

Bible Study Notes for Small Groups WB 7th April 2024

Linked to talk on Sunday 7th April

The story of Lazarus is in three parts. There are many things to learn from it but let's just have a look at three of them.

This event took place towards the end of Jesus' ministry before He was arrested. His own passion, death and resurrection may have been very much in the forefront of His mind. The way He dealt with the situation of Lazarus shows Him revealing who He really is and drawing on lots of truths He has been teaching His followers while they were with Him.

Read John 11: 1-16

- When you hear that someone you love is very sick what is your reaction?

Jesus has drawn away from the limelight because He had been threatened with death and it is not His time to die. That is why it may have taken the messenger several days to find Him and yet He does not react immediately.

- Why do you think Jesus waited?
- How do you think Jesus knew that Lazarus had already died?
- Why do you think that Jesus first said that Lazarus had fallen asleep but He would wake him up?

Focus Point

Jesus explained that for Him, death is not permanent.

The phrase 'fallen asleep' was a way that people, then, meant someone had died. Just as people now say 'passed'. Jesus was going to turn the meaning on its head.

Read John 11:17-37

When Jesus arrives in Bethany, He sees the usual mourning process well underway with a crowd of relatives, friends and neighbours taking part to show comfort and support for Martha and Mary.

- How does Martha show her faith in who Jesus is?
- Look at verses 25-26. Why do you think Jesus reinforces this?

Jesus loves this family and is very close to them. Once both Mary and Martha are with Him, He wastes no time in getting on with the job because He is troubled by

the way the brokenness of the world is affecting them in their brother's death. When He reaches the tomb, He joins in with the weeping.

- How do the Jews interpret the reason for Jesus' tears?
- Have you ever made assumptions about something that turned out to be inaccurate?

Focus Point

Jesus waited until God said it was the right time to go to Bethany. He was moved by how the delay had caused grief to His friends but although Jesus has authority over all things, including death, He only uses it on His Father's instructions.

Read John 11: 38-44

The stone is rolled away from the entrance to the tomb. Jesus has complete authority and commands Lazarus to come out of the tomb. Jesus is standing in the middle of a burial ground.

- Why did Jesus need to use Lazarus' name when He gave that command?
- Have you ever heard or sensed that Jesus is calling your name?

Lazarus appears at the opening of the tomb.

The next instruction Jesus gives is to take off the grave clothes. These would have been tight and restrictive bindings. Lazarus could not have gone about his daily life successfully still wearing them.

Jesus frees us from things that bind, spoil or kill aspects of our lives. These things can still threaten and restrict even after we have accepted Jesus as our Saviour.

Focus point

Once we are saved, we need to take off the grave clothes, leave old restrictions behind and live the Kingdom Life that Jesus brings.

Spend some time thinking about anything that is restricting your freedom in Christ. Each morning, continue to hand that problem over to Jesus so He can remove it from you. You need to realise if you are taking it back from Him and hand it over again. Keep doing that until you have completely unwound yourself from the particular gravecloth that has been restricting you. God bless you all.