



ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Encounters with Jesus – The Resurrection of Lazarus

Date: Sunday 6th March
Key Verses: John 11:1-45

Speaker: Paul Gating (City Centre), Kathryn Thorp (South Site)

Talk Summary:

This passage starts with messengers from Mary & Martha arriving to tell Jesus that their brother, Lazarus, is unwell. They were all very close to Jesus and clearly knew all about the miraculous healings that Jesus had already performed. But Jesus chose to wait where He was for two days before heading to Bethany, which was just two miles outside of Jerusalem where Jesus had recently narrowly avoided getting stoned by the religious authorities there.

After two days of waiting, He tells His disciples that they're now going to make the journey to Bethany. They respond knowing that heading back that close to Jerusalem where Jesus enemies were based was extremely risky having only just escaped from there.

By the time Jesus arrives in Bethany, Lazarus has already been dead for four days. Jesus was already supernaturally aware of this and had indicated to His disciples that what was about to happen was for the glory of God and so that others would believe.

When Martha comes out to meet Jesus, she cries out that if only He had been there sooner then her brother would still be alive. But she also knows that even now Jesus still has the power and authority to do something amazing. Jesus tells her that her brother will rise again but she misunderstands and presumes Jesus is referring to the last day when all believers will be resurrected. Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life" – He wasn't just telling her that one day everything will be alright but that He was bringing life and resurrection **today**.

Martha goes to fetch her sister, Mary, who also cries at Jesus' feet, if only He had been here. When Jesus sees her weeping and all the other people with her mourning, He is deeply moved in spirit and troubled. But the origin of that phrase means a groan of anger or indignation. Jesus is frustrated and upset with

death itself. He has come face to face with death with the passing of His friend and is coming closer to His own death by travelling back towards Jerusalem.

When Jesus gets to Lazarus's tomb He weeps. Not loud wails of grief like the official mourners that were with Mary but quiet, genuine tears.

Jesus asks for the stone to be moved away from Lazarus' tomb, but Martha was concerned that after four days the body would already be decomposing. When the stone is taken away, Jesus prays, thanking His Father that His prayers have already been heard because there is no stench of death.

All that was left to do was for Jesus to call Lazarus to come out of the grave, and for his burial clothes to be removed. John makes it clear that this resurrection was very publicly witnessed and that many people came to believe in Jesus because of this miracle.

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

- Does reading about Jesus' emotional reactions in this passage bring you comfort when you think about experiencing suffering or loss? How do you feel when you see others in leadership and authority have emotional responses to difficult situations?
- Mary and Martha were close friends of Jesus', but He chose to wait for two days before travelling to Bethany to see Lazarus. How do you cope when you're waiting to see the things you're praying for come to fruition?
- How do you respond to God when you don't get the answers to your prayers that you were hoping for? Do you find yourself, like Mary and Martha, asking **if only** things had turned out differently?
- How do past experiences of pain and disappointment affect your faith and expectation for what Jesus might want to do today?
- In what ways have you seen God use what were initially difficult or painful situations for His glory?

Witness - *How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?*

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?
 - Upcoming Events (go to bvc.so/whats-on for details)
 - Young Adults Retreat: 25th-27th March