

JESUS IS THE LIFE

+ SESSION OUTLINE

1. The Messiah brings life from death (John 11:20-27).
2. The Messiah brings glory from grief (John 11:38-44).
3. The Messiah brings salvation from rejection (John 11:45-53).

Background Passage: John 11

+ WHAT WILL MY GROUP LEARN?

In the raising of Lazarus, Jesus revealed that He has power over life and death, both physically and spiritually.

+ HOW WILL MY GROUP SEE CHRIST?

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He showed that He has power over death. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." Because Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, we have full assurance that Jesus has defeated death forever and will one day resurrect us from the dead.

+ HOW SHOULD MY GROUP RESPOND?

Because we have been given eternal life in Christ, we glorify God always, even in sickness and in death, trusting in His power to raise us from the dead.

GROUP TIME

NOTES



SCRIPTURE HANDOUT

Scan this QR code for a reproducible handout of this session's Scripture passages.

INTRODUCTION

SETTING: The Gospel of John is often considered the most evangelistic Gospel in the New Testament. John explicitly stated the evangelistic nature of his Gospel toward the end of the book, stating how Jesus did many other signs unmentioned in his writing, but that the signs written were to help people believe Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God that they might have life (John 20:30-31). John 11:1-46 records the final, climactic sign that Jesus performs—the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

EXPLAIN: When people get sick, they have various signs or symptoms that confirm their illness.

DISCUSS: What are some common symptoms or signs of illnesses? (a person with a common cold might have a headache or a fever; a person with strep throat will have a sore throat and difficulty swallowing; lack of taste may be a sign of COVID)

TRANSITION: The Bible states the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Because every person has sinned (Rom. 3:23), every person receives the wages of sin: death. This means that apart from Christ, people have no spiritual life or relationship with God. They are dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). Yet they are not without hope. Jesus alone has the power to raise the spiritually dead to life. He is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25). Those who trust Jesus Christ alone for salvation are raised from death to life and made alive in Christ (Eph. 2:5). The resurrection of Lazarus in John 11 is a vivid sign that Jesus is the Messiah who has power to raise the dead.

POINT 1

THE MESSIAH BRINGS LIFE FROM DEATH (JOHN 11:20-27).

20 So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. **21** Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” **23** Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” **24** Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” **25** Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, **26** and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” **27** She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

READ: Ask a volunteer to read aloud **John 11:20-27** from his or her own Bible.

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSES 20-22** commentary to highlight the following point (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

Amid sorrow, Martha clings to her **faith** in Jesus and remains **convinced** of His power.

DISCUSS: Read the Athanasius quote on **PACK ITEM 12: THE VOICE OF LIFE**, and then ask: **How can Christians cling to Jesus Christ in the midst of difficult circumstances and situations?** (pray to Him for comfort; read His Word for His presence; go to church to learn from and with the body of believers; talk to church members/Christians who will encourage you; read gospel-centered resources that exalt Christ)

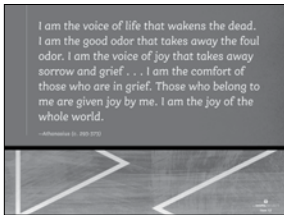
EXPLAIN: Recall **PACK ITEM 6: THE GREAT “I AM”** and use it along with the **VERSES 23-27** commentary to emphasize the following idea (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

Jesus is the resurrection and the **life**—those who trust in Him will **overcome** death and live forever.

DISCUSS: **What are some reasons Christians should trust Christ to give them eternal life?** (the Bible affirms a future resurrection of the just and the unjust, and God always keeps His promises [John 5:28-29]; Jesus rose from the dead Himself, and He is the firstfruits of the resurrection [1 Cor. 15:20-23]; the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in the hearts of believers [Rom. 8:1])

TRANSITION: Any person who desires to enter God’s kingdom must do so through Jesus. Faith in Jesus—not familiarity with Him—is the necessary response to enter God’s kingdom. Jesus can bring life from death and glory from grief.

NOTES



VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

“There is no spiritual life of which he is not the author, and there never will be. When you and I come to deal with men for their salvation, we discover our inability; for we perceive that the creation of life is out of our power, since it remains the sole prerogative of the Son of God.”¹

—Charles Spurgeon
(1834–1892)

COMMENTARY

VERSES 20-22 / John 11 contains the final, climactic sign in John's Gospel: the resurrection of Lazarus. Lazarus was the brother of Mary and Martha (vv. 38-42), two women from Bethany who loved and followed Jesus. When Lazarus became sick, Mary and Martha sent for Jesus: "Lord, he whom you love is ill" (v. 3). Jesus waited for two days before traveling to Bethany because He planned to raise Lazarus from the dead for two reasons: (1) to glorify God (vv. 4,40), and (2) to generate faith (vv. 15,42). As Jesus approached Bethany, Martha "**went and met him,**" while "**Mary remained seated in the house**" (v. 20). Martha's move toward Jesus, even in her grief, is inspiring and instructive. Her faith was not shaken, even though she experienced loss.

Martha's faith can be seen in her first words to Jesus: "**Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died**" (v. 21). Though she was grieving the loss of her brother, she knew that Jesus had power and authority. Martha believed Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, but perhaps was unclear about the extent of His power. She continued: "**But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you**" (v. 22). Martha remained confident in Jesus, acknowledging His close relationship with the Father and His ability to intercede. Martha grieved the loss of her brother, but her faith and confidence in Jesus remained intact.

VERSES 23-27 / Jesus offered hope to Martha in her grief: "**Your brother will rise again**" (v. 23). There are two ways these words could have been received by Martha: (1) Lazarus will rise again in the general resurrection on the last day, or (2) Lazarus will rise again in the present. While Jesus had the latter sense in mind, Martha understood Jesus to be speaking in the former sense. She responded: "**I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day**" (v. 24). Her statement is consistent with orthodox Jewish belief and reveals she knew of a future bodily resurrection. Note that the group of Jewish leaders known as

the Sadducees denied the resurrection, so Martha's statement aligned with the teaching of the Pharisees. Nevertheless, Martha misunderstood the point of Jesus's statement. He was not speaking of the future resurrection; He was talking about an immediate resurrection.

Jesus told Martha: "**I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?**" (vv. 25-26). This is one of seven "I AM" statements in the Gospel of John, designed to reveal Jesus as the Son of God. The other six "I AM" statements are: "I am the bread of life" (6:35), "I am the light of the world" (8:12), "I am the door" (10:7), "I am the good shepherd" (10:11), "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6), and "I am the true vine" (15:5). As the resurrection and the life, Jesus had the power to raise Lazarus from the dead immediately. Yet Lazarus was not the only one who would benefit from Christ's identity as the resurrection and the life. Jesus said every person who believes in Him will live, even if they die, and every person who believes in Him will live and never die. The certainty of a bodily resurrection in the future and the possession of eternal life in the present is available through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Martha answered Jesus's question with one of the strongest confessions of faith in the Bible: "**Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world**" (v. 27). She affirmed Jesus is the Messiah, the One to whom the Old Testament pointed. She affirmed Jesus is the Son of God, acknowledging His deity. She affirmed Jesus came into the world, highlighting His pre-existence and eternity. Martha recognized Jesus as the divine Son of God who came to die and rise from the dead to secure eternal life and a bodily resurrection for all who believe.

POINT 2

THE MESSIAH BRINGS GLORY FROM GRIEF

(JOHN 11:38-44).

38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. **39** Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." **40** Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" **41** So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. **42** I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." **43** When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." **44** The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

READ: Ask a volunteer to read aloud **John 11:38-44** from his or her own Bible.

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSES 38-39** commentary to highlight the following point (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

Jesus was moved by the grief of Martha, Mary, and the crowd, which reveals His **sympathy** and **compassion**.

DISCUSS: From Day 3 in the DDG: **How can Christians display compassion and help others who are struggling with grief?** (provide meals for families; start a grief recovery ministry or encourage people to attend one; help pay for counseling if someone needs professional help; lend a listening ear)

EXPLAIN: Use **PACK ITEM 3: HEARING THE OLD IN THE NEW** and the **VERSES 40-44** commentary to emphasize that God, and thus Jesus, has always had the power to give life (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

The resurrection of Lazarus was intended to display God's **glory** and to inspire **faith** in the hearts of those who witnessed it and read about it.

DISCUSS: What are some other ways God has made His glory known? (creation declares the glory of God [Ps. 19:1-4]; Jesus reveals the glory of God [Matt. 17:1-8; John 1:14]; God is glorified when disciples bear fruit [John 15:8]; God is glorified in the salvation of sinners [Gal. 1:22-24])

TRANSITION: The resurrection of Lazarus allowed everyone present to witness the glory of God and provided another reason to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. But as the next point shows, not everyone responded to the sign of Lazarus's resurrection by believing in Jesus.

NOTES



JEWISH BURIAL CUSTOMS

In Jewish custom, many families had family tombs to bury their loved ones, usually carved into a cave and sealed with a large stone. Burial would be rather immediate after death, usually including the wrapping of the body in linen cloths with spices to help hide the smells.

COMMENTARY

VERSES 38-39 / John recorded Jesus's being moved by the death of Lazarus and the grief of his family and friends. He wrote, "When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled" (v. 33). Some scholars think Jesus was angry about Lazarus's death or angry at the display of grief, while others believe Jesus was experiencing His own personal grief. Whatever the reason, John wrote, "Jesus wept" (v. 35), and the crowds observed Jesus's tears and exclaimed, "See how he loved him!" (v. 36).

When Jesus arrived at the tomb, He was "**deeply moved again**" (v. 38). The inner stirring and movement in Jesus's spirit likely highlights Jesus's eagerness to raise Lazarus from the dead, but this should not be viewed in isolation from His love for Lazarus and His sympathy toward Martha and Mary and the Jews who accompanied them in deep anguish. Indeed, one of the reasons Jesus was eager to raise Lazarus was because He loved him and his sisters (vv. 3,5).

Jesus's humanity is evident in this passage. John records Jesus experiencing common human emotions: love, grief, and excitement. Yet Jesus's deity is also evident, as His human emotions led to divine action. Jesus commanded those present to "**take away the stone**" (v. 39) so He could raise Lazarus from the dead. Martha objected: "**Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.**" (v. 39). Her objection reveals her love for her brother and her desire to honor him while revealing her inability to grasp what would take place in the next few minutes.

VERSES 40-44 / Jesus responded to Martha's objection by reminding her of their previous conversation: "**Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?**" (v. 40). Before Lazarus died, Jesus told the disciples his sickness would not end in death. Instead, Lazarus's sickness was "for the glory of God, so that

the Son of God may be glorified through it" (v. 4). Jesus knew Lazarus's sickness would not ultimately end in death but in resurrection and life. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, God was glorified and Jesus was shown to be God's Son, both of which accomplished the first purpose for which Lazarus was raised.

After the stone was removed, Jesus prayed to God the Father. Although He prayed to the Father, Jesus's prayer was intended to be heard by those present. Jesus was confident God heard Him, but He prayed in the crowd's hearing "**that they may believe that you sent me**" (v. 42). Jesus wanted the crowd to know God the Father always heard the Son's prayers, and He wanted them to believe God the Father sent Jesus. The sign of Lazarus's resurrection was designed to produce faith in those who had eyes to see and ears to hear. The next section demonstrates the sign accomplished exactly what Jesus intended (cf. John 11:45).

After the prayer, John records the resurrection of Lazarus. In the broader narrative, the actual resurrection of Lazarus is relatively short. Jesus shouted, "**Lazarus, come out**" (v. 43). Lazarus walked out of the grave in his graveclothes, "**his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth**" (v. 44). Jesus said, "**Unbind him, and let him go**" (v. 44). Then the narrative transitions to the response of the Jews to Lazarus's resurrection. Yet the significance of the sign cannot be overlooked. The entire chapter builds up to verses 43-44, where Jesus demonstrates He is the resurrection and the life. The resurrection accomplishes exactly what God designed it to accomplish: God was glorified, and many Jews present believed in Jesus.

POINT 3

THE MESSIAH BRINGS SALVATION FROM REJECTION (JOHN 11:45-53).

NOTES

45 Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, **46** but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. **47** So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. **48** If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” **49** But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. **50** Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” **51** He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, **52** and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. **53** So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

READ: Ask a volunteer to read aloud **John 11:45-53** from his or her own Bible.

EXPLAIN: On **PACK ITEM 2: JESUS’S MINISTRY MAP**, point out the proximity of Bethany to Jerusalem to show how close the Pharisees and Sanhedrin in Jerusalem were, then use the **VERSES 45-48** commentary to highlight the following point (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

Many Jews **believed** in Jesus, but the Pharisees rejected Him and plotted to **kill** Him.

DISCUSS: Why might someone reject Jesus as the resurrection and the life? (they might not believe in God or the supernatural; they might believe the Bible contradicts itself; they might have been hurt by the church or hypocritical Christians; they might have past struggles and blame God)

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSES 49-53** commentary to emphasize the doctrine that Christ is our substitute (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

KEY DOCTRINE #60: Christ as Substitute: At the heart of the atonement is Jesus Christ substituting Himself for sinners as He died on the cross. This truth is seen against the backdrop of the Old Testament **sacrificial** system, which provided a picture of humanity’s need for sin to be covered and guilt to be removed by an innocent sacrifice. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with humankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross, He made provision for the **redemption** of humanity from sin.



THE SANHEDRIN

A counsel of 70 men, led by the high priest, somewhat similar to Moses and the 70 elders ruling over the Israelites. They were responsible for local rule over Jews in the Roman province of Judea. “Included in its responsibilities were the investigation of charges related to the violations of the Mosaic Law and the assessment of claims made by people to be prophets or the Messiah.”²

COMMENTARY

VERSES 45-48 / The reaction to Jesus's miracle was mixed. Many of the Jews **"believed in him"** (v. 45). A significant number of those who witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus placed their faith in Jesus. However, some of the people present went to the Pharisees and told them about the miracle (v. 46).

The chief priests and Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. They needed to discuss further how to deal with this Jesus. They had been worried about Jesus all along, and now they were hearing accounts of Him raising the dead. How could it be?

The "many signs" performed by Jesus were irrefutable, so the religious leaders had the choice to either believe or harden their hearts even more. They chose the latter and felt compelled to act. **"If we let him go on like this,"** they said, **"everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation"** (v. 48). The chief priests and Pharisees were concerned that Jesus would garner such a large following that Rome would intervene and punish the nation, so they ultimately decided to plot to kill Him (v. 53). Readers should observe the irony in the religious leaders plotting to kill the One who is the resurrection and the life. Even if they could succeed, their efforts would be pointless. He had just demonstrated His power over death, and He would do so again!

VERSES 49-53 / Caiaphas, the high priest, chastised the gathering of religious leaders: **"You know nothing at all"** (v. 49). This less-than-diplomatic response revealed his frustration with their thought process. Caiaphas reasoned the death of Jesus would be beneficial for the Sanhedrin and Israel, since Jesus would die rather than **"the whole nation should perish"** (v. 50). His proposed solution was to kill Jesus.

Yet Caiaphas spoke better than he knew. John clarified that Caiaphas **"did not say this of his own accord"** but **"prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation"** (v. 51).

John discerned a deeper, spiritual meaning in the words of Caiaphas than Caiaphas himself realized.

Jesus would die for the nation, but He would also die **"to gather into one the children of God"** (v. 52). Jesus truly is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world by dying on the cross (cf. John 1:29). The religious leaders clearly understood Caiaphas's words as instructions to kill Jesus because **"from that day on they made plans to put him to death"** (v. 53).

Caiaphas unknowingly spoke about one of Scripture's most important doctrines: substitution. Caiaphas was not using sacrificial language in a Christian sense. His statement that it was better that **"one man should die for the people"** (v. 50) reflected his own thoughts of a "better Him, than us" mentality. Nevertheless, Christians can identify the unmistakable spiritual truth of the high priest's statement.

Jesus is the substitute for sinners. Michael Lawrence pointed out Christ's substitution is similar to other examples of substitution in Scripture:

An effective sacrifice is a substitute. We saw a ram slain in the place of Isaac. We saw the Passover lamb slain in the place of the firstborn. And we see the same kind of substitute pictured in the book of Leviticus—a point punctuated when the person lays his or her hand on the animal. In the same way, Jesus provided an effective sacrifice for us by offering himself to God as a substitute.³

Yet Jesus's substitution is greater. He died for the sins of the world, and everyone who **"believes in him should not perish but have eternal life"** (John 3:16).

MY RESPONSE

Because we have been given eternal life in Christ, we glorify God always, even in sickness and in death, trusting in His power to raise us from the dead.

NOTES

HEAD:

Only Jesus can make alive those who are spiritually dead, and only He can raise Christians from the dead to enjoy God's presence forever. Apart from Him, there is only sin and death. Yet through faith in Christ, there is resurrection and eternal life. Therefore, we affirm the historical nature of biblical resurrections and anticipate the return of Christ, when the dead will rise and God's people will enjoy Him forever.

Why must we as Christians affirm the historical nature of the resurrection? (See 1 Corinthians 15, especially verses 12-19.)

HEART:

Mary, Martha, and their friends were overcome with grief when Lazarus died, but Jesus did not scold them or rebuke them. Instead, He wept (John 11:35). He was moved (vv. 33,38). He loved them (v. 36). The emotional language and the tears reveal Jesus's compassionate heart. Christians can take comfort in the fact that God loves them faithfully, even in their most difficult moments. We know God loves us even when we face sickness and death, so we remain faithful to God and glorify Him with our bodies, whether in life or death.

When facing difficult circumstances, how can we continue to praise God?

HANDS:

Mary and Martha both announce their confidence in Jesus even after Lazarus died (cf. John 11:21,32). They did not allow their present circumstances to shake their faith in Jesus. Their unshakable confidence in Jesus was based on the fact that He is the resurrection and the life (v. 25). Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave, and then He Himself died and rose from the dead to give us spiritual life and to guarantee our future resurrection from the dead. Because our sins are forgiven and our future is secure, we can face whatever happens in life with confidence. We can glorify God by continually trusting Him, loving Him, and obeying Him, even when tragedy strikes.

With whom can we share this message of hope this week?

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Christ assumed our identity, as it were, and endured the retributive judgment due to us ... as our substitute, in our place, with the damning record of our transgressions nailed by God to his cross as the tally of crimes for which he was now dying."⁴

—J. I. Packer (1926–2020)

EXTRA

POINT 1: THE MESSIAH BRINGS LIFE FROM DEATH

(JOHN 11:20-27).

+ COMMENTARY

“In the context of Jesus’s discussion with Martha, the occurrence of the ‘I am’ statement is significant. . . . Here Jesus claims for himself the authority over life and death given to him by the Father (cf. 5:21-29). It is important to note that this resurrection and life are both coming and not yet; as Jesus explained it, ‘An hour comes and now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live’ (5:25). In this way, ‘belief’ in Jesus is faith placed in the person of Jesus, so that Jesus is both the promise of the provision of God for the future and the present reality of the provision of God.”⁵

+ ILLUSTRATION

According to the Health Resources and Services Administration at the time of this writing, there are currently 105,910 people on the national transplant waiting list.⁶ The people on the list are waiting for one of the following organs: the liver, heart, pancreas, kidneys, and lungs. When a person registers as an organ donor, in a limited sense, they bring life from death.

In John 11:1-44, Jesus brought life from death. Today, Christians anticipate a future resurrection and a glorious reunion in heaven because Jesus brings life from death.

+ OPTIONAL TEACHING ACTIVITY

Martha, even in her time of distress and sorrow, was able to declare Jesus for who He is: the Messiah, the Son of God who has come into the world (John 11:27).

Pass out a sheet of paper or have people write in their DDGs some pains or stress items or prayer requests they might be struggling with. Then have them write down who they believe Jesus to be in the midst of those pains. For example: a broken relationship—Jesus is the God of reconciliation; a habitual sin—Jesus is our strength; a loss—Jesus is our comforter. Provide concordances or let your group use their phones to find verses that support their ideas. Provide an opportunity for group members to share their thoughts and ideas and Bible passages to encourage the rest of the group.

EXTRA

POINT 2: THE MESSIAH BRINGS GLORY FROM GRIEF

(JOHN 11:38-44).

+ COMMENTARY

“When the group arrived, Jesus witnessed their sorrow and was ‘deeply moved in spirit’ and ‘troubled.’ . . . Some have suggested the general state of unbelief among the people angered Jesus, but this seems out of place given His compassionate care for Martha, whose struggle was not so much with incomplete faith as with incomplete knowledge. Unlike the selfish gods of mythology, the triune God of the Bible empathizes with His creation. Furthermore, He is justifiably angry with the cruelty of evil, which oppresses His beloved creation. Death is the ultimate affront to His creative act; it tries to destroy what He intended to last forever.”⁷

+ ILLUSTRATION

William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* is considered a literary masterpiece and is one of his more well-known works. The tragedy centers on two young lovers from rival families who are forbidden to see each other. Toward the end of the tragedy, Juliet fakes her own death to be with Romeo, but the details of the plan do not reach Romeo in time. When he discovers her unconscious body, Romeo believes Juliet is dead and takes his own life. When Juliet awakes and finds Romeo dead, she takes her own life. The grieving families finally agree to end their feud, but not until Romeo and Juliet are dead.

The story of *Romeo and Juliet* is familiar, so sometimes readers fail to fully appreciate the sad ending. *Romeo and Juliet* were robbed of a happy ending, and both died in a tragic twist of fate. Yet through their death, the Montague and Capulet family feud was ended. Good came from the grief and sorrow of their death.

In a much greater way, Jesus turned the grief of Mary and Martha into glory—demonstrating that God the Father sent Him and empowered Him to raise the dead to life. No matter what Christians go through, God is glorified by Christians who are resolved to trust Him and follow Him, regardless of the circumstances.

+ ILLUSTRATION

In our day and age, people, especially younger adults and teens, are fascinated with zombies. Movies, comic books, and stories with zombies seem to saturate our media, including *Abraham Lincoln vs. Zombies* and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. People coming back from the dead is a fun, fearful, or fantastical storyline that sells. People want to know that it might be possible to come back from the dead.

But unlike fictional zombies, the resurrection that Jesus provides is real and true. Because Jesus had the power to resurrect Himself, He also has the power to resurrect us in the last days. And we can have eternal life through Him. Unlike zombies, our resurrection is restorative and comes with glorified bodies that we may reign with Christ and be in His presence forevermore.

POINT 3: THE MESSIAH BRINGS SALVATION FROM REJECTION (JOHN 11:45-53).

+ COMMENTARY

“That statement in 11:50—it was an advantage (sumpherein, ‘better’) for one man to die ‘on behalf of’ (hyper, NIV ‘for’) ‘the people’—is filled with sacrificial meaning. The term hyper is frequently associated with a substitutionary or replacement view of the atonement. In the Old Testament the devotees and priests would place their hands on the sacrificial animals or scapegoat in identification (cf. Lev 16:7-10, 20-22), and thus the animals would carry the weight of sin and guilt on behalf of (for) the worshipers. Accordingly, the worshipers would not bear the punishment of God. Here the word of the high priest provides insight into the means whereby the nation would be spared from perishing. But the evangelist added that the death of Jesus (the sacrificial victim) would extend beyond the ethnic and geographical borders of Israel (‘the nation’) and unite into one group all the scattered children of God (11:52; cf. 10:16).”⁸

+ ILLUSTRATION

Rejection is hard to accept. When you get passed over for a promotion, it stings. When you get denied a loan, it is frustrating. When you get turned down for a date, it hurts. Everyone has faced rejection. Consider sharing a story about a time you experienced rejection firsthand. This could be from the distant past or more recently. Use your story to transition into the rejection of Jesus.

In John 11:45-53, John recorded the rejection of Jesus. While some of the Jews saw the sign of Lazarus’s resurrection and believed, many of the Pharisees did not. They rejected Jesus as the Messiah and plotted to kill Him. The Pharisees and religious leaders were worried about Roman retribution should Jesus gain a large following, so they decided to kill Him before that could happen. Little did they understand that Jesus would die, rather than the nation, so that all who believe in Him might live eternally.

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