

Connection Group Discussion Questions

For the week of July 31, 2016

John 11:17-27

These questions are to be used as a spring board for discussion.

Answers may or may not be found in the sermons.

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." 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. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

New International Version (NIV)

¹⁷ *On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. ²¹ "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." ²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷ "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."*

Connection Questions:

1. Jesus says to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life." This is before Jesus' crucifixion. Discuss how you think the people who were listening to Jesus' message in that moment interpreted what he said.

2. Why was Jesus telling his listeners he was the resurrection and the life? How was his message different from what his Jewish listeners already knew about God from their Jewish faith?

3. Do you think Jesus takes fatal illness seriously and personally? Why did he show up at Martha and Mary's house late and Lazarus was already dead?

4. What are some questions people have about God today that are similar to the issues raised here in Lazarus' death?

5. Does Jesus' statement, "I am the resurrection and the life," help people deal with the problem of evil in the world?

6. Does trusting in God have a place in experiencing resurrection and hope in our moments of suffering?

7. Rather than promising Martha a miracle, Jesus invites her to trust him to work for new life. What is the difference between these two approaches to God?

8. How can we find resurrection and hope in the vortex of physical and spiritual illnesses?

9. If we are not alert, looking and expecting God to come to us in our daily experiences, does it limit God's potential for us to find the life God seek for us to have?