Community Group Study – John 11:38-44 (Study Guide)

The main goal of this week's study is to reflect on the hope we have even in the face of death.

Introduction

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

1. **What is the worst smell that you have had to track down, and what was the source?**

Bible Study

The sermon was on John 11:38-44. We preached from this text at Zoe on 10/25/26 in a sermon called "What Is Our Hope in Life and Death?"

John 11:38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." 40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." 43 When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." 44 The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

This passage concludes the Lazarus narrative. Though grief and death are real, there is something even more powerful and "real" – namely, Jesus and the life he brings.

Note: If your group is large, consider splitting into smaller groups to go through the discussion questions below.

Word: Studying the Text

The sermon had three points:

I. The purpose, which is about seeing (38-40)
II. The prayer, which is about believing (41-42)
III. The power, which is about hoping (43-44)

2. **It will be helpful to recap the Lazarus story so far, and the previous two sermons. Invite group members to recount what has happened up to this point in the story.**
3. **Why does John include details emphasizing Lazarus's death, such as calling Martha "the sister of the dead man" and her comment about the odor (v 39)?**
4. **Jesus tells Martha that if she believes, she will "see the glory of God." What is the glory of God, and what does it mean to see it?**
5. **Why does Jesus pray this unusual prayer here (vv 41-42)?**
6. **Raising Lazarus is the seventh sign that Jesus performs in John's Gospel. What is the eighth sign, and how is it even better than Lazarus's resurrection?**

Worship: Getting to the Heart

7. **How can we try to "see the glory of God" in our trials and sufferings?**
8. **Based on this text, why does God allow rather than prevent tragedy in Christians' lives? How can this be a comfort to us?**
9. **Have you known a Christian who maintained hope and joy amidst death? How did their testimony impact you?**

Work: Being Doers of the Word

10. **Is there someone (Christian or non-Christian) you can encourage, follow up with, and/or pray for in light of this sermon? For example, someone who is dealing with suffering, a death in the family, etc.**

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.