

Life Groups

Signposts to Jesus



• 2026

• TOPIC 7 • JOHN 11:1-45

Topic

Lazarus is raised from the dead.

First Thoughts

This account of the seventh and last of John's signs acts as a bridge between Jesus' ministry and the events that lead to his death. Rather than the miracle leading to a debate about who Jesus is, here we see that the discussion takes place en route to the event. In chapter 10 Jesus is again back at the beginning where John had first been baptising. After a while a message arrives from Mary and Martha informing Jesus that his friend is sick.



1. How do we see people deal with the illness of a close friend or relative?
2. Do you think it is any easier for people of faith to watch those they love go through a period of illness?

Focus

It is not a new thing that those who follow Jesus become ill. There are no promises in the bible that Christians will always be healed or that they will experience continued good health and never suffer with sickness or disease. In John 11 we find a follower of Jesus, even a close friend, has fallen ill.

The Scriptures

 Read John 11:1-45

1. What do you think is the purpose of the message sent from the sisters?
2. Why do you think Jesus waited for two more days before taking action?

Going Further

1. Does the attitude of the disciples in verse 8 surprise you?
2. Do the words of "doubting" Thomas surprise you in any way? Verse 16
3. Why do you think Martha runs to greet Jesus but Mary stays in the house?
4. Do you think Martha's response in verse 24 sheds any light on the message they had sent? Were they expecting a resurrection?
5. Verse 33 & 38 report that Jesus was angry and deeply troubled. What do you think he was angry about?

Going Further continued

6 Lazarus was a common name meaning “God helps”. In what ways did this seventh sign see that become a reality for those involved?

7. Martha protests Jesus’ request to move the stone. Do you think she has any inkling of what Jesus is about to do? v39

Life Application

1. Jesus obviously had something different in mind than the sisters and the disciples. Should knowing this always affect our expectations?

2. Do you think Martha’s reply in verse 21 tells us anything about how we can approach God?

3. A commentator says that this story demonstrates that God’s delays do not indicate a lack of love or care. Do you agree with this?

4. Do you think this account provides any lessons for us about patience and suffering through or with illness?

“Victory over death is an aspect of living in association with Jesus.”

- Filament Bible Notes

“As with Mary’s request about the wine...Jesus takes his own initiative, in his own time and acts when he is ready. ”

- Richard A. Burridge

Summary

Each of these seven signs in John’s gospel point to who Jesus is. They each tell the reader that Jesus is the awaited messiah but more than that, they leave little doubt that Jesus has power and authority over nature, sickness and even death. These signs point to Jesus as divine, a fact stated at the start of chapter 1.

- Sign 1 shows us that Jesus transforms.
- Sign 2 shows us that Jesus has power, even from a distance.
- Sign 3 shows us that Jesus can both heal and restore.
- Sign 4 shows us that Jesus provides for and sustains life.
- Sign 5 shows us that Jesus has power over nature and any obstacle.
- Sign 6 shows us that Jesus brings sight, both physical and spiritual.
- Sign 7 shows us that Jesus has the power over death.

The final sign in John’s gospel is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The purpose of all of these is that God may be glorified and that people will believe “that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.” (20:30-31)

To finish

Take a few moments to give thanks for the life groups, life group leaders and those who open their homes to enable us to meet, support and learn from each other. Thank God for the lessons learned from John’s gospel and ask for the wisdom to apply the practical application of these lessons to our own lives.