



WEEKLY STUDY

Week 3

In this week's message, we continued in John chapter 11. On the heels of Lazarus' return to life, we see two distinct responses. Some people were amazed at the power of Jesus and came to believe. Others were offended and threatened by the miracles performed by and attention given to Jesus. Many of us find ourselves somewhere in between. We can even feel like both groups of people at the same time. *I believe, but I also want to control the world around me.* We discovered that the answer is the cross. The cross of Jesus is the place where we have to let go of control and receive the gift of grace. May you find yourself in that place all week long, and may it change you day by day.

Peace of Christ,
Dr. Mark Youngman
Lead Pastor of Discipleship

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt. You might also pray this prayer of confession that we prayed at the end of the message.

*Merciful God,
we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have failed to be an obedient church.
We have not done your will,
we have broken your law,
we have rebelled against your love,
we have not loved our neighbors,
and we have not heard the cry of the needy.
Forgive us, we pray.
Free us for joyful obedience,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: JOHN 11.45-48

Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation."

- The contrast in responses to the resurrection of Lazarus was drastic. Lazarus wasn't the main event for long because it was Jesus who had called him out of the grave. By upsetting the rules of life, death, and religion, Jesus had caused a stir. Is it easier to receive new life or to attack the One who brings it?
- *Jesus, today I choose to be among those who marvel at the miracle of resurrection. May it truly upset the stagnant course of my life and bring me into your presence.*

TUESDAY: JOHN 11.49-53

Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! ⁵⁰ You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."

⁵¹ He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, ⁵² and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. ⁵³ So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

- God spoke through Caiaphas to those who were worrying about their control over the nation of Israel. Jesus' impending death would not be about silencing a threat, but about saving the scattered children of God. Caiaphas himself might have been surprised at the words coming from his own mouth. In that moment, his words only resulted in an increased urgency among those who were plotting against Jesus. When is Good News not good news? For the chief priest and the Pharisees, it was not good news when it disrupted their hold on power.
- *God, shine a light on my own need for control. Help me to surrender fully to you today that I might take my place among your children who are brought together as one.*

WEDNESDAY: JOHN 11.54-57

Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the people of Judea. Instead he withdrew to a region near the wilderness, to a village called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples.

⁵⁵ When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover. ⁵⁶ They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple courts they asked one another, "What do you think? Isn't he coming to the festival at all?" ⁵⁷ But the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who found out where Jesus was should report it so that they might arrest him.

- In this time when many people were plotting against him, Jesus withdrew. It might seem strange to our sense of right and wrong. This is not how the hero-story is supposed to go. We might be confused when the One with the power to raise a man from the grave would withdraw. But he was not running, he was waiting. Where do you do your waiting for the fulfillment of God's promises?
- *Jesus, I wait with you and work with you for the coming of your Kingdom.*

THURSDAY: LUKE 20.20

Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies, who pretended to be sincere. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he said, so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor.

- The enemies of Jesus were watching carefully in hopes of seeing a misstep. They parsed his words looking for an excuse to take him out and remove the threat to their system. It can be exhausting—exerting energy in hopes of taking down your enemy. (Although that seems to be a favorite pastime in many segments of our world.) Oh that we would put ourselves to living the words of Jesus.
- *God, I thank you for your patience with me. I look to your Word today to give me life. Open my mind and my heart to hear from you.*

FRIDAY: LUKE 9.49-50, ISAIAH 50.6-7

John answered, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him because he does not follow with us."⁵⁰ But Jesus said to him, "Do not stop him, for whoever is not against you is for you." Luke 9.49-50

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

*I offered my back to those who beat me,
my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard;
I did not hide my face
from mocking and spitting.*

*⁷Because the Sovereign Lord helps me,
I will not be disgraced.*

*Therefore have I set my face like flint,
and I know I will not be put to shame. Isaiah 50.6-7*

- The words from the prophet Isaiah seem to point to the moment in Jesus' life described in Luke 9. He was determined to move forward to Jerusalem.

It seems that we are always trying to figure out the rules. And our own insecurities often lead to a perceived need to deflect and point attention to those rule-breakers *out there*. They make us look better, right? But Jesus demonstrated a striking resolve for the days ahead. The rule breaker in question was really just emulating Jesus. Jesus threatens the status quo by keeping his focus on God's ultimate plan—a plan that would lead him to a cross.

- *God, in my surrender, strengthen my resolve to go where Jesus goes.*

SATURDAY: COLOSSIANS 2.14-15

He forgave us all our sins,¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

- In the ultimate threat to the religious system of his day, Jesus forgave us of our sins. It didn't require work or strict adherence to every code in the system. It didn't require the purchase of sacrificial animals or even a specific prayer. It was all Jesus. May our own sense of our authority and power over our life and salvation be disarmed by Him.
- *Thank you Jesus for taking on my debt of sin and removing the condemnation I've stacked against myself. I receive your gift and live in the freedom of joyful obedience.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

In this week's message Pastor Jacob said,

"Jesus was going to the cross. And there was no plan we could make or not make that would stop him from doing what is necessary to forgive our sin. Because we would never get it right or get it all right. We are all prone to wander. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. So while all kinds of us are making plans for destruction, Jesus is making a plan for life by giving his own life!

We try to make a plan away from the pain, away from the suffering, but Jesus is calling us closer to it, he is calling us to the cross. And it is at the cross that we find redemption, at the cross we are forgiven, at the cross we live. So, we are supposed to stay near the cross."

- Jesus set his face like flint in the direction of the cross. The cross of death led to life for us. Is your face set like flint in the direction of following Jesus? What keeps you from that course? In what moments do you find that resolve?
- When have you been tempted to make your own plan that takes you away from the way of Jesus?