

# Raising Lazarus – Growth Group Study

22/11/20 – John Malcolm

**John spoke about the survey work by the University of Otago and locals at the Drybread cemetery in Central Otago. Many of the graves date back to the 1860's and the goldrush days. Some headstones are in disrepair and some graves are unmarked, the burial plots lost.**

Have you ever walked around a graveyard to look at the headstones or would you only visit if you were attending a funeral?

Why do we care enough about gravesites to research them as is happening in Drybread?

Why do some people visit the burial site of loved ones while other people prefer not to visit but to remember loved ones in some other way?

## **Read, John 11.19, 33-35 & 1 Corinthians 15:26**

John suggested, with the story of Lazarus, we should not rush too quickly to the happy ending, but allow time to reflect on the grief Martha, Mary and the mourners felt at their loss.

Why do you think it is important to recognise their grief?

Have you ever wept at a graveside? (If appropriate share your story with the group)

Why do you think the bible speaks of death as *the last enemy*?

## **Read John 11.1-3, 11-14, 21 & 32**

With the distance and travelling times, scholars suggest Lazarus died soon after the messengers left and before Jesus heard the news of his friend's illness.

Even so, why do you think Jesus delayed his visit to the grieving family?

How did Martha and Mary express both their faith and frustration?

## **Read John 11.35-37**

What was going through the minds of the mourners?

What did they know about Jesus?

## **Read John 11.24, 38-39**

In his sermon, John noted some people in Jesus day believed the soul of the deceased lingered nearby until the third day.

What do these verses reveal about the finality of Lazarus' death, and any hopes Martha and Mary may have held?

## **Read John 11.33 & 38.**

Compare your bible translation with that of the Message bible v33 "*When Jesus saw her sobbing and the Jews with her sobbing, a deep anger welled up within him.* v38 *Then Jesus, the anger again welling up within him, arrived at the tomb.*

What do you think it tells us if Jesus was not simply sad, but also angry about Lazarus' death? How might this help us understand Jesus' mission to conquer death?

Have you ever felt angry at the death of a loved one or friend?

Who are we likely to direct such anger towards – God, medical staff, the deceased, ourselves?

**Read Luke 4:18–21, Matthew 11:4–6 & John 11.41-44**

Why do you think Jesus made his prayer to God so obvious, thanking God for hearing him?

What does the appearance of Lazarus tell us about Jesus and his power?

How do Jesus miraculous signs fit into the mission he said God sent him to fulfil?

**Read John 11.47-48**

Why were the authorities worried about the miraculous signs Jesus was performing?

**Read John 7:31 & 21:25**

Ask among the group and see if you can list the seven signs John records in his gospel.

Taken together, what do the signs of Jesus mean to you?

How does the knowledge of these miracles help you in your spiritual life?

**For reflection:**

What does it mean to you that Jesus has conquered death and offers us eternal life?