Community Group Study – John 11:1-16 (Study Guide)

The main goal of this week's study is to consider what it truly means to be loved by God.

Introduction

As an opening icebreaker or discussion, answer the following question:

1. **Have you ever known someone who seemed to be one of "God's favorites"? What made you think that?**

Bible Study

The sermon was on John 11:1-16. We preached from this text at Zoe on 10/11//26 in a sermon called "Does Jesus Really Love Me?"

11 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. 3 So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." 4 But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. 7 Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." 8 The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" 9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10 But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." 11 After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." 12 The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." 13 Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. 14 Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, 15 and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." 16 So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

In this passage, Jesus learns that his beloved friend, Lazarus, is sick. But instead of going to him, he delays.

Word: Studying the Text

The sermon had three points:

I. The Delay, which teaches us about love–it doesn't always look the way we expect
II. The Daylight, which teaches us about life–it's about more than just staying alive
III. The destination, which teaches us about love–what God's love looks like

2. **What do we learn about this family (two sisters, Martha and Mary, and one brother, Lazarus) from the first three verses of this chapter? What else do we know about them from the rest of Scripture?**
3. **Look at verse 3. What do you notice about the message that Martha and Mary send? What does it reveal about how they understood their relationship with Jesus?**
4. **Read verses 5-6 together. What are we supposed to expect after the "so" in verse 6 and how does John subvert our expectations? What does this teach about the nature of Christ's love?**
5. **Consider verses 1-6 as a whole. Why do you think John tells us all these things *before* he tells us what Jesus actually does?**
6. **What does the disciples' question in verse 8 betray about where their thoughts are?**
7. **What are your first thoughts when you read verses 9-10? How does Jesus's previous teaching on the themes of day/night and light/dark help us to understand more of what he's getting at here?**
8. **Why do you think Jesus says he is "glad" he wasn't there to heal Lazarus? What's the right way to understand this?**

Worship: Getting to the Heart

9. **Read Matthew 10:28-31. What's the difference between believing that God's love means sparing you from suffering and believing that God's love means his presence with you in it?**
10. **Read Matthew 6:25-33. What does it mean that life is "more than food…and clothing"? How does this challenge you?**

Work: Being Doers of the Word

11. **Is there anything in your life that is taking up your precious "daylight hours" that really shouldn't be so important? What would it look like to make a practical change to your priorities this week?**

Prayer Time

Break up into single-gender prayer groups. Spend time in prayer lifting one another up. Feel free to share any personal prayer requests as well and pray for those.