

# WHEN LIFE HAPPENS

SERMON SERIES

## SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 1 August 31, 2025  
"God is Good?"

### OPENING PRAYER

Gracious Lord, we gather in Your presence today with open hearts and minds. As we reflect on the story of Lazarus, we are reminded of Your deep compassion, Your power over death, and Your call to trust You even in moments of grief and uncertainty. Lord, help us to enter into this passage with fresh eyes. Teach us what it means to weep with those who weep, to wait on Your timing, and to believe in the hope of resurrection life. May Your Spirit guide our conversation, open our hearts to one another, and draw us closer to You. We pray that as we study, we would not only learn more about You but also experience Your living presence with us here and now. In the name of Jesus, who is the Resurrection and the Life, we pray. Amen.

### SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

#### John 11:32-43 (NIV)

<sup>32</sup> 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."

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

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus wept.

<sup>36</sup> Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

<sup>37</sup> But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

#### **Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead**

<sup>38</sup> Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. <sup>39</sup> "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!"

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## INTRODUCTION

The story of the death of Lazarus reminds us that God is present in our difficult circumstances, he weeps with us in our pain, and that with God there is always hope. Therefore, our circumstances are not an indicator of God’s absence or lack of goodness. When you deal with difficult seasons in life, Peter reminds us to cast our anxiety on God, because he cares.

## QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever had second thoughts about the goodness of God because of pervasive pain and suffering in the world?
2. Does your faith play a significant role in the midst of difficult circumstances? If so, how? If not, why do you think that is?
3. How has personal suffering impacted your confidence in the goodness of God?
4. Read John 11:32-43 (on page 1). Knowing that miracles don't always happen the way we sometimes hope they would, how could the story of Lazarus still provide a foundation of hope for someone in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges?
5. Peter writes, “Cast all your cares on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). What is your initial reaction to that invitation?
6. Can you share a personal experience when you felt God's presence and care during a difficult time in your life?

## FINAL APPLICATION

This week in prayer, cast at least one fear upon God. See if you discover any peace in this area.