Community Group Study – John 11:45-57 (Study Guide)

The main goal of this week's study is to reflect on the Lord's control over our lives.

Introduction

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

1. **What is something that seemed like an inconvenience or frustration at the time, but turned out to be a benefit or "blessing in disguise"?**

(Remember how Pastor Greg's wrist pain alerted him to a more serious health problem.)

Bible Study

The sermon was on John 11:45-57. We preached from this text at Zoe on 11/1/26 in a sermon called "The Divine Conspiracy."

John 11:45 Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, 46 but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47 So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. 48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." 49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. 50 Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish." 51 He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. 53 So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

54 Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.

55 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. 56 They were looking for Jesus and saying to one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? That he will not come to the feast at all?" 57 Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

This passage bridges from the Lazarus narrative to Jesus's final week. The religious leaders plot to kill Jesus, but this plot is part of God's ultimate plan of salvation.

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 panic, which shows us how fear can lead to sin (45-48)
II. The plot, which shows us that what men mean for evil, God means for good (49-53)
III. The purpose, which shows us that God's purpose will stand (54-57)

2. **What was "the Council" (v 47), and what did its members do?**
3. **What about Jesus concerned the Sanhedrin (vv 47-48)? What were they afraid was going to happen?**
4. **The high priest, Caiaphas, suggests that it is better that one man die for the people rather than the whole nation perish (v 50). What did he mean by these words? What did *God* mean by them?**
5. **How did the early Christians think about God's involvement in the death of Jesus? Read Acts 4:23-28.**
6. **How did the disciples' awareness of God's purpose affect their witness and commitment? Read Acts 4:29-31.**

Worship: Getting to the Heart

7. **Are you prone to any particular "what if" spirals of fear? For example, concerns for your job, your family, society, etc. In what circumstances do they arise, and what do you do about them?**
8. **Pastor Greg reminded us that it's okay to plan, but not to plan as if we can control the outcome. How can you tell the difference between healthy planning and attempting to exercise control that is rightfully God's?**

Work: Being Doers of the Word

9. **Is there an area of your life where you can live more "boldly" in faith as you trust God's control over your life? What would this look like, practically, for you 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.