPE IN DEATH. WE MAY EXPERIENCE SORROW AND
GRIEF NOW, BUT BECAUSE OF YOUR DEATH ON THE CROSS
AND YOUR RESURRECTION FROM THE GRAVE, WE TRUST
THAT DEATH HAS BEEN DEFEATED FOREVER.**





KICK STARTER

RATE IT!

How well do you handle plans changing or falling through (1=Hate it; 10=Roll with it)?



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

These optional activities are designed to help your students interact. You'll find a Discussion Activity and a Cultural Connection, which touches on a relevant topic in today's teen culture. Each group is different, so adapt these activities to fit your group's needs. The goal is for students to connect more to the lesson as they connect to the topic and to one another.

1

CHANGE IN PLANS

SUPPLIES LIST: NONE

Ask the following questions, allowing time for students to share responses:

- **WHAT KIND OF PROBLEM SOLVER ARE YOU: DO YOU ACT QUICKLY OR DO YOU NEED MORE TIME TO THINK?**
- **WHAT IS YOUR TYPICAL RESPONSE WHEN SOMETHING DOESN'T GO AS PLANNED?**
- **DO YOU NORMALLY BELIEVE THINGS WILL WORK OUT OR DO YOU TEND TO BRACE FOR DISAPPOINTMENT?**

We all deal with and handle problems differently. Maybe you like to fix issues as soon as you see a problem; maybe you need time to process your answer before you actually answer. Life can serve us a lot of unexpected situations, but we can trust the Lord's purpose when our plans fail.

2

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Our world moves quickly. We order fast food and within minutes, the meal is ready. We live fast-paced lives. How has this affected us? Well, many of us aren't good at waiting. Moving slowly or patiently isn't our preference. But our desire for instant gratification harms us when it comes to our relationship with God. We wrestle with praying to and trusting in a God who may not give us what we ask for immediately—or at all. We especially struggle when God's answer results in discomfort, pain, loss, or disappointment. We may question if God is good and if He can be trusted. But we must remember that God is eternal in His nature and understanding. When His timing or His answer doesn't meet our expectations, we can actually breathe a sigh of relief. Why? Because God sees what we don't see and knows what we don't know. More importantly, God does what is good because He is good (Ps. 119:68). When our circumstances don't feel good in the moment, we can know that our good God will do only what is good and what brings Him glory.

DISCUSSION

MAIN POINT.

Because Jesus has authority over life and death, we can trust Him entirely.

DEATH STINGS NOW

READ JOHN 11:17-37



HOW DID MARY AND MARTHA REACT TO JESUS'S DELAY? HOW DID THEY FEEL?

Leaders: Share Context about Ancient Near Eastern beliefs. Martha's response included one significant word: "yet." She felt death's sting, yet she knew Jesus, as God's Son, was able to do all things—despite what she saw and felt. Mary responded without a "yet." Sure, she may have believed like Martha. **But maybe Mary struggled in this moment with why—why Jesus let her brother die, why He came too late. Jesus didn't scold her; He was moved by her pain.** Some of us more easily lean on God's sovereignty when what we see or feel doesn't make sense. Some of us feel overwhelmed with sorrow, anger, and doubt. But we can know that Jesus sees and cares, and He came to defeat death forever.

READ VERSE 37. WHEN HAVE YOU WRESTLED WITH THOUGHTS LIKE THESE—THAT GOD COULD'VE PREVENTED SUFFERING BUT DIDN'T? WHY DOESN'T HE?

People at Lazarus's home questioned Jesus: If Jesus was really God, then why didn't He save Lazarus? Why didn't He prevent his death? They saw Jesus perform miracles, so their expectations clashed with disappointment when Jesus didn't do what they expected Him to do. When we suffer or when someone we love suffers or passes away, we wrestle with why God doesn't answer our prayers or prevent our suffering—especially the suffering of good people who love Him. God invites us to bring these questions to Him. We can keep a few truths in mind: (1) God created a good world, but we are only "good" because of Jesus. We're all guilty of sin (Rom. 3:10) and actually deserve death—the wages for sin (Rom. 6:23); (2) God often reveals more of Himself to us in suffering, as He does in this passage (see also Job 42:5). **Suffering reminds us of what sin has broken and points us to our deep need for a Savior, for One to give us hope. We suffer because humanity chose rebellion (Gen. 3:6-7). But God redeems our suffering, never wasting it and using it to mold us, to show us He is near, and to reveal the futility of choosing sin. Jesus stepped into our suffering, sacrificing His body in exchange for our eternal peace.**



WHY DO YOU THINK JESUS WEPT (V. 35)?

Jesus is fully God; He intended to raise Lazarus from death, yet He wept. Jesus wept because, as God the Son, He hurt over sin's effects on His creation. He wept over His friends' lack of faith. Jesus wept because He was also fully human. Like us, Jesus experienced the sorrow of death and wept because the people He loved felt the effects of sin—the effects of the fall. He wept because they still didn't understand who He was and why He came. **The Lord of creation wept because He cares deeply for His creation, for human pain and suffering, though He knows believers' stories end in victorious resurrection.**

DEATH HAS LOST

READ JOHN 11:38-44



WHAT DOES MARTHA'S COMMENT ABOUT THE ODOR REVEAL ABOUT HER THOUGHTS (V. 39)?

Martha had expressed belief that the Father would give Jesus whatever He asked (v. 22). She had incredible faith, but faith and reality sometimes oppose one another. Martha believed in and trusted Jesus, but at the tomb, she smelled the stench of death; experience told her that they were too late to help Lazarus. **Human logic opposes faith and trust in the eternal God. If Martha struggled though Jesus stood right in front of her, then we can expect our human understanding to oppose faith in the Lord at times as well.**



WHAT DOES JESUS CALLING LAZARUS OUT OF THE TOMB REVEAL ABOUT HIS AUTHORITY OVER DEATH?

Jesus calling out Lazarus proclaimed He has complete authority over death. When Jesus called out Lazarus, He didn't ask that He come out. He didn't hope for Lazarus to come out. He commanded Lazarus to come out, and Lazarus did so immediately. Jesus, the Creator of life, has control of life, even after death. This passage proves that Jesus is fully God because only God has control over life and death. **If Jesus has all authority over death, then this means death has lost its sting. How much more should we rejoice in this reality!**

HOW SHOULD BELIEVING JESUS DEFEATED DEATH CHANGE THE WAY WE LIVE NOW?

When we say that death has lost its sting, we mean that death has no power, no authority, no effect! Death lost its sting because Jesus defeated it when He rose from the grave. Shouldn't believers look at and respond to death differently than the rest of the world? While unbelievers may fear death, we live in victory! We have hope because of Jesus; we get security because of Jesus; we can live without fear because of Jesus. While we shouldn't live recklessly but wisely, and the deaths of our loved ones will cause us pain—remember, even Jesus wept over death—we know death isn't final. Instead, death is a doorway to eternal life and rest for those who believe. **We have confidence that Jesus has already won the battle over the grave, and this hope doesn't waver. We can live life to the fullest, completely devoted to Jesus, because we have assurance. We can handle disappointment here, knowing it isn't final.**

WRAP-UP



HOW WOULD YOUR LIFE LOOK DIFFERENT IF YOU LEANED ON FAITH INSTEAD OF HUMAN LOGIC? HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH?

Most of us say that we believe Jesus has all authority, but the real question is: Do we live like it? If so, our lives will look completely different from those without hope when we face pain, suffering, disappointment, and death. If we believe Jesus has all authority, we'll choose to trust Him instead of trying to control our circumstances when life feels uncertain. When situations don't go our way, we'll trust that Jesus still has good purpose instead of panicking. If we believe Jesus has all authority, we'll obey Him, even when it feels uncomfortable or is unpopular. We'll follow Jesus even when it costs us something—even when it costs everything. If we believe Jesus has all authority, we'll forgive others, even when they're undeserving. **When we really believe Jesus has all authority, we'll surrender our lives into His hands—our fears, our future, even our death—because it's the safest place.**