



Gospel Community Notes & Questions

Title: When Death Comes Calling

Text: John 11:1-16

Theme: Every ounce of suffering in the believer's life is redeemed by the love and sacrifice of Jesus.

Teaching Notes: Lazarus, a friend of Jesus, falls ill, and when Jesus hears of it, he declares that the sickness will not end in death but will glorify God. Despite knowing Lazarus has died, Jesus stays two more days before deciding to go to Bethany. He explains to His disciples that Lazarus' death is for their benefit, so they may believe. The disciples are concerned about the dangers of returning to Judea, but Thomas, in a resigned yet courageous tone, suggests they go with Jesus, even if it means facing death.

Outline:

1. The prayer of surrender. (v. 3)

- a. They appeal directly to Jesus.
- b. On the basis of his authority and love.
- c. And they leave the answer up to him.

2. The perspective of sleep. (vv. 4, 11-13)

- a. To die in Christ is ultimately to enter rest.
- b. To die in Christ is to experience renewal.

3. The paradox of something greater. (vv. 5-6)

- Jesus wasn't going to heal a *sick* man; he was going to raise a *dead* man. He wasn't going to do something *difficult*; he was going to do something *impossible!*

4. The purpose of suffering.

- a. To glorify God. (v. 4)
- b. To strengthen your faith and character. (v. 15)

5. The price of salvation. (vv. 15-16)

- In order for Lazarus to live, Jesus had to die.



Questions to explore individually and with your group:

1. What's something you learned about the first half of the Lazarus resurrection story that you didn't know before?
2. Think of a crushing loss you've experienced or are experiencing now. What questions did/do you have either for God or about God?
3. When you experience problems (failure, disappointment, loss) what are some of your go-to reactions and "solutions"? Who do you trust, first and foremost, to fix your problems . . . and what do you learn about yourself from that?
4. What are some subtle ways you slip bargaining into your prayers? (e.g. "If you . . . then I'll . . ." "You should answer this because I . . .") On what basis do you appeal to God in prayer?
5. Take a few important things you're already praying about. What would it sound like for you to pray something this way: 1) Appeal directly to Jesus, 2) on the basis of his authority and love, 3) and leave the answer up to him?
6. How does the perspective of sleep change the way you think about death?
7. How does your mind process verses 5-6? Have you ever thought something like, "If God really loved me, he would . . ."? He would . . . what? What do you associate with love, both in terms of what it does and does not do or allow?
8. What are some of the greater things is God always accomplishing through suffering in the lives of believers? Why is suffering sometimes a necessary part of accomplishing a greater good in our lives?
9. What did it cost Jesus to go and raise Lazarus from the dead? How does this speak to you in the difficulties and loss you're experiencing?
10. What one actionable thing will you do this week in response to this Scripture?

Prayer Prompts:

1. Praise Jesus for redeeming the suffering and loss in your life. Praise him that your pain is never empty or meaningless because of the Cross.
2. Confess where you've responded poorly to suffering in your life, perhaps with only anger or unbelief, and surrender your reactions to the Lord.
3. Ask God to give you eyes to see some of the greater good he is working in your life through suffering, and ask him to strengthen your faith and character.