



Groups



Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of the last page.

NEW this year: These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders. As always, use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group. And of course, please continue to give us feedback.

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

for the Monologue Sermon given on April 9, 2023

by Pastor Bryan Wilkerson

"I AM the Resurrection and the Life"

Question: Who was Jesus?

Bottom Line: Because Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life, then with him, we can experience life to the full, now and forever.

We are in week 7 of our series exploring the I AM statements of Jesus. Seven times in the gospel of John, Jesus very intentionally declares himself; assigning a NAME to his identity and mission. The premise of our series is that the better we understand who Jesus is, and why he came, and what his life was all about, the better we understand who we are, why we're here, and what our lives are all about.

Today's text is not one of the familiar accounts of Christ's resurrection. However, it does bring home the message of Easter in a **powerful** and **personal** way. Today we will turn into one of the most dramatic stories we find in the Bible, hearing one of the most outrageous claims Jesus ever made.

Let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

Main Scripture Reading: John 11:1-26; 32-44

¹ Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) ³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." ⁴ When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." ⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, ⁷ and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

⁸ "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?" ⁹ Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. ¹⁰ It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light."

¹¹ After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." ¹² His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." ¹³ Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. ¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶ Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

¹⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles^[b] from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

²¹ "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha answered, "I know 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 will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

Group Discussion Questions

Q – After reading the passage together, what details stir your curiosity about this powerful story? Does anything strike out to you in hearing this story during Easter Sunday?

Q – Why do you think Jesus “delays” his arrival?

- Like how Martha and Mary experienced the delay of Jesus’ arrival, have you experienced what felt like a “delay” of God’s intervention? How did you feel?
- What truths sustained you during these times of confusion?

Q – How does Jesus describing himself as the Resurrection and the Life impact your life?

Q – Pastor Bryan highlighted that the verb “resurrect” is a passive verb.

In his words, “The action has to be done TO you, or FOR you. You can only Be resurrected... Because God resurrected Jesus, the resurrected Jesus can resurrect you.”

As Jesus asked Martha, “Do you believe this?” take a moment to answer that question in your heart. “Do you believe this?”

Q – The shortest verse in the Bible is in verse 35: “Jesus wept.” What does the idea of Jesus weeping over Lazarus death mean to you?

Q – Towards the end of the sermon, we heard a testimony given by Kevin, who is the owner of Neillio’s, a popular deli and catering business. He shared his testimony of his life towards recovery from alcoholism, fear, and emptiness through faith in Jesus Christ, which impacted even how he manages his team in his business. Kevin expressed that he feels a new type of freedom as his life is heading towards Jesus.

- What kind of life is Jesus calling you to live TODAY?
- What does a life that is moving toward Jesus look like for you?

Q – As you reflect on the different I Am messages, which have had an impact on you, and why?

Homework Until Next Time:

Ask the members of your LG to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool and the GPS Assessment Tool before your next meeting. Here is some fresh language:

We're all on a journey; where is yours taking you?

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it's good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus; it comes from putting them into practice. Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The with-God life of our personal habits and routines;
- The with-others life of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The for-the-world life that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

Support for the Leader (These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and also opportunities in the life of our church).

How to Use These Study Guides:

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
 - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
 - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

Group Leader Support: Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Grace Lee from the Group Life team.