

## **John 11:1–45 — Bible Study Handout**

### **Big Idea**

Jesus reveals Himself as the resurrection and the life. In the face of grief, delay, and death, He shows that God's glory is not defeated by the tomb. He enters human sorrow with compassion and calls life out of places that seem beyond hope.

### **Context**

- Occurs near the end of Jesus' public ministry in John's Gospel.
- Follows growing opposition to Jesus from religious leaders in Jerusalem.
- Serves as the climactic sign in the Book of Signs, revealing Jesus' authority even over death.
- Takes place in Bethany, near Jerusalem, which heightens both the personal tenderness and the political danger of the moment.
- Prepares the way for the events leading to Jesus' own death and resurrection (Carson).

### **Key Themes**

- Jesus as the resurrection and the life
- The tension between divine love and divine delay
- Grief, compassion, and the tears of Jesus
- Faith in the middle of unanswered questions
- New life breaking into places of death
- Community helping "unbind" what grace has made alive

### **Passage Overview**

#### **Verses 1–6 — Love and Delay**

- Lazarus becomes sick, and Mary and Martha send word to Jesus.
- Jesus loves the family deeply, yet He does not come immediately.
- His delay is not indifference but part of a greater revelation of God's glory.

#### **Verses 7–16 — The Decision to Go**

- Jesus tells His disciples it is time to return to Judea.
- The disciples are concerned because of the danger there.
- Jesus speaks of Lazarus's death as sleep, showing His authority over death.
- Thomas responds with a mixture of courage and uncertainty.

#### **Verses 17–27 — Martha's Grief and Confession**

- Jesus arrives after Lazarus has been in the tomb four days.
- Martha tells Jesus that if He had been there, Lazarus would not have died.
- Jesus leads her from belief in a future resurrection to faith in Him personally.
- He declares, "I am the resurrection and the life."

#### **Verses 28–37 — Mary's Tears and Jesus' Tears**

- Mary comes to Jesus weeping, joined by the mourners.
- Jesus is deeply moved by the grief around Him.
- He weeps, revealing His compassion and nearness in human sorrow.

#### **Verses 38–44 — Lazarus Comes Out**

- Jesus comes to the tomb and orders the stone removed.
- Martha hesitates because death has already done its work.
- Jesus prays openly so the people may believe the Father sent Him.
- He calls Lazarus by name, and Lazarus comes out alive.
- Jesus tells the people to remove the grave clothes and let him go.

#### **Verse 45 — Responses to the Sign**

- Many who witness this miracle believe in Jesus.
- The sign reveals His glory, but it also sharpens the division between belief and unbelief.

### **Important Observations**

- John places Jesus' love for this family right beside His delay, forcing us to think more deeply about the ways God works.
- Martha and Mary both speak honest grief to Jesus, showing that faith can still ask hard questions.
- Jesus does not rush past sorrow. He enters it.
- The raising of Lazarus is not only a miracle story, it is a revelation of who Jesus is.
- Lazarus comes out alive, but others must help remove the grave clothes.
- In John's Gospel, signs are never ends in themselves. They point beyond the miracle to the identity of Christ (O'Day).

### **Wesleyan Insights**

- **Prevenient Grace:** Jesus is already at work before anyone understands what He is doing. Grace moves ahead of human comprehension (Collins).
- **Awakening Grace:** Martha's understanding grows as Jesus leads her from doctrine to personal trust in Him.
- **Transforming Grace:** Lazarus is called out of death into life, a picture of the restoring power of Christ.
- **Communal Holiness:** Jesus tells the community to unbind Lazarus, reminding us that grace often works through the church's care, patience, and support.

### **Life Application**

- God's delay is not always God's absence.
- Faith does not require pretending grief is easy.
- Jesus meets people with both truth and compassion.
- Some things in life feel sealed shut, but Christ still speaks life into impossible places.
- The church has a calling not only to celebrate new life, but to help people leave behind what still clings to them from the tomb.
- We can trust Jesus even when we do not yet understand His timing.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. Where have you struggled with God's timing in your own life?
2. What stands out to you most, Martha's confession, Mary's tears, or Jesus' tears?
3. What does it mean to you that Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life"?
4. Are there any "grave clothes" in your life that need to be removed?
5. How can the church help people walk in the freedom Christ gives?

### **Key Verse**

"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die." — John 11:25

### **Cross References**

- Isaiah 25:6–9
- Ezekiel 37:1–14
- John 5:24–29
- Romans 8:11
- 1 Corinthians 15:20–26
- Revelation 21:1–4

### **Takeaway**

The raising of Lazarus shows that Jesus is not only stronger than grief, delay, and death, He is the resurrection and the life. He still meets people in places that feel hopeless, and He still calls them into freedom, faith, and new life.