

## Small Group Guide THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

*The Church at Brook Hills*

*Dr. Jim Shaddix*

*March 23, 2014*

*John 11:1-44*

Use this resource as a tool to help Christ-followers move forward in their spiritual growth. To do this well requires that the Small Group Leader is building a relationship with the individuals in the small group and has identified where the people are in their relationship with God. Are they Christ-followers? Are they growing in Christ? If so, in what areas do they need to grow further? As disciple-makers, Small Group Leaders shepherd people to know the truth of Scripture, to understand why it matters, and to apply it to their lives. Small Group Leaders come alongside those whom they disciple to discover how loving God, loving each other, and loving those not yet in the Kingdom should shape how they live. The structure of this resource coincides with moving people from knowledge (Main Truth) to understanding (Why It Matters) to application (Now What Do We Do?). Utilize this Small Group Guide as a flexible teaching tool to inform your time together and not as a rigid task list.

## GETTING STARTED

### *Before Small Group*

#### *Weekly Readings for January 1-5*

Exodus 35-40

Leviticus 1

John 14-20

#### *Where We Are In The Story ~ Old Testament (Exodus & Leviticus)*

**Background of Exodus:** The title “exodus” comes from the Greek word meaning “going out” or “departure” and describes the major event that occurs in the book. Exodus opens where Genesis leaves off – the descendants of Abraham are living in Egypt instead of in the Promised Land. The events in Exodus occur approximately four hundred years after Jacob’s family moved to Egypt, and as prophesied in Genesis 15, Abraham’s descendants became slaves. While Genesis highlights God as Creator, Exodus focuses on God as the Deliverer of His people, for He keeps His promise to free His people and to bring them back to the land of promise.

#### **Structure of Exodus:**

- Exodus 1-18 focuses on the deliverance of the people Israel from Egypt and God’s provision for His people.
- Exodus 18-24 explains God’s covenant with Israel.
- Exodus 25-31 provides instructions for the construction of the Tabernacle and explanation for the priestly role.
- Exodus 32-34 describes God’s response to His people’s idolatry.
- Exodus 35-40 highlights the nation’s obedience in building the Tabernacle.

**This Week in Exodus:** Exodus 35-36 details the generous contributions from the people in order to build the Tabernacle and God’s call on Bezalel and Oholiab and other craftsmen to build the sanctuary. These two chapters include two emphases: the desire of the people to sacrifice for the Lord’s sanctuary and the empowerment of the Spirit to do His work.

Exodus 37-39 tells of the construction of the Ark, the Table of the Bread of Presence, the Lampstand, the Altar of Incense, the Altar for the Burnt Offering, the Bronze Basin, the court, the priestly garments, and other materials. For explanations of the significance of the Ark and the Table of the Bread of Presence, view Week 10 of the Faith Family Worship Guide, and Week 11 contains information about the priests’ clothing and the Altar of Incense. While the Ark of the Covenant was in the Holy of Holies or Most Holy Place (the inner room), the Table for the Bread of Presence, the Altar of Incense, and the Lampstand were in the Holy Place (the outer room). But the Altar for the Burnt Offering and the Bronze Basin were located in the courtyard of the Tabernacle.

## Small Group Guide

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---

The Bronze Basin was also called “the laver,” and it stood between the Altar for the Burnt Offering and the Tabernacle tent. It was for the priests to wash their hands and feet before entering the tent since they could not enter until they had purified themselves. In fact, if the priests entered without washing, they would die (Ex. 30:21). While the Bronze Basin served the practical purpose of a place to wash away the dirt, blood, etc. off the priests’ bodies, the laver also symbolized purification and what should be true of them internally and not just outwardly because of God’s holiness and righteousness (see Ps. 24:3-4; Tit. 3:5; Jas. 4:8; 1 Jn. 1:9).

The Bronze Altar (a.k.a. “high altar”) was made out of wood but covered with bronze to make it fireproof and waterproof. Once inside the Tabernacle courtyard, it was the first stop for the worshipper. The top of the altar was basically a very large grill, and the priests would use basins to dash the animal’s blood against the side of the altar. At each corner of the altar, a horn projected outward. While it was used to attach the ropes of the bound sacrifice, the blood of the sacrifice would be applied to the horns, and depending on the nature of the sacrifice, either the priest or the person making the offering would grab the horns and pray or offer praise to God. The Bronze Altar was a perpetual reminder that entrance to God’s presence requires a sacrifice. No one – not even a priest – could approach God without the shedding of blood. In Exodus 40, Moses records the Lord inhabiting the completed sanctuary, and God fulfills His intention to dwell among His people.

**Background of Leviticus:** Everything in Leviticus points to the holiness of God. His perfection and man’s sinfulness stands as the reason for all of the sacrifices, laws, and regulations included in this book, for Leviticus explains how a covenant between a righteous God and a sinful people practically plays out in everyday life in the era before Christ’s resurrection. Written by Moses as Israel wandered in the wilderness, it contains divine speeches that Moses delivered to the people of Israel about how to worship God and how they should live. Modern readers of Leviticus may tire of reading the many laws and regulations, but for Israelites in the Old Testament era, Leviticus provided relevant information for how they were to go about their day-to-day lives.

#### **Structure of Leviticus:**

- Leviticus 1-7 explains the rituals of the different sacrifices.
- Leviticus 8-10 gives instructions for the priests of Israel.
- Leviticus 11-15 instructs the people on cleansing and purification.
- Leviticus 16 details the sacrifice and instructions for the Day of Atonement.
- Leviticus 17-27 provides directions regarding the festivals, the holy days, and how the people should live.

**This Week in Leviticus:** Leviticus 1 provides instructions regarding the burnt offering. When worshippers came to the Tabernacle, this was the second offering that they would make, for there were at least four, sometimes five, offerings made (see Lev. 1-5). It is listed first in Leviticus because it was one of the most important sacrifices that the people would make. It was also the only sacrifice where the *whole* offering belonged to God and where portions were *not* consumed by the priests or the worshipper. The burnt offering (a.k.a. “holocaust offering”) addressed the issue of how a sinful creature could approach a holy God, and it demonstrated both the complete surrender of the worshipper and the complete acceptance by God of the worshipper. By having the worshipper lay his hand on the animal’s head, the worshipper expressed the need for substitutionary atonement, for the worshipper could not approach God without the blood sacrifice of a blameless substitute. The fact that life would be taken in order for people to access God speaks to the severity of man’s offense against Almighty God. Passages such as Romans 3:25, Matthew 20:28, 1 Peter 2:19-22, and Ephesians 5:27 in the New Testament draw upon the imagery of the burnt offering.

*Where We Are In The Story ~ New Testament (John)*

**Background of John:** John 20:31 gives the thesis of this Gospel: “but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.” John stands distinct from Matthew, Mark, and Luke in his emphasis on eternal life and how it refers to both duration

## Small Group Guide

### THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

The Church at Brook Hills

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March 23, 2014

John 11:1-44

but also the quality of life that God designed us to have in Him. From John 1, this book establishes that Jesus *is* God in the flesh. He is fully God and fully human at the same time. Written by John who was one of Jesus' disciples, this Gospel does not follow Jesus' life chronologically. Instead, John 1-12 looks at the eight "I AM" statements of Jesus and at seven of His miracles in order to demonstrate by words and actions that Jesus is God, and it spends the remaining nine chapters on the night of Last Supper through Jesus' ascension.

**This Week in the New Testament:** John 14-16 records Jesus' words to the disciples on the evening of the Last Supper, and as a result, this group of teachings is often called the "Farewell Discourse." In the hours before His arrest, Jesus reassures the disciples by promising His resurrection, His return, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In all of this, Jesus reiterates to the disciples why He must depart. Jesus also leaves them with instructions to obey Him (Jn. 14:21-24), to abide in Him (Jn. 15:4-5), to love one another (Jn. 15:12-14), to bear fruit (Jn. 15:16), and to bear witness about Christ even in the face of persecution (Jn. 15:18-16:4).

With regards to the Holy Spirit, Jesus describes Him as "Helper," "the Spirit of truth," and "the Holy Spirit," but the Greek word used for "Helper" in John 14-16 also means "counselor," "advocate," and "comforter." In the Farewell Discourse, Jesus gives five different sayings about the Holy Spirit.

- The Spirit bears witness to the truth of who Jesus is, and while the world cannot receive the Spirit, He will reside in those who follow Christ (Jn. 14:16-17).
- Sent by the Father, the Spirit would teach the disciples and remind them of Jesus' words (Jn. 14:25-26). The Gospels demonstrate the fulfillment of this promise when the Gospel writers make comments such as "When he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken" (Jn. 2:22).
- The Holy Spirit bears witness about Christ (Jn. 15:26-27).
- The Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (Jn. 16:7-11).
- The Spirit guides believers to the truth, declares what is to come, and glorifies Christ (Jn. 16:12-15).

John 17, which is often called the "High Priestly Prayer," records Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of His arrest, and in this prayer, Jesus prays for Himself (vv. 1-5), His followers (vv. 6-19), and the church (vv. 20-26). John 18-19 details Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion. It differs from the previous three Gospels in its mention of Christ's kingdom during Jesus' conversation with Pilate (Jn. 18:33-37; 19:9-11). As Jesus appears to the disciples in the locked room after His resurrection, He breathes on them as He imparts the Holy Spirit to them (Jn. 20:22). This scene in John's Gospel tells of us a private bestowal of the Spirit as Jesus sends them on mission, while Acts 2 tells of a broader bestowal of the Spirit at a large public event.

### *During Small Group*

**Welcome** – Incorporate time for greeting one another, enjoying any refreshments, and making announcements. If guests are visiting, make introductions and help them feel welcomed. Ask for their contact information, so you can follow up with them.

**Looking Back** – Provide an opportunity for small group members to share what God is teaching them, how they are applying what they are learning, and how He has given them opportunities to share the gospel with others. This can be done as a whole group or in smaller groups. Do the people know each other well enough to share more than surface level information? How can time together be used to foster deeper relationships among those in the small group? Also, what are the struggles and needs of the people in the small group? How can the people in the small group sacrificially serve each other?

**Looking Up** – Hold prayer as fundamental to small group time rather than supplemental to it. Give adoration and thanksgiving to God in prayer. Submit yourself to Him, confessing sin. Petition God for personal needs and other requests. Pray for the disciple-making efforts of those in the group and for the salvation of the lost in each other's families, spheres of influence, and in the world. The Weekly Prayer Focus below can also be incorporated in the group's prayer time.

## Small Group Guide THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

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John 11:1-44

---

### Weekly Prayer Focus (from Our Worship Guide)

- *Pray for Our Lives: Praise God for His gift of life, both now and forever with Him for those who have faith in His Son Jesus Christ. Ask God to help us live in the hope of His future promises regardless of what life has for us in the present. Pray for those who are grieving a loss of a loved one to find comfort in God. Ask God to remove the fear and anxiety many Christ-followers still have regarding dying. Ask for opportunities to share with others how to overcome death through faith in Jesus. Confess your trust in the work of Jesus in your life and ask God to increase your trust.*
- *Pray for Our City: This week, we are praying for Hearts in Hands, a ministry that began from Brook Hills members, that helps with yard work and home repairs for elderly, disabled, and shut-ins in Birmingham. To learn more about Hearts in Hands, visit [heartsinhands.org](http://heartsinhands.org). We are also praying for Briarwood Presbyterian and Harry Reeder, Pastor.*
- *Pray for Our World: This week, we are praying for Brook Hills Church Planters Chris and Leah serving in East Asia. Chris, Leah, and their two boys serve among an unreached people group in East Asia. They are currently learning language, working, and engaging this people group with the gospel. Join us this week as we pray for Chris and Leah. This week, we are also praying for our Short-Term team of students who are serving in Ecuador as well as our Short-Term team serving in India. We are also praying for the Hui people. For more information and ways to pray, visit [brookhills.org/weeklyresources](http://brookhills.org/weeklyresources).*

## MAIN TRUTH

### Message Outline

#### THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

John 11:1-44

#### WHAT?

*The problem in the story...*

- Faithless people
- Sorrowful people
- Hopeless people
- Fearful people
- Skeptical people
- Hostile people

*The reason for the story...*

- Jesus wants people to glorify God through Him. (John 11:4,40)

## Small Group Guide

### THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

The Church at Brook Hills

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March 23, 2014

John 11:1-44

---

- Jesus wants people to have faith in Him. (John 11:15,25-27,40,42,45,48)

*The heart of the story...*

- Jesus gives resurrection & life because Jesus is resurrection & life. (John 11:25-26)

SO WHAT?

- We need hope in life after death. (John 11:25; cf. John 14:19; Romans 6:8; 2 Corinthians 4:14)
- We need help in life before death. (John 11:26; cf. Romans 6:4; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; Galatians 2:20; 2 Timothy 1:8-10)

NOW WHAT?

- Don't deny death or wait for a sign to prepare for it.
- Trust Jesus for resurrection and life, now and forever.
- Be afraid of dying, but don't be afraid of death.
- Tell everyone how to overcome death through Jesus.

### *Message Summary*

John 11 presents people who were troubled because of Lazarus' death, Jesus' identity, and Jesus' response to Lazarus' illness. However, Jesus did not raise Lazarus from the dead to be dramatic or sensational; He did so to glorify God and to move people either from unbelief to belief or from weak faith in God to a strong faith in Him. Jesus wants people to have faith in Him. He alone *is* the resurrection and life, and He alone *gives* resurrection and life. Knowing this truth gives Christ-followers hope for life after death and in life before death, and as a result, we should prepare for death, trust Jesus for resurrection and life, not fear death itself, and tell everyone how to overcome death through Jesus.

## **WHY IT MATTERS**

### *Digging Deeper*

*As the leader, there are at least three directions the small group can take in light of the current Bible reading plan. Knowing the people in the group, prayerfully consider what would be the best route to help those in your group grow. The group's meetings could also vary with each week, so if one week's sermon prompts a lot of thought and discussion, option one could be what the group does that week while the next week could be different. As the leader, feel the freedom to take all or just some of the content in this guide and do what is best for your group.*

- *Using the discussion questions below, the small group time can focus on discussing the sermon and how to apply it.*

## Small Group Guide

### THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

The Church at Brook Hills

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March 23, 2014

John 11:1-44

---

- *The group can discuss the Bible readings from the past week. If choosing this route, ensure that the group does not simply discuss information but also focuses on how to apply what they have learned from the Bible readings. The information in the "Where We Are in the Story" section can assist the leader in knowing the background and context for the readings.*
- *Using the REAP (read, examine, apply, pray) outline for studying Scripture, the group can take one or both passages from that day's readings and discuss them. So if the group meets on Monday, then you could pick one or both of the passages for Monday. This also helps those who are new to studying the Bible or who struggle with doing so learn how to study it. To assist the group with REAP questions, download the Guide to Personal Worship from [brookhills.org](http://brookhills.org).*

Pastor Jim arranged this sermon into three sections: what, so what, and now what. The "what" delves into the truth expressed in the passage, the "so what" discusses why that truth is important, and the "now what" emphasizes how that truth should affect our lives. For groups that use the questions from this guide, we attempt to spend more time in the guide on the so what and the now what since the sermon explains the doctrinal truth of the passage. While knowledge of Scripture is a positive thing, does your small group focus more on the acquisition of knowledge than on application of that truth? There should not be an inordinacy between what we know and how we live out what we know. James 1:22 exhorts us to be doers of the Word and not just hearers of it. As the leader of the group, are *you* faithful in aligning your desires and your life with what you read in Scripture? How are you encouraging the group to allow God's Word to transform their mind, affections, will, relationships, and purpose? With personal study of Scripture and with the sermons they hear, relay to the group the importance of identifying the "what" and the "so what" of the passage and of asking and obeying the "now what."

Jesus' conversations with Martha and Mary in John 11:17-37 are the heart of this chapter. In them, Jesus expresses that He *is* the resurrection and the life and, therefore, He *gives* resurrection and life. While these sisters demonstrated faith in Jesus, their responses to Jesus indicated that their faith in Him was limited. Our responses to circumstances and how we choose to live each day indicate what we functionally believe. God wants for people to have faith in Him. In fact, Hebrews 11:6 expresses that, without faith, it is impossible to please God. Faith can be compared to a muscle. As muscles either grow or atrophy, so our faith is either is growing or atrophying. To grow our faith, God often allows us to be tested, for it is in situations of stress that we learn what we operationally believe, that we grow in our trust and dependence on Him, and that we experientially learn about His sufficiency. How can we prepare now for challenges that will come? How can we grow our faith in God now? For those who are in a season of suffering, are you turning to God, or are you relying on yourself or others? Does your faith have any limitations when it comes to Jesus' ability to deal with the issues going on in your life? How do we make the theology that we know in our heads translate to how we live, feel, and respond in real life?

## **NOW WHAT DO WE DO?**

### ***Group Discussion & Application***

*Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).*

- In John 11:1-16, the disciples were fearful that the Jewish leaders would try to kill Jesus and that identification with Him would cost their lives. In your own life, what has identification with Christ cost you? Why would a Christ-follower be fearful of the cost of following Jesus? How can a Christian address this fear? What promises and truths should believers meditate on to bolster their faith?
- John 11:17-37 describes people who were sorrowful over the death of a loved one. How can those who are mourning deal with loss in a faithful way? How can a Christ-follower avoid making an idol of their grief?

## Small Group Guide

### THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. Jim Shaddix

March 23, 2014

John 11:1-44

---

- How can this small group come alongside those who are mourning to encourage, to pray, and to support them?
- John 11:17-37 also portrays people who were skeptical of Jesus, questioning both His ability to heal and His care for Lazarus. Why would an unbeliever today be skeptical of Jesus? Why would a Christian today be disillusioned or feel let down by God? How do we minister to a skeptic? If they are a Christ-follower, what truths can we point them to?
- John 11:38-54 depicts people who were hopeless and disappointed. What are reasons for hopelessness in this world? Why would a *Christ-follower* feel hopeless? What truths and promises in Scripture provide hope for the Christian?
- John 11:38-54 also tells of religious leaders who were hostile towards Jesus. Why would someone hate Jesus? How do we share the gospel with someone who is hostile towards Jesus and maybe even towards those who follow Him?
- Read John 11:4. Why did Jesus perform this miracle? What does it mean to “glorify” God? What does it look like for you to glorify God in your daily life – as a single, a spouse, a parent, an employee, a co-worker, a friend, etc.? Either God gets the glory or we do. Which do you value more – His glory or your own? How can you choose to glorify God and not yourself as you go about your day? Think back on the decisions you made yesterday and the things you said and thought yesterday. Were you giving God glory, yourself glory, or glory to something else? What would it have looked like to have given God the glory in those choices, words, or thoughts?
- How does a value of God’s glory affect our view of suffering, how we pray, and everything else we do in life?
- Read John 11:25-26 and 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 35-57. What is the resurrection from the dead?
- Read John 14:19, Romans 6:8, and 2 Corinthians 4:14. How do these verses offer hope about life after death?
- Read John 11:26, Romans 6:4, 1 Corinthians 15:50-58, Galatians 2:20, and 2 Timothy 1:8-10. How does faith in Jesus help us to navigate life now? How do these passages provide hope and direction for the present?
- Discuss the difference between a fear of dying and a fear of death. How can we have peace regarding death itself? Why is a fear of death unhealthy? How does a relationship with Christ strengthen and enable Christ-followers to navigate living and dying with hope? Why should Christ-followers face death differently than the world?
- The concluding point of the sermon exhorts us to “tell everyone how to overcome death through Jesus.” Who can you tell this week? How can you express this truth to them in a way that is loving and in a way that they will understand? If you cannot think of anyone to share this truth with, how can you begin to cultivate a relationship with someone who is lost? Why should you do this? Why should you tell someone how he or she can overcome death through Jesus?