First Baptist Friendswood Students

Daily Discipleship — October 25-30

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25TH

CHRIST CONNECTION

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He showed that He has power over death. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Because Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, we have full assurance that Jesus will one day defeat death forever and resurrect us from the dead.

DEFIANT FAITH — JOHN 11

DEATH STINGS NOW — JOHN 11:17-37

17 Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Bethany was near
Jerusalem, about two miles off, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them
concerning their brother. 20 So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary
remained seated in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have
died. 22 But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your
brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last
day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall
he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She said to him,
"Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world." 28 When she had
said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." 29
And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but
was still in the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who were with her in the house,
consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb
to weep there. 32 Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him,
"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews
who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. 34 And he said,
"Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus wept. 36 So the Jews said, "See
how he loved him!" 37 But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have
kept this man from dying?"

DEATH HAS LOST — JOHN 11:38-44

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."

THEOLOGY CONNECTION — RESURRECTION

Both the Old and New Testaments teach that one day believers will experience a resurrection of the body from the dead (Isa. 26:19; Ezek. 37:12-14; John 11). The promise of the resurrection is found in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and it will take place at His return in the future. Because Jesus was the firstfruits of the resurrection, Christians can be assured that their resurrection will be both bodily and glorious (Phil. 3:20-21; Rom. 8:22-23). The hope of the future resurrection gives Christians confidence that death has been defeated in Jesus's death and resurrection.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

DEATH STINGS NOW — JOHN 11:17-37

• How did Mary and Martha react to Jesus's delay? How did they feel?

• Why do you think Jesus wept (v. 35)?

• Read verse 37. When have you wrestled with thoughts like these—that God could've prevented suffering but didn't? Why doesn't He?

DEATH HAS LOST — JOHN 11:38-44

• What does Martha's comment about the odor reveal about her thoughts (v. 39)?

• What does Jesus calling Lazarus out of the tomb reveal about His authority over death?

• How should believing Jesus defeated death change the way we live now?

How would your life look different if you leaned on faith instead of human logic? How does this passage strengthen your faith?

LIFE CONNECTION

Our world moves quickly. We order fast food and within minutes, the meal is ready. We live fast-paced lives. How has this affected us? Well, many of us aren't good at waiting. Moving slowly or patiently isn't our preference. But our desire for instant gratification harms us when it comes to our relationship with God. We wrestle with praying to and trusting in a God who may not give us what we ask for immediately—or at all. We especially struggle when God's answer results in discomfort, pain, loss, or disappointment. We may question if God is good and if He can be trusted. But we must remember that God is eternal in His nature and understanding. When His timing or His answer doesn't meet our expectations, we can actually breathe a sigh of relief. Why? Because God sees what we don't see and knows what we don't know. More importantly, God does what is good because He is good (Ps. 119:68). When our circumstances don't feel good in the moment, we can know that our good God will do only what is good and what brings Him glory.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26TH — PSALM 34:17-18

If God delivers His children from "all of their troubles," then why do we still experience pain? "All their troubles" does not mean a life free from suffering; it points to the faithful compassion of God, His steadfast presence, and the ultimate rescue of His children that will take place when He comes back. The Lord doesn't ignore pain. He is a God who listens. He hears every cry and sees every hardship. He promises that rescue will come, but it does not always look the way we think it should. Deliverance can take place in many different ways: strength to persevere through a trial, comfort in the midst of pain, or ultimate restoration found in eternity with Christ. While we cannot expect to see total deliverance from all our troubles here on earth, we can expect to be held and seen by a loving God until we experience that ultimate deliverance. We see a clear picture of the nearness of God and heartache coexisting in John 11. When Jesus arrived after the death of His friend, Lazarus, we see that Mary and Martha are grieving deeply. Both Mary and Martha suggested that if Jesus had made it to them faster, Lazarus would still be alive. Jesus knew what was coming next. He knew that He had the power to raise Lazarus from the dead, but His knowledge of the future did not stop Him from entering into Mary and Martha's sorrow and being "deeply moved" by it. This should remind us of the beautiful truth that God is not distant while we are hurting; He intentionally draws near and enters our sorrow. Just like Mary and Martha, we don't always understand or agree with God's timeframe, nor do we see the whole picture, but we can trust in His promises. While God's Word doesn't guarantee that His love will come in the form of instant solutions, we are promised that His love will show up in the form of His presence, no matter the circumstance.

• Have you ever felt like God was distant from you while you were hurting? What made you feel that way?

• How does knowing that God promises to be present at all times change the way you view suffering?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for not always answering my prayers in the way I think You should. Your ways and Your thoughts are far higher than mine, and I trust that Your plans for me are good even when I can't see the good in my circumstance.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27TH — ISAIAH 53:1-3

We're often surprised when our expectations are wrong. Jews had expectations for the Messiah, and Jesus was not the Messiah the people expected. Instead of coming in power with prestige and popularity, He was rejected. Jesus was no stranger to suffering and pain. He was not hidden from hardship; He entered fully into a broken world and took on the total penalty of sin. When we are hurting, it is easy to feel like God is far off and doesn't understand what we are going through, but that couldn't be further from the truth. Isaiah 53 shows us that Jesus not only understands our feelings, but He experienced them. He is familiar with the pain of being misunderstood, mocked, dismissed, and rejected. Not only did He feel emotional pain, but He experienced spiritual and physical anguish as well. We don't serve a distant and blind God. We commune personally with a Savior who walked through deep suffering. In the main passage from this week, we see a connection to Isaiah 53. The Son of God chose to bear the weight of emotional pain alongside those He loved who were grieving. Seeing Jesus weep in John 11 and described as the Suffering Servant in the book of Isaiah helps us to realize His empathy for us. When we feel that we don't belong and our pain doesn't matter, we can rest in the fact that Jesus understands and sees us. Because we serve a risen Savior who knows our pain, we can bring every hurt to Jesus and trust that we will be met with compassion and with the promise that our suffering will not have the final word.

• What effect does this description of Jesus have on you?

• Instead of coming as the powerful King Israel expected, Jesus was born as a baby and experienced all types of suffering while here. Why is the truth that Jesus was not shielded from suffering comforting?

PRAY

Jesus, thank You for experiencing all types of suffering, even death on a cross, so that we could have a Savior who understands us. Help me to remember Your empathy so that I can run to You more quickly in trials.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28TH — ISAIAH 53:4-9

This passage shifts the focus from Jesus understanding what we walk through to Him carrying what belonged to us. Jesus didn't come only to walk with those who were suffering, but He stepped into our brokenness and took our suffering upon Himself. Isaiah points out that Jesus's suffering was not punishment for His own mistakes but ours. This truth has the power to set us free. We don't have to carry the weight that Jesus died to release us from. Mistakes we wish we could unmake, the pressure to perform perfectly, guilt over wrong choices, shame from hidden darkness in our lives—Jesus took the weight of all this and more on Himself and carried it to the cross. Isaiah prophesied: "He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities." The punishment that we deserved fell on Jesus, not by accident, but because He willingly accepted it in obedience to the Father. Jesus was completely innocent, yet He willingly took on the pain and consequences He didn't deserve because of His great love for us. Unlike many of the people who witnessed Jesus's crucifixion, we know that His suffering wasn't meaningless or random. His suffering was God's plan, making His desire for restoration possible and available to all people. Jesus died in our place and made a way for us to have freedom from the weight we were never designed to carry alone. Because of this, we must stop trying to pick back up and carry what He already left in the grave. Jesus not only understood our pain; He took it upon Himself so we could walk in the freedom He won for us instead of the condemnation we deserved.

• What weight are you carrying even though Jesus took it on Himself?

• How should the truth that Jesus did not earn the punishment He received, but He took the penalty we deserved, change the way we live?

PRAY

Jesus, thank You for taking the punishment I deserved and the weight of guilt and shame on Yourself. Help me to live in the freedom You won for me.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29TH — ISAIAH 53:10-12

Have you ever been deceived by how something looked? Maybe the way it appeared was drastically different in person than you expected. Appearances can be deceiving, and Jesus's death certainly appeared like loss. Isaiah 53 reminds us that Jesus's suffering did not end in defeat but in victory. This passage shows us that even in death, God was working out the greatest redemption story to ever be written. The perfect Son of God gave His life as a final sacrifice for sin. Although He had done no wrong, "it was the will of the Lord to crush him" so that many would be brought into right standing with God. Just like the death of Lazarus wasn't final, Jesus rose from the grave, claiming victory over death and changing the end of the story for those who would put their trust in Him. Because of the victory of Christ, suffering no longer has the final word, and sin and death no longer have power to define the ending of our story.

Let's think back to Mary and Martha. While they had heard of the ending of the story, they had no idea what the next chapter held for them and for their brother, for whom they were grieving. As far as they knew, their brother's death was final, and all hope was lost. They were confused and hurt that Jesus had not gotten there in time to heal him. In the same way, we may walk through times when life feels confusing, unfair, lonely, and disappointing, but because Jesus bore our sin and conquered the grave, we know that life exists even in situations that seem like loss. This prophecy written in Isaiah and fulfilled in the Gospels reminds us that God is always moving in ways that we cannot see and may not understand, but we can walk with hope knowing that He has already won the ultimate victory for us.

• Why does Jesus's death and resurrection give us the ability to walk with hope, even when we suffer?

• God is faithful to keep His Word. How does reflecting on the fulfilled prophecies of the Old Testament encourage you in difficult times?

PRAY

Lord, thank You for being a God who is always working behind the scenes to bring about Your plans and purposes. Help me to take joy in remembering that because of who You are, suffering isn't final.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30TH — JOHN 11:1-4; ROMANS 8:28

When Jesus was told that His friend, Lazarus, had become sick, He said something that would have shocked anyone who heard it: Lazarus's illness was for the "glory of God." Jesus then intentionally waited two days before traveling to see Lazarus and his sisters, and during this timeframe, Lazarus died. To those who were mourning, this death felt confusing, unnecessary, and painful. Jesus deeply loved Lazarus, yet He allowed his death to happen in order that God's glory was revealed, even through pain. God's glory through our pain is something that can be hard to see and understand when our own pain often feels pointless. While walking through loss, disappointment, mental health struggles, or family issues, we understandably question why God would allow us to hurt. Jesus, when He wept over Lazarus's death, shows us that while we shouldn't deny the existence of pain, we should remember that pain and death do not have the final word. Romans 8:28 reminds us that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him. This "good" should not be misinterpreted as the absence of pain because, as believers, Jesus promised we will have trouble in this world (John 16:33). Instead, we should remember that this "good" represents God's greater purpose of making us more like His Son, which He can accomplish through working all things together. His plans are good, and they cannot be stopped. In the story of Lazarus's death, the "good" accomplished was God's glory revealed and lives changed through belief in Jesus. God is not the author of pain, but like we see in this passage, He does use it to draw people to faith. Even when we don't understand why difficult things happen, we can be confident that God is present in our pain with us and that our suffering isn't the end.

• Many people believed in Jesus as a result of Lazarus's death. How does this challenge you to reframe your thoughts about your own trials?

• Knowing that the "good" in Romans 8:28 refers to God's will, how can the truth that He works all things together for good encourage you?

PRAY

Father, thank You for being the only One who is capable of working all things together for good. When I feel like something is too dark to be used for good, remind me that nothing is outside of Your control.