



Small Group Work Sheet

John 11 - How Christ Gets Glory Through Cancer and Death

April 21, 2013

Part 1 - Ice Breaker

1. Is there a time where you, or your immediate family, was touched by a debilitating disease like cancer? How did it change you?

Part 2 - Sermon Review

2. Read John 11:1-4. Mark 5:39-42. Why does God allow sickness into our lives? Many times we can't understand why God allows a particular kind of suffering or sickness into lives. Where can we find comfort when we can't discern God's purposes behind our suffering? *(Think about the threads in a shirt and Alan's infamous words to Lucy in Prince Caspian about never doing the same thing twice.)*
3. Read Romans 8:28. In what ways does God use the experience of deep sickness or suffering to change us?
4. Read John 11:5-6; Isaiah 55:8-9. Why does God love to put us in apparently hopeless situations?
5. Read John 11:17-37. How are Mary and Martha different?
6. Read John 11:25-26. Read these verses carefully. When Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life," what does that mean happens after death to those who have faith in Christ?
7. Read John 11:33-35. There are two emotions Jesus experienced when he faced death. What were they? Why are they both important?
8. The greater the obstacle, the more glory that goes to the one who overcomes it. How does knowing the state of decomposition of Lazarus' body bring more glory to him being raised to life? How much more glory will go to Christ when he raises from the dead bodies not just in 4 days of decomposition but 4,000 years of decomposition? How much more glory will go to Christ when the raised body isn't corruptible but is incorruptible?

Part 3 - Digging Deeper - God brings glory to himself by asking us to do things that doesn't appear to make sense.

Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." John 11:7-16 (ESV)

This is a great section. At first, it is a little confusing because it has humor in it, but it is a great section. After seemingly ignoring Mary and Martha's request, Jesus finally announces to the disciples they are returning to Judea. I love the way the disciples respond. *They tell Jesus he is nuts.* Last time he was in Judea, the Jews promised to kill him. Why go back there? Ministry on the other side of the Jordan River is good. Why go where you are not wanted and risk your life?

Jesus tells them that Lazarus has fallen asleep and he is going to wake him. This goes completely over the disciples head. They think he is talking about physical sleep. Sleep is used as a metaphor for death 14 times. Jesus clears it up for them. Lazarus is dead.

Then he says, "For your sake, I am glad that I was not there." Why is he glad? Jesus is going to use this incredible adversity, Lazarus' death, as an opportunity to grow and strengthen the disciples faith. Jesus allows deep adversity into our lives not just to grow our faith *but to build the faith of others around us.* The purpose of our life is not just for ourselves but it is interwoven with others.

I love the way this section ends. It is the most misunderstood part of this paragraph. Thomas says, "Let's also go that we may die with him." This cracks me up. Since Jesus is going to get killed in Judea, we might as well go die with him. He is a great mix of a pessimist and a Jesus groupie. We all know people like Thomas.

What really impressed me most about this section is how the disciples are completely against going to Judea, because it seems the foolish thing to do, yet Jesus calls them to do something that appears foolish to build their faith. Because Jesus loves us, he will occasionally call us to do something that is not comfortable. He occasionally calls us to do things that don't make sense to others.

God did this with Abraham, he called Abraham to leave his prosperous and comfortable life in the city of Ur to a land he had never seen. Abraham followed God's call upon his life even when it didn't make sense. God called Abraham this way to build his faith.

Is God calling you to do something that doesn't make sense to others? If he is calling you this way, he is calling you to something that doesn't make sense to build your faith and give you a story to tell.

Follow him today.