



The Lazarus Life | Entombed - Coming to a Dead End • Week Three •

March 4, 2018

John 11:17-31

Seasonal Focus: We are in the season of Lent, where for centuries, people across all different faith traditions set aside these weeks for the purpose of deep spiritual reflection, humility, learning, prayer, and placing themselves before God in a way that would shape them.

Opening: Have you ever felt trapped, boxed in a corner or stuck in a place or position you never expected or wanted to be? What was this experience like for you?

Discussion: Read John 11:17-31. Pastors Dan Meyer and Suanne Camfield brought us back into the story of Lazarus. Lazarus' sickness has led to death. Jesus never showed up.

- How is your image of God impacted when, from your perspective, Jesus doesn't show up?
- Pastor Suanne questioned, "If faced with the reality that the life, healing or restoration you hoped for, is not coming, what would you be thinking, feeling or doing?"
- "I am the resurrection and the life...The one who believes in me will live, even though they die" (John 11:25). What does the major emphasis of this story open up for you?

1. *It's Hard to Talk About the Tomb*

- Pastor Dan stated, "To absorb how good the good news is... sometimes you need to sit at the tomb." How have you experienced this to be true? How hard is it for you to sit and remain at 'the tomb'...this dead end, closed-in place where you don't want to be?
- Sitting at the tomb, one can often "feel a bit selfish to dwell there." Why do you think this is? Does this feel selfish to you or just a natural aspect of enduring suffering and pain?
- How have you resisted talking about 'the tombs' in your life? Was a feeling of failure part of the mix in your resistance?
- Pastor Dan added, "Maybe one of the most disturbing realities of these tombs in our lives is this secret sense that maybe you're in this place because Jesus did not care enough for you to show up when you needed help." What do you do when this secret sense creeps in?

2. *Jesus Meets Us at Life's Tombs*

- In John 11: 20, we read that Mary [had] stayed at home. From Luke 10:38-42, we know that Mary hangs on Jesus' every word. Why do you think Mary wasn't the first to go see, Jesus?



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- What was Mary's posture when she did come to Jesus? What does this convey to you?
- Mary invites Jesus to 'come and see' ... to come and behold the Reality of Death. How does Jesus respond? What does he feel? How will you let this impact your prayer life?

3. The Tomb Is the Place Where Transformation Begins

- "The tomb is where resurrection happens—in fact the tomb is the only place resurrection happens...We can have no life without first entering death." How does this truth from Pastor Dan, move you forward?
- Where do you turn when you find yourself, "hurting and helpless to fix the condition you're in by yourself?" What do you think Jesus' response would be toward you?
- When you are in 'the tomb,' is it easier or harder for you to listen to God?
- "Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead to establish ... that he has the authority and power to redeem human life...from the sin and evil that drags it down." "Our tombs are always to God's glory, to prove he alone can raise the dead to life." What do these comments from Pastors Dan and Suanne evoke in you?

Practice of the Week: Prayer of Lament

Prayer of Lament: to take your complaints, anger, sufferings, frustrations and heartaches to God

- Put words to the contents of your heart. Put words to where you are 'entombed.'
- Pray the Psalms (Psalms 3, 4, 5, 7, 9-10, 13, 14, 17, 22, 25, 26, 27).
- Listen to this week's Lenten devotional. Text 'devo' to 630-206-3230. It is a song of Lament.

Additional Resources:

The Lazarus Life: Spiritual Transformation for Ordinary People by Stephen W. Smith

A Sacred Sorrow: Reaching Out to God in the Lost Language of Lament by Michael Card

We'd love to hear from you!

If you have thoughts, questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you and your group, please let us know.

We would also LOVE to hear how God is using these Scriptures and study guides in your lives.

Kathy Woods: kwoods@cc-ob.org • Eric Haskins: ehaskins@cc-ob.org