

COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Spring 2025 - Signs - "The Glory of His Love"

Monday, Apr. 14 - Sunday, Apr. 20 (Week 11)

EMPHASIS FOR THE MONTH: **Going Deeper Through Vulnerability.** This month, we're focusing on what it means to go deeper: not just in our discussions, but in our relationships with one another. Depth doesn't happen without vulnerability, and vulnerability starts with us as leaders. When we open up first, we create a safe space for others to do the same. Whether it's sharing a personal story, being honest about struggles, or asking questions that move past the surface-level, let's model what real community looks like. Depth takes courage, but it also leads to the kind of growth and connection we long for in our groups. Let's be the first to go there. Let's create a culture where people are known, seen, and loved. I'd love to hear how you're encouraging deeper connection this month, feel free to share stories, wins, or ideas!

ICE BREAKER: If you could have a conversation with any biblical figure about their experience of God's timing, who would it be and what would you ask them?

CAB ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Celebrate the hope and joy of Easter with us! We invite you to our Good Friday service on April 18 at 5:45 PM (Childcare: Nursery - Pre-K 4) and our Easter Sunday services on April 20 at 9:15 & 11 AM (Childcare: Nursery- 5th grade). Come as you are and bring your family and friends... we can't wait to worship with you!
2. We hope you will join us every Tuesday evening at 6:30 PM for our weekly corporate prayer gathering.

PRAYER FOR DISCUSSION: Leader or Co-Leader prays for the discussion time. Pray that the The Holy Spirit would assist in the conversing, processing, and listening of the discussion.

SERMON DISCUSSION TIME: Have someone read the passage: John 11:1-44, and then read this sermon summary to jog everyone's memory:

In the sermon, Pastor Mike focuses on the profound miracle of Lazarus's resurrection, emphasizing that these signs or miracles in John's Gospel serve as reflections of the glory of Jesus. He stresses that the story is more than just about Lazarus: it reveals the counterintuitive love of Jesus. As Lazarus falls ill and dies, Jesus's response to Martha and Mary's plea for help is puzzling, as he delays his arrival intentionally. Pastor Mike points out that this delay is woven into the fabric of divine love, demonstrating that sometimes grief and suffering lead to greater faith and understanding of God's glory. Pastor Mike delves into the emotional interactions between Jesus and Martha and Mary, highlighting their different responses to grief. Martha engages with theological understanding, while Mary expresses raw, emotional pain. Through their encounters with Jesus, Pastor Mike illustrates that, in the midst of suffering, it is essential to recognize Jesus's love and the purpose of grief, not as a sign of abandonment but as a pathway to deeper faith. Pastor Mike concludes that true conversion is a spiritual resurrection, as only Jesus can call individuals from spiritual death into life and invites listeners to consider their own "grave of sin" and respond to Jesus's call to new life.



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- How does the sermon describe the "peculiar, counterintuitive love of Jesus"?
 - The sermon describes the "peculiar, counterintuitive love of Jesus" as a love that does not always align with our expectations of immediate comfort or relief from pain. Instead of rushing to prevent Lazarus's death, Jesus deliberately delays his visit, ensuring that Lazarus dies. This delay is not due to a lack of love but is precisely because of his deep love for Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. The sermon emphasizes that Jesus's love is demonstrated through his commitment to reveal his glory and deepen the faith of those he loves, even if it means allowing them to experience grief and sorrow. This love is counterintuitive because it challenges the assumption that love always seeks to prevent pain, instead, it shows that Jesus values the strengthening of faith and the revelation of his glory above immediate relief from suffering.
- Can you think of a time in your life when you felt God's love in a "peculiar, counterintuitive" way? How did it change your perspective?
- The sermon mentions that Jesus allows grief to strengthen our faith. How do you see this principle at work in your own life or in the lives of others?
- Discuss the significance of Jesus delaying his visit to Lazarus. How does this challenge our understanding of God's timing?
 - **Purposeful Delay for Greater Glory:** Jesus's delay is intentional and serves a greater purpose. By waiting until Lazarus has died, Jesus sets the stage for a more profound demonstration of his power and glory. The miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead becomes a powerful sign that points to Jesus as the resurrection and the life, revealing his divine authority over life and death.
 - **Strengthening Faith:** The delay is also meant to strengthen the faith of the disciples, Mary, Martha, and the onlookers. Jesus explicitly states that he is glad he was not there to prevent Lazarus's death so that the disciples may believe. This indicates that the experience of witnessing Lazarus's resurrection would deepen their faith and understanding of who Jesus is.
 - **Challenging Assumptions About Love:** The delay challenges the assumption that love always seeks to prevent suffering. Jesus's love is shown not by preventing Lazarus's death but by using the situation to reveal a deeper truth and bring about a greater good. This teaches that Jesus's love is not about shielding us from all pain but about leading us to a deeper experience of his presence and glory.
 - **Foreshadowing Jesus's Own Death and Resurrection:** The delay and miracle foreshadow Jesus's own death and resurrection. By raising Lazarus, Jesus sets in motion the events that will lead to his crucifixion, demonstrating his willingness to face suffering and death out of love for humanity.



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- How can you apply patience and trust in God's timing in a current situation you are facing?
- The sermon invites us to consider what we have "sealed in the dark" that Jesus wants to bring to light. What might this "stone" be in your life and what steps can you take to "roll away the stone" and allow Jesus to work in that area?

PRAY TOGETHER: Spend time taking ***and recording*** prayer requests and then pray together as a group (*I strongly encourage you to send out the prayer requests weekly to your group to keep everyone informed and in the loop on how to pray for one another throughout the week. This also makes it easier to check-in with people who have shared requests to see how the Lord has been working in their lives*).



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