



SESSION 8: Encounters with the King

Lazarus, Mary and Martha

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Key takeaways for Pre-Disciples:

- Jesus is the king who has power over death
- Those who believe in Jesus will share in his life that he has with God forever
- Jesus is angry and grieved to tears over the death and unbelief that cause suffering in the world and to the humans that God loves

Part 1

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Part 1: catch up

- Icebreaker question – Get everyone to share about how their week has gone, what has been happening in their life in the past 7 days. Listen out for things you could pray for.
- Ask everyone how they got on sharing the story
 - (this is not to keep tabs on people, but is a helpful reminder that part of them learning the story well is you asking them every week if they managed to share it.)
- Ask someone to re-tell last week's story
- **Part 2 (story)**

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Lazarus, Martha and Mary (John 11)

Story-Audio-Link: <https://christ-central.org.uk/pre-disciple/>

So Jesus continued teaching and healing the sick,

*Then one day when Jesus was in the north of the country **he received a message** from some of his best friends in the world, a family of two sisters, Martha and Mary, and their brother Lazarus. **The message said that Lazarus was very sick. When Jesus heard this he said to his disciples, 'this sickness will not end in death, but this has happened so that God's glory will be revealed through me.'** Now Jesus loved this family very much, so he stayed 2 days longer and then Jesus and his disciples travelled to see Lazarus,*

Now Lazarus had been dead four days when Jesus arrived, and Martha went out to meet him. When she saw Jesus she said 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died, but even now I know God will do what you ask him.'

Jesus responded, 'Your brother will live again'



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Martha said 'I know he will, in the resurrection at the end of time'

Jesus said to Martha, 'I am that resurrection, I am that life. Anyone who lives in me and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this Martha?'

Martha said 'Yes Lord, I have always believed. You are God's promised king, his very son, who has come into this world.'

At this moment Mary came to Jesus and when Jesus saw Mary and the family weeping, he felt a deep anger well up within him, and he asked where they had laid Lazarus. And they took him to the tomb, and Jesus began weeping.

Then Jesus, still angered in his heart, said 'open up the tomb, take away the stone'

Martha said to Jesus 'But Lord, he's been dead four days, the smell will be awful.'

Jesus responded, 'did not I tell you, that if you believed you would see God's glory?'

Then Jesus shouted, 'Lazarus, come out!'....and the dead man walked out of the tomb, still wrapped in the cloth they'd buried him in. Jesus spoke the family 'unwrap him and let him go.'

Now many people believed in Jesus when they saw this happen, but others went to report on him to the religious leaders. When they heard what had happened, they were afraid that this Jesus movement would become too powerful, so they began plotting and arranging how they would arrest and kill Jesus.

Re-tell the story as group: allow everyone to share a section of the story. If there is more than 6 people consider breaking up into pairs to retell the story.

(this a long story; a suggestion would be to break into scenes)

Scene 1 – Jesus receives the message of Lazarus and waits for 2 days

Scene 2 – Jesus and co. travel to the family, Jesus meets Martha and they talk (I am that resurrection and that life)

Scene 3- Martha calls Mary, Mary meets Jesus followed by the funeral party, Jesus wells up with anger

Scene 4 – They go to the tomb, Jesus weeps, 'roll away the stone' Jesus prays. Lazarus comes out

Scene 5- people report what happened to the religious leaders. They start plotting Jesus' death.



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Questions for discussion

1. What do you like about this story/What stood out to you?
2. What bothered you about this story?
3. What does this story show you about God?
4. What does this story show you about people?

Part 3 (practice / takeaways)

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Ask the remaining questions:

5. What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
6. How will you remember this story? (tell it!)
7. Who are you able to tell this story to?

Encourage everyone in the group to think of people in their life whom they could retell the story to; mention that at the next session we will recap the story and ask who remembered to tell the story. Again it is helpful to emphasise the reason for going and telling the story ourselves is that it is the best way for us to remember the story.

Notes for leaders - questions / topics that may arise

What is this whole thing about the Resurrection at the end of time?

- The mainstream belief of most Jews at the time of Jesus was that at the end of time, God would raise up his faithful people to life with him. When Jesus responds by saying 'I am that Resurrection and that Life' he is diverting Martha's hope from an abstract future day, to an imminent and personal hope in himself. He is the one who raises the dead and he alone gives life. However, he not only gives eternal life and raises the dead, he can say that *he is* the resurrection and he is the life, because this life is intrinsically bound up in his person; there is no eternal life nor resurrection outside of Jesus.



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Why is Jesus angry when he sees the weeping and mourning of Mary and the funeral party?

- Although some translations refer to Jesus as being 'deeply moved in spirit', the word *embrimaomai* actually refers to something far stronger such as 'anger' or 'outrage'. But why was Jesus angry? In the story, there seems to be a direct link between seeing the mourning and the weeping of Mary and the funeral party, in which case there are two main suggestions why Jesus is angry at seeing this.
- 1.) Jesus is moved by the grief of his friends, and is therefore angry with the evil, sickness and death that cause so much suffering in this world outside the garden. Death is not part of God's original creation and therefore Jesus is angry at the brokenness and evil in the world that is causing his dearly loved friends to suffer.
- 2.) Jesus is angry that the mourners are grieving without and hope or faith in who he is. Grief is perfectly right, but grief that degenerates into despair without hope is a denial of the resurrection and perhaps a dismissing of who Jesus is.
- Neither of these are exclusive from the other, what we do know is that Jesus was human, and experienced the full measure of human emotions in all their complexity. We see that Jesus was moved to tears, but also was angry at the situation of death and mourning and perhaps unbelief. His love and empathy is combined with divine outrage. We can John hinting at this, when Jesus weeps John uses the term *Dakryo* to different from the weeping of Mary and the mourners – *Klaio*, the latter carries with it a sense of lament and grief.



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Feedback from Group Leader

In our vision for discipleship, we have identified 4 key ingredients to healthy and growing disciples. As you are leading your group, for each session, make some notes under each heading for how the group is faring in each of these areas .

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