

Week Beginning: 2nd April 2017

Worship Series: #6 in series **NO SHORTCUTS**

living sharing growing



lifegroups
live life abundantly

Theme Verse

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26

Remember This Week

Jesus has committed himself to you – living, dying, raised again – so that his life and power would be yours now. God loves you so much that he lets nothing stand between you and his life-giving powerful love...not yesterday, not today, not tomorrow, not ever. The life he offers is not merely an end-times promise but something that enables you to live abundantly now, It's the smell of someone who is forgiven, free, accepted, and loved without condition. Jesus calls you to be that fragrance of life wherever you go.



For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

Lord Jesus, you are the resurrection and the life, who breathes life into us so that we can fully live now. Unbind us from the clothes of death which keep wrapping around us and wash us clean again in the waters of our baptism that we may be an aroma that brings joy to you and draws others into your life-giving presence. Bless this time that we share together in your name. Amen.



1. *Share your highs and lows for the past week.*
2. *Accountability time! How did you go with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *What smell do you associate with your grandparents/your home/someone who is special in your life?*
4. *What is the hardest/most memorable funeral you have been to and what made it that way?*
5. *If you could raise one person from the dead, who would it be? Why?*

It's smelt in broken relationships and divorces, in wounds and betrayals, in fears, in anger and resentment, in addictions, in sorrow and despair, in excessive busyness and preoccupation with success, in things done and left undone, and especially at the graveside. It's the stench of death and it wraps around us like strips of cloth. It's unavoidable. There is no way around it - no cheats, no negotiation, no opt-outs, and no alternatives. The Bible says, 'Adam sinned, and that sin brought death into the world. Now everyone has sinned, and so everyone must die.' (Rom 5:12 CEV). As we face the daily reality that there are no shortcuts around death, Jesus calls us by his Word to come out and smell the fragrance of life that is ours now in him, and to be that fragrance as we live abundantly in him.

Read John 11:1-45

First thoughts/reflections

6. *What part of this reading spoke to/touched/disturbed or challenged you the most?*
7. *What questions did this passage raise for you?*
8. *What lame or misguided attempts at comforting words have you heard people offer to those who are grieving or have experienced a tragedy in their life?*
9. *How would you describe the attitude toward death of the family you grew up in?*





In the story of Lazarus Jesus is told his good friend Lazarus is dying but Jesus then goes on to do something unexpected. Jesus waits another two whole days in the place where he was. Jesus then declares in no uncertain terms, **“Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there.”**

10. *How would you feel if someone said to you I'm glad your loved one is dead?*
11. *The rest of the verse concludes with these words. “... so that you may believe.” What does Jesus mean by these words?*
12. *What makes it hard for Mary and/or Martha to put their faith in Jesus? (In Jewish thinking, the soul of a person only remained in the body for three days),*
13. *Both Mary and Martha come to Jesus with the same question. What was it and how was Jesus' response different to each of them?*
14. *What do Mary and Martha discover about themselves and about Jesus? Is there anything that they fail to understand?*
15. *What can we learn from this account that gives you a model of both grieving and caring for those who are grieving?*
16. *How can grief stop people from living fully in the present?*

As the story progresses, Jesus ends up going to the grave of Lazarus. Even after her discussion with Jesus who tells her that when he is present, it is never too late for anything, Martha still says **“Lord already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.”** These are words of death; words that say we trust the stench more than the fragrance of life that Jesus promises. Today it is easy for people to say the same thing with different words. “He’s beyond help. It’s his own fault. Leave him alone. She’s always been like that; she’ll never change. It’s hopeless. It will always be like this. No matter what I do, how hard I try, nothing happens.:

16. *In what situations, do you hear these words of death in your own life?*
17. *What message of hope/promise do you take from this Bible passage for your own life or that you can pass on to others when you hear these words spoken?*



Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. Ephesians 4:21-24 (NLT)

Jesus is the One who miraculously raises the dearest of dead to a new and beautiful life now. The most corrupt, decaying, hopeless soul is retrievable and lovable. And He invites us to participate in that work today. Only Jesus can set people free from the prison of death, but we need each other to remove the grave clothes which still reek of decay

18. *Why does Jesus invite the Christian community to be part of the healing and restoration?*
19. *Where in your life do you still get a whiff of the scent of death (It could be bitterness, unforgiveness, greed, a hard heart, self-importance)? How can your Lifegroup help unwrap those strips of death from you?*
20. *Read 2 Corinthians 2:14-16. How is the aroma of Christ in you adding a fragrance of life to the relationships, places that you are sent each week? What is one change that you could make so that the fragrance of life is even stronger in the weeks ahead?*



- * Praise God for his gift of forgiveness and eternal life. Thank Jesus for defeating death so you can live fully now. Ask the Holy Spirit to breathe his breath into you every day that you may be a fragrant aroma of life in the midst of a dying world.
- * Ask the Holy Spirit for boldness to invite someone you know who needs the life of Jesus, along to a service at Easter or to your LifeGroup.
- * Pray for discernment to smell and name the scent of death in your own life or for humility to listen to others who see it and share it with you, that you may get rid of all that smells in your life.
- * Pray for courage to be honest with the people around you when you smell death in their life. Pray for God's grace to season your words that you may draw them into the refreshing smell of his life.
- * Pray for the upcoming Easter services, that God would even now start preparing the hearts of those who come to receive his message of hope, love and life in the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:
Name, may the life of Jesus in you, be a beautiful fragrance. Amen.

