

# 7 SIGNS

JESUS REVEALED IN  
THE BOOK OF JOHN

## **SESSION 7: JESUS BRINGS HIS FRIEND BACK TO LIFE**



In this series, we discover seven signs of Jesus in the gospel of John. Water turns into wine, one lunch feeds 5000 hungry bellies, people are healed, and Jesus walks on water! Are these random miraculous acts, or do they point to something more? Together we will explore what these miracles tell us about who Jesus is. Today, Jesus brings his friend back to life.



## Share

- When have you made an urgent call to a friend? How did they respond?
- Where have you seen God's power at work in the world?



## Pray

The passage that we are exploring today highlights the power of Jesus over death and his invitation to join in his life-changing work. Before we read it, let's pray together.

*Pray that the Holy Spirit will speak through God's Word.*



## Read

Read John 11:17-44.

*You might like to read it in a couple of different translations.*

<sup>17</sup>When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. <sup>18</sup>Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem, <sup>19</sup>and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. <sup>20</sup>When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house.

<sup>21</sup>Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup>But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask."

<sup>23</sup>Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again."

<sup>24</sup>"Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day."

<sup>25</sup>Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. <sup>26</sup>Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?"

<sup>27</sup>"Yes, Lord," she told him. "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God."

<sup>28</sup>Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, "The Teacher is here and wants to see you." <sup>29</sup>So Mary immediately went to him.

<sup>30</sup>Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. <sup>31</sup>When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus's grave to weep. So they followed her there. <sup>32</sup>When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."

<sup>33</sup>When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. <sup>34</sup>"Where have you put him?" he asked them.

They told him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup>Then Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup>The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!" <sup>37</sup>But some said, "This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

<sup>38</sup>Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. <sup>39</sup>"Roll the stone aside," Jesus told them.



But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, "Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible."

<sup>40</sup> Jesus responded, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?" <sup>41</sup> So they rolled the stone aside.

Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. <sup>42</sup> You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me."

<sup>43</sup> Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" <sup>44</sup> And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him go!"

*(New Living Translation)*



## Share

- As a group, have a go at retelling the story in your own words.
- Jesus doesn't arrive in Bethany until four days after he receives the message that Lazarus is sick (see verse 17). Some people think this was to show that he did things in God's timing. Others say it was because of the danger Jesus faced in going to this area. One theory notes that some Jews believed a soul stayed *near* the grave for three days, hoping to return to the body.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, Jesus may have waited until there was absolutely no hope of resuscitation.<sup>2</sup>
  - Why do you think Jesus waited to go to Lazarus?
- Martha runs to meet Jesus. Her words in verse 21 express her pain and grief. These words were loaded with the question, *why? Why didn't you come? Why did you allow this to happen? Why didn't you intervene?*
  - When have you reached out to Jesus and felt that he didn't show up for you?
- In verse 21, Martha doesn't try to hide her disappointment in Jesus' late arrival. Do you find it easy to be honest with God about your thoughts or feelings?

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus Rabbah 18.1

<sup>2</sup> [Enduring Word Bible Commentary John Chapter 11](#)

- In verse 22, Martha demonstrates her faith by telling Jesus, "But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask."<sup>3</sup>
  - How easy do you find it to trust Jesus when things seem to be falling apart?
- In verse 25, Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life."<sup>4</sup>
  - What do you think this meant to Martha?
  - What do you think Jesus was saying?
- In verse 27 Martha says, "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God."<sup>5</sup>
  - How does your belief about who Jesus is shape your reactions to things that happen?
- In verse 32, Mary falls at the feet of Jesus and pours out her grief. She says, "Lord, if only..."<sup>6</sup>
  - Do you think this was a statement of faith or a criticism of Jesus for coming late? Why?
  - Have you experienced a moment when you fell at the feet of Jesus and poured out your heart? What happened?
- Jesus is moved by the grief and tears of Mary and Martha and he weeps.
  - What does the image of Jesus weeping say to you about his nature?
  - How do you think God responds when we grieve?
  - How might this response of Jesus influence how we respond when others are grieving?
- Jesus performs this miracle in front of many witnesses. He does not need their help, but he invites them to take part. He asks them to roll away the stone. Then, in verse 44, he instructs them to take off the graveclothes.
  - Where do you see God inviting people to participate in his life-changing work?

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<sup>3</sup> John 11:22 (NLT)

<sup>4</sup> John 11:25 (NLT)

<sup>5</sup> John 11:27 (NLT)

<sup>6</sup> John 11:32 (NLT)

- In verse 41 Jesus prays, "Father, thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me."<sup>7</sup>
  - What difference do you think this prayer made to how people understood what happened next?
- When Lazarus is resurrected, we are told that the graveclothes are still wrapped around his face. In the account of the resurrection of Jesus, the graveclothes stay in the tomb, neatly folded (John 20:6-7). Jesus, unlike Lazarus, would never need graveclothes again.<sup>8</sup>
  - What other differences or similarities do you see between the resurrection of Lazarus and the resurrection of Jesus?
- What is something new you have taken from this story today?



## Pray

*Spend some time listening to the Holy Spirit in silence.*

*Then have a volunteer pray for the group about what was discussed today.*

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<sup>7</sup> John 11:41 (NLT)

<sup>8</sup> [New English Translation](http://netbible.com) NET Bible® copyright ©1996-2017 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C.  
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## Notes

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