

# BELPRES CHURCH

## **Sermon Title: Dealing with Disappointment**

**Scott Dudley**

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### **Scripture:**

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#### **John 11:1-45**

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) <sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

<sup>4</sup> When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." <sup>5</sup> Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup> So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, <sup>7</sup> and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

<sup>8</sup> "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?"

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. <sup>10</sup> It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light."

<sup>11</sup> After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."

<sup>12</sup> His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." <sup>13</sup> Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

<sup>14</sup> So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, <sup>15</sup> and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

<sup>16</sup> Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

**17** On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. **18** Now Bethany was less than two miles<sup>(a)</sup> from Jerusalem, **19** and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. **20** When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

**21** "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

**23** Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

**24** Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

**25** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; **26** and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

**27** "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

**28** After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you." **29** When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. **30** Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. **31** When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

**32** When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

**33** When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. **34** "Where have you laid him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

**35** Jesus wept.

**36** Then 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** Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. **39** "Take away the stone," he said.

"But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."

<sup>40</sup> Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

<sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

<sup>43</sup> When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" <sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

<sup>45</sup> Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

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## **Transcript:**

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So good to see all of you, those of you in the room. Those of you joining us online, thank you for all being here on this holiday three-day weekend. Thank you so much. It's great to have you here. Holy Spirit, as we turn to your word, we ask that you would make us resilient through it, in your name, Lord, Amen.

So let me ask you, those of you in the room and those of you online, how do you handle disappointment? Like when things don't go the way that you would hope, do you say, "This is awesome, what a great chance to grow in my character"? Is that what you say?

Yes.

Yes. All right. Josh says, "Yes." The rest of us say, "No, that's not how I respond. That's not how I respond to disappointment." And unfortunately, we all face disappointment at some point in our lives. I saw a quote this week that said, "When life throws something at you duck and let it hit someone else." But unfortunately, disappointment hits all of us at some point.

Maybe you had hoped you would be married by now or maybe you are married and you had hoped it would be different. Maybe you'd hoped you'd get into a certain college or a certain job or a certain friend group or have a child. Or maybe you had hoped that you wouldn't be facing that health or financial crisis that you're facing. Or maybe there's nothing really wrong at all, but you still feel disappointed like something's missing. Kind of like this cartoon that someone sent me, this dog saying, "I got in the human world to find purpose, but this whole thing is just an elaborate game of fetch." So depressing, and painfully close to true, right?

Where are you experiencing disappointment? And then there are the deep, painful disappointments that we sometimes have: loss of a loved one too soon, estranged families, refugees and immigrants fleeing poverty and violence only to encounter huge problems and obstacles here as well. How do we handle disappointment, especially, when one of the things we might be disappointed in is God?

Well, what we're going to do is I'm going to walk through a story in the Bible of where Jesus raises a man named Lazarus from the dead. And I'm just going to walk through the story. It's in John 11, and I'm just going to throw out so many observations. Okay? Here, an observation. There, an observation. And your job is to ask the Holy Spirit to help you focus on the observation that He wants you to pay attention to.

So John chapter 11, Lazarus has two sisters, Mary and Martha, and they were all friends with Jesus, close friends. And the text says, now a man named Lazarus was sick. So his sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." Now, Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when He heard that Lazarus was sick, He stayed where He was two more days. What?

Why didn't Jesus rush off and do a miracle? And this is super disappointing and we can hear the disappointment from Lazarus's sisters, Mary and Martha, when Jesus eventually does go. Jesus eventually does go and it says, Martha goes and meets him and says, "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died." And you can hear all the pain and disappointment, and maybe even anger in that sentence. Lord, if you had been here, my loved one wouldn't have died. Lord, if you had been here, my hopes wouldn't be dashed. Lord, if you had been here, I'd still be married. Lord, if you had been here, where were you? Where were you?

Now, there are two things going on here. Two things. First, a few verses later. Jesus says to His disciples, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I'm glad I wasn't there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." So in other words, by the time Jesus was told Lazarus was sick, Lazarus was already dead, and Jesus knows that. So His delay did not affect the outcome at all. Lazarus was already dead. If he had gone right away, Lazarus was already dead. It wouldn't have changed that fact.

But the second thing that's going on here is, as I said last week, Jesus has this habit of pulling good things out of bad things. It is interesting to notice that the word disappointment contains within it the word appointment. And with Jesus, our disappointments contain appointments to see God's power. With Jesus, our disappointments contain appointments to see God's power. Everyone in this story is disappointed, and everyone in this story is about to see Jesus raise a man from the dead.

And that is going to supercharge their faith. And when our faith is supercharged, it makes us resilient, because it makes us brave, because we know what Jesus can do. Which is why Jesus said, "I glad I wasn't there for your sakes, because this is going to make you have so much more faith, and that's going to make you resilient because it's going to give you my courage, because you're going to see what I can do."

So after two days, Jesus says, "Let's go." "But Rabbi," the disciples said, "a short while ago, the people there tried to stone you, and yet you're going back?" And then Thomas said, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." Well, we're not going to get very far with that kind of attitude, Thomas. Thomas, like bumper disciple, Thomas the downer. There Thomas goes again, "Let us go, that we may also die with Him" and this is sometimes me, right? I will follow Jesus, even though I know it's going to be terrible.

But Jesus isn't asking them to go on a suicide mission. He's inviting them to see a display of God's power. He is about to raise a man from the dead. Then it says on His arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. How many days did Jesus delay? Two days. So delaying didn't affect the fact that Lazarus was already dead. Many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. So by the fourth day, a large crowd had gathered.

And this is part of why Jesus delays, because if Jesus had gone sooner, it wouldn't have affected the outcome. Lazarus was already dead. But if He'd gone sooner or the crowd wouldn't have been there, because they wouldn't have had time to gather. So that's part of why He delayed. So this big group of people can see this amazing miracle. See, there is always purpose in God's timing, and it doesn't always feel that way sometimes, right?

There's this old church saying. "Jesus is never late. He's always on time." I hate that because... I know I should like it, I'm a pastor, because sometimes it doesn't feel that way. Sometimes it feels like, "Yeah, no, he's late. I'm sorry, he is not on time. He's just plain old late." Yeah, he's never early, that's for sure, right? Sometimes he's just like, "Where are you Jesus? God's timing, it just doesn't..." But there is always purpose in God's timing. Whether we see it or not, there's always purpose.

Jesus' delay of two days allowed this large crowd together, which is going to supercharge a lot of faith for a lot of people. And what we find at the end of the story is this large crowd went and they told everyone they could tell about what Jesus can do. And this sermon series is called storytellers. And part of the reason Jesus delays two days is so that the right people can be in the right place at the right time to see this amazing miracle, and become storytellers and tell everyone about it. And it launches this like mini revival.

There's always purpose in God's timing. Plus, it's going to give these people a deeper faith, which makes them resilient because they're brave, because they know what Jesus can do.

There's always purpose. A man in our church told me that when he joined the Army during the Korean War, he was sent to Las Vegas. And he said he was so disappointed, because he hated being there. And he said, "Lord, this is Sin City. Why did you send a good Baptist boy to Las Vegas? I hate it here." But he ended up finding this wonderful church, and he said he grew as a Christian and he grew as a person in spectacular ways.

And he said, "From then on, I learned to trust that the Lord knew best." And he said, "Throughout my career, I never got stressed out about who's getting promoted? Who isn't? Because I had learned to trust God already. And he says, now he'll say something to one of his fundamentalist friends about living in Las Vegas and they'll frown. And he says, "Nobody can say anything to me bad about Las Vegas, because that's where I learned to trust the Lord." I think that's a sentence that doesn't get said a lot. "I found God in Vegas," but he found God in Vegas.

His disappointment contained an appointment to see what God can do. And it taught him to trust God, which made him resilient at peace. Through all the ups and downs of his career, he was always at peace, because he had learned to trust God in Las Vegas. So many times I look back on my life to realize that if I had gotten what I wanted, when I wanted, it wouldn't have been that good for me. And that God's plan really was better.

So Martha says, "Jesus, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." And then Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in even though they die, will live again. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the son of God who has come into the world." That's how He responds to Martha.

Now, watch how he responds to her sister Mary. The text says, when Mary reached the place where Jesus was, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Same sentence that Martha said. Same exact sentence, filled with disappointment, maybe even anger. Same exact sentence her sister said. But watch, Jesus deals with her differently with Martha. Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life. With Mary, it says, when Jesus saw her weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

And very few translations have the guts to translate the original Greek out of what it actually says. The words there for deeply troubled means very, very angry. In fact, the words can be even used to describe the bellowing of an enraged animal, like an angry bull that is about to charge. That's what Jesus is right here, mad. And then it says, Jesus wept. So Jesus treats Martha and Mary differently. He resists Martha's despair by pointing to the resurrection. But Jesus enters into Mary's despair and mourning. He enters into it with her and mourns and weeps and cries with her.

And what this shows is that in times of disappointment, Jesus gives us a tailor-made response just for us, because we all need something different and we all need something different at different

times. Sometimes in our despair or in our disappointment, we actually need to be confronted and challenged. I've told you before that my squeal point is embarrassingly low. It does not take much to get me to, "My God. My God. Why have you forsaken me." You can just ask my wife, "It's raining on our vacation. Where's God when it hurts?" I mean, I'm not that bad, but sometimes it gets kind of close. And in those times, I need Jesus to look at me and challenge me and say, "Really, Dudley? Seriously, like 425 problems, okay, get over them." That's our zip code, by the way.

There's a man in my sermon review team this week that said, "I wonder if Jesus ever does eye rolls at us." Sometimes I need a divine eye roll like, "Oh, Dudley, come on. Buck up, man." But then there are other times when what we really need is someone to enter into our grief and our anger and our despair. And that's what Jesus does here. I mean, think about it. Jesus knows very well that He's about to raise Lazarus from the dead, so why does he take time to cry? I mean, why? "I mean, it's not efficient, Jesus. Come on, let's go. Come on, right now. Raise him from the dead. Let the healing begin. Let's go."

But Jesus takes time to cry, because when we suffer, Jesus is going to make sure He suffers with us. And Christianity is the only religion where this is true. Only religion, where God Himself suffers. Only religion, where God Himself has the guts to suffer the way we do by coming Himself, in the person of Jesus, born into poverty, rejected his whole life, died a painful death on a cross to pay the price for our sins. The God that comes to us in Jesus will not comfort us from a sanitary distance. He will experience our pain with us.

And when we are in deep pain and somebody feels that with you enters it is so validating. It is so comforting. And Jesus also gets angry here. And He's not mad at the people. He's staring at that tomb. He is angry at death. He is angry at suffering. He is angry at the injustice of death. He is angry at injustice, just plain old injustice. And if you are suffering or if you've been a victim of injustice or racism or those kinds of things, sometimes what you need is someone to be mad with you and for you, and cry with you. Because it's a way of saying, "You're not crazy. This is real. This is not a 425 problem. You're not crazy."

And I think this is really important because we Christians are really good at giving cheesy Christianese cliches to each other when people are suffering, right? I mean, we're really good at this. "God won't give you more than you can handle." "Really? You handle this then. I'll handle you," right? "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." "No, sometimes it just makes you angry and bitter." Jesus does not give us a one size fits all cheesy Christian cliché, and we shouldn't give that to each other either. We should enter into each other's pain. We should pray for each other. We should encourage each other and comfort each other.

Our disappointments contain appointments to see the power of God. Jesus tailor makes a response to us in times of disappointment. And then Jesus goes on, and then Jesus says, "Remove the stone from the tomb." And then Martha, ever practical, says, "Yeah, about that

thing Jesus, ixnay on the stone. By this time there's a bad odor. He's been there in that tomb for four days. He stinks." And it's interesting because just a few verses, Martha said she believed that Jesus was the resurrection and the life. But now, staring in the face of her disappointment and the stench of death and disappointment is not so easy to believe. Right?

It can be really easy to believe sometimes when things are going well, but when we are standing at that tomb, looking at the stench of our disappointment, our failure, our suffering, our hurts, it can be really hard to believe that Jesus is a resurrection and the life. And that's why in times of disappointment, remember in the dark what you learned to be true in the light. In the past, I've seen God be faithful, so I will trust him now in this dark time.

And this has sustained people through some of the deepest suffering imaginable. Generations of slaves in America kept faith, in spite of all the suffering, because they believed in the dark God's truth in the light. And that sustained them through slavery and Jim Crow and segregation and ongoing racism. People I know from Congo and Rwanda who have lost loved ones to ethnic violence and are resilient because they remember in the dark God's truth in the light, and it's their focus on Jesus that gets them through.

And I think it's interesting here that Jesus doesn't roll the stone away Himself. He makes them roll the stone away. And I think that's because part of how we believe and remember in the dark, what is true in the light is we participate in our own resurrection, in our own renewal. Our job is not to raise the Lazarus' or the Lazari from the dead. Our job is not to do that. Jesus raises from the dead. Our job is to roll the stone away.

And what I mean by that is to open up to Jesus and to other people and to let them in. Because if we try to keep the stone in place and hide the stench of our failure, of our hurt, of our suffering, of our pain, if we try to keep everyone from seeing that and smelling that, then we will not become resilient. But if we roll the stone away and let Jesus into those places and other people in, then Jesus will bring new life. Your family's in crisis, don't hide it. Roll the stone away and let Jesus and others in, ask for help. Friendships on the rock, roll the stone away. School or job not going well, don't pretend it is. Roll the stone away and let Jesus and others in.

Because when we do, we discover what Jesus says next. "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" In other words, standing there at Lazarus' tomb, Jesus is saying, "The glory of God is found even here in the stench of death. Even in a graveyard, the glory of God can be seen." That's how strong He is. And we see this at the cross, where the glory of God is revealed as Jesus dies to pay the price for our sins. And then it says, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus come out," loud voice. It doesn't say, Jesus said very meekly, "Mr. Lazarus, sorry to bother you. I know you're resting in peace and all, but do you think you could come out of that tomb?"



He shouted with authority. Jesus has ultimate authority over your disappointment. The devil doesn't have authority over it. The world doesn't have authority over it. You don't have authority over it. Jesus has authority over your disappointment. Demands, with authority, that our dead hopes and dreams yield up new life. Now, that doesn't always mean we get what we want. It may mean God changes what we want. It may mean God gives us something we don't think we want, but we found out it's the best thing for us later on. Like the man who didn't want to go to Vegas, but it was a turning point of his life.

Maybe it's just to be resilient. Because you know what, some pain will never fully heal until we get to heaven. And if we know Jesus, we are destined to be raised to new life, just like Lazarus. As I said last week, "When God does a miracle, it's not because he likes that person better." Miracles are just previews of what we are all going to experience. We are all going to experience this healing. But in the meantime, sometimes what new life means is God gives you supernatural strength and courage and hope to be resilient.

So Jesus says, "Come out." And then it says, the dead man came out his hands and feet wrapped, so like a mummy, think of a mummy. And then Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go." And He says that to the crowd. And that's our job as a church to unbind each other. That's the assignment Jesus gives to us, the church. Because you know what, Jesus brings new life, but old habits and old sins still clinging to us like grave clothes. Old tapes still play our head that we're not worthy enough. We're not good enough. We're not lovable. We're a failure. And those things clinging to us like old grave clothes, and they bind us and they slow us down. And Jesus gives us, each other, the job of unbinding each other by praying for each other and encouraging each other and challenging each other.

So for this week, three action steps. First, ask God to show you which of these observations is most applicable to you. They're listed there on the screen. Like which one is God trying to draw your attention to? Maybe you need to roll the stone away, and let Jesus and others into your disappointment. Maybe you need to ask God to help you see the appointment in your disappointment.

Second, ask God to show you your stories of how he is at work in your disappointments, and then tell those stories. In the next chapter, at the end of this story, it says, the chief priest made plans to kill Lazarus, as well as Jesus, for an account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him. In other words, that large crowd of people that had gathered, they went and told the story to a bunch of people and a bunch of people started following Jesus. And the religious leaders didn't like that. And so they tried to kill Jesus and Lazarus to shut it down, because of all the storytellers. So what's the story God's doing with your disappointment and how can you tell it?

And then third, and this will be on our action items for a couple more weeks, baptism or reaffirmation of baptism on March 5th. Baptism, reaffirmation, it's a way of publicly saying,

"Jesus is at work in my life." And if you've never been baptized, you can be baptized on March 5th. If you have been baptized, you can reaffirm your baptism. Maybe because Jesus is doing something new in your life, maybe because he's become more real to you. You can reaffirm your baptism. And we've got a bunch of people already signed up. It's a good number already signed up, but room for lots more.

And I'd also say, be here on March 5th. It's going to be a cool... Presbyterians are actually going to dunk people. I mean, that's going to be like, you just want to be there for that. That's epic, right? But also, I think just the Holy Spirit... I mean, that's just going to be a cool Sunday. So just encourage you to be there.

As part of this sermon series on storytelling, some of you have been sending me your stories, which I thank you. And I got an email from a man who said that growing up, he didn't really have any faith. And then he got married and he started going to church. But he said, "I was simply going through the motions. I was really skeptical about all this faith stuff." He said, "My career had topped out, although the money was fine. My marriage was failing. And life was unfulfilling, it had become just doing enough to keep family and work tenable, very unfulfilling." Then he ended up being laid off five times in just 10 years. And then his wife decided she wanted a divorce. And he said, "After the divorce, I became more comfortable with faith and began to realize the importance of grace. That I could be forgiven and I could forgive others." He said, "A few years later, a woman I was dating asked me to come to a Bible study at her church, and I did. And the people were friendly, they were knowledgeable, and they made the passages we explored relatable. It made much more sense than what I learned as a child. I was stunned and I wanted more."

He said, "But then, shortly after that, I had a sudden cardiac arrest while I was working out at LA Fitness. Fortunately, in EMT resuscitated me, but they had to resuscitate me two more times on the way to the hospital. The doctors stabilized me by inducing a coma. And remarkably, my short-term memory remained intact, contrary to what the doctors had predicted. So I was either extremely lucky or something, or someone was watching out for me." He said, "I knew I had a new chance at life, and I decided to work in concert with God's plans, instead of just following my own plans."

And then he has this amazing sentence in his email. He said, "My cardiac arrest and recovery set me on the path to peace." You'd think it would be the opposite, right? He says, "Over the past 10 years, I've become more a part of BelPres, and I have learned several things. I have learned that it is better to listen and learn than to pontificate." Can I have an amen?

Amen.

"I have learned that I am not defined by my resume. I have learned that God's plans are better than mine. I am comfortable with the fact that I will die someday, because there is such a thing

as grace. And because of grace, I am now married to a wonderful woman who helps keep me grounded in faith and tolerates my mild eccentricities. I lead a much happier, and more fulfilled life than I ever would've predicted 10 years ago. I do not deserve it, but grace gave me what I needed."

There's so much disappointment in that story: an unfulfilling life, divorce, laid off five times, massive health crisis. But in the disappointments, there are appointments to experience God's power. Pulling new life out of death, even close to physical death, and to see that God's timing and God's plans really are better than his. And there's lots of unbinding, God's people inviting him to Bible studies and encouraging him and praying for him, and unbinding him in all kinds of ways. And because of Jesus, now, he's not afraid of death. He's discovered grace. He has peace.

So what disappointments are you facing? And how might those disappointments contain an appointment to see God's power? Roll the stone away. Remember, Jesus has authority over your disappointment. Let Jesus in, let others in, remember his authority, and say with authority, "In the name of Jesus, disappointment, come out of that grave."

So Jesus, we bring all of our disappointments to you, including the places we are disappointed with you. And we put them at your feet, and we ask that as you did for Lazarus, help us see in our disappointment the appointments you have to experience your power. Help us see your lordship over our disappointments, and Lord, with your authority, call new life out of what seems to us dead. And we'll give you all the glory. Pray this in your name, Jesus. Amen.

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### **Discussion Questions:**

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*Read this week's scripture(s) & answer the below questions with your friends, family, or All In small group.*

**Icebreaker Question:** What is your favorite time of day: sunrise, daylight, twilight, or night and why?

**Opening Question:** Looking back to last week's sermon and scripture... How did you live differently or practice what we talked about in your life this week? What did you do and how did it go?

**Scripture Reflection Questions:** Read this week's scripture together and discuss the following:

- What do we learn about God (e.g., traits, personality, what matters, priorities) in this passage?
- What do we learn about people, and ourselves in particular, this week?

**Sermon Reflection Questions:** Reflecting on this week's sermon, discuss the following:

- In his sermon, Scott said that "disappointments are appointments with Jesus." Looking back, share about a time that you encountered Jesus during a disappointing or challenging time in your life. How has that experience impacted your Jesus story today?
- Scott had a number of different points such as: roll away the stone, disappointments are appointments to see God's power, Jesus gives us tailor-made responses, Jesus fights for us, glory of God found in the stench of death, remember in the dark what you have learned to be true in the light, Jesus has authority over our disappointments. Which of these is most applicable in your life right now? With whom might God be prompting you to share this?

**Closing Question and Application:** Given what we've discussed together today, how might God want you to apply these learnings to your life or in the life of your community this next week? Who might you share this with?

**Closing group prayer:** Spend a few minutes together in your group sharing prayer requests and then praying together for each other. Thank God for the time together, the conversation shared, the other people in the group, and for encouragement in the week ahead.