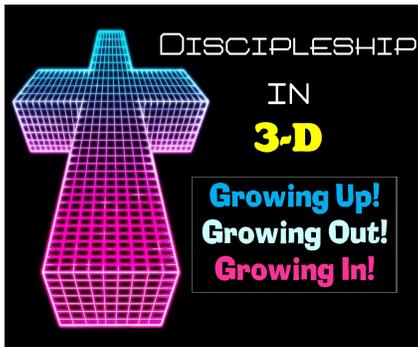


The Year of Discipleship in 3-D

(Further Developing Devoted Followers of Christ)



Welcome! Growing into more fully-devoted followers of Christ, may this time help all: **Grow Upward** into a more mature personal relationship and commitment to Christ Jesus faithful to God's Word!

Grow Outward to neighbor and world around, learning how to love well and to lead in what matters to God - guided by God's Word, by Jesus Himself, and by the Holy Spirit!

And, **Grow Inward** to discover a more contemplative faith, enhanced by both silence and prayer!

The Scripture for Sunday, March 6, 2022

[STUDY LESSON 27]

THE GOOD NEWS READING:

John 11:1-44

{1} Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. {2} Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. {3} So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." {4} But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." {5} Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, {6} after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

{7} Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." {8} The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" {9} Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. {10} But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." {11} After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." {12} The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." {13} Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. {14} Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. {15} For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." {16} Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

{17} When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. {18} Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, {19} and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. {20} When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. {21} Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. {22} But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." {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. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, {26} and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" {27} She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

{28} When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." {29} And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. {30} Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. {31} The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. {32} When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." {33} When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. {34} He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." {35} Jesus began to weep. {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 have kept this man from dying?"

{38} Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it.

{39} Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a

stench because 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 looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. {42} I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” {43} When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” {44} The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

DISCUSSION GUIDANCE AND QUESTIONS:

1. Open (*or have someone in the group open*) with a prayer inviting the work of the Holy Spirit to open up the hearts and lives of any and all to shape believers into more fully devoted following of Christ.
2. Read (*or have one or more persons read*) the passage printed above (*or from a bible*).
3. What words or phrases caught your attention as you heard this passage read? Put another way, were you to choose to memorize a verse and cherish it from this text, what verse might that be and why? Take note within yourself, what sort of feelings arise in that word, phrase, or verse?
4. **BACKGROUND NOTES:** This weighty text brings us the final (seventh) and a most climactic sign. The actual miracle is brief and appears at the very end of the narrative. The rich discourse and dialogues preceding the raising of Lazarus bring clarity to matters surrounding resurrection. Another “I AM” statement of Jesus takes center stage. A certain foreshadowing of Jesus own death and being raised in Jerusalem, soon to come, seems in play here particularly given the proximity to the city. Believing is once more a central theme, along with light and darkness. Our text is also linked to the previous sign with reference to Jews asking, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?” (*See John 11:37*)
5. Geographically, Jesus, when word comes of Lazarus’ illness, is on the other side of the Jordan River (Perea) where John had been baptizing. What do you make of Jesus’ delay and lack of immediacy in going to Bethany?
6. Funerals, as such, beg for a “slowing down” and have a particular pace. Given the extent of this text, where do you believe John/Jesus/God/Holy Spirit might be leading you to more deliberately contemplate and reflect.
7. Consider your own grieving as compared to Martha and Mary. Martha is engaged in a somewhat involved dialogue with Jesus while Mary essentially weeps. How do you experience grief? Would you prefer to speak with Jesus or simply have Him grieve alongside of you sharing in your loss?
8. Previously in John 10, Jesus spoke of followers as sheep, who know the voice of the Good Shepherd, are called by name, and are led by Him. Reflect on this in light of Lazarus, dead four days in the a grave, being called by name, and being led out of the tomb.
9. Once again the disciples evidence their lack of understanding surrounding death, dying, and rising, requiring Jesus’ explanation. (*See John 11:11-14*) Is there anyplace that you struggle or stumble with respect to “the resurrection and the life?” What would you bring to Jesus about this?
10. Spend some time talking or reflecting upon the implications of resurrection for you following of Jesus and as an aspect of discipleship. If willing, share (*or personally identify within yourself*) an aspect of your life where you believe God is calling upon you to integrate “I am the resurrection and the life” into your following of Jesus and witness to others.
11. What is your main discipleship “takeaway” from this text?
12. Can you identify any particular ways your Christian faith and following might be inspired to change in light of this passage from the Bible (and any discussion and/or reflection that may have taken place)?
13. (*Optional*) Read the passage once more. Then, take some time to close (or have someone close) with a prayer.,