

Seedling Group Questions for the week of November 4 – All Saints Sunday

The sermon for November 4 can be found at www.saidanotherway.org

Questions for opening up

What kinds of things can reliably comfort you when you are upset?

What line of a hymn makes you tear up every time you sing it?

Read Revelation 21:1-6a

In the book of Revelation (and in the ancient world in general), the sea (verse 1) is a metaphor for dangerous chaos and the source of the uncontrollable forces that threaten humanity. Are there chaotic, threatening, and uncontrollable forces in today's world? What metaphor might work for today?

What are the features of the "new heaven and new earth" described here? How does this square (or not) with your perceptions of life after this life?

The "one seated on the throne" says, "See, I am making all things new!" What do you think he is talking about? Where do you see examples of God making things new?

Read John 11:32-44

Based on what Mary and Martha say to Jesus, what do you think they expected to happen when Jesus finally arrived? Lazarus' resuscitation? Something else?

The three words that describe Jesus' emotions in this passage are difficult to translate and can mean anything from "greatly disturbed" to "deeply moved" or "very agitated." How do you interpret Jesus' reactions and emotions? How does this affect your understanding of Jesus and your relationship to him?

The raising of Lazarus is the last of a series of signs that Jesus performs in John's gospel in order to provoke faith in people that he is God's Son. What "signs" have you ever experienced that assure you of Jesus' power and love?

Putting things together

Pastor Phillip contrasts the God Jesus prays to at the tomb of Lazarus with the deity that many youth in today's churches, according to current theologians, seem to espouse belief in. (This has been called Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, in case you want to Google search it). How do you understand the difference between the two? Do you believe in a God who is transcendent and can bring about new life in the world, even miraculously?

Do you think that the lack of crying is a compelling feature of God's eternal kingdom? Why or why not?

Making it personal

Is "valley of sorrows" a term you've heard before? If so, where? Does it resonate with your own experience of this life? Why or why not?

Who could you be Mr. Rogers to in your life right now? That is, who in your life could use a reminder, even if they don't really seem to hear it, that they are a beloved, forgiven, and worthwhile child of God?

Revelation 21:1-6a

¹I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them;
⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.”

⁵And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ^{6a}Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.”

John 11:32-44

³²When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵Jesus began to weep. ³⁶So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

³⁸Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”