



**Growth Group Questions**  
**March 8, 2026**  
**“Lament”**

**CONTEXT**

John 11 tells the story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. We also see Mary and Martha in Luke 10 when Mary chooses to sit at the feet of Jesus while Martha is busy getting things prepared. In our story for the week, we see Martha rushing out to Jesus as he makes his way to Bethany while Mary stays at home. By the time Jesus arrives in Bethany Lazarus has been dead four days. At that time historically, people believed that the spirit of the deceased hovered around the body for three days, but by the fourth day all hope was lost.



*Grief by Diane Dammeyer*  
La Jolla, California November 16, 2019

Martha and Mary both greet Jesus with similar words...“if only you had been here.” It is probably not an accusation but words that are simply marked by grief. When Jesus says, “Your brother will rise again,” Martha hears him through the lens of conventional Jewish belief in the resurrection on the last day. She is thinking in the future while Jesus is speaking about a power that is already standing before her.

Jesus responds with one of the seven “I AM” statements in the gospel of John. This sets up the great moment when Jesus declares that he is not merely one who teaches about resurrection, but that he himself is “the resurrection and the life.” In John’s Gospel, the “I AM” statements reveal that Jesus is the divine Son/Messiah who bears the very identity and presence of God. This connects back to the Old Testament when Moses asked for God’s name/identity when he was called to free the Israelites and God said, tell them “I AM” has sent you.

Jesus’ words move beyond Martha’s expectations by showing that resurrection and life are found in him personally. The one who believes in him will live even though they die, and the one who lives and believes in him will never truly die, because Jesus is the source of eternal life itself. Martha gives a strong confession of faith, naming Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and the one who was to come into the world.



We next see Mary and the contrast is striking. Martha speaks theologically, Mary embodies anguish, yet both sisters still seem unable to grasp the power of Jesus in their midst. Yet, Jesus is not just about power. He also identifies with the women in their grief and weeps. Though he knows that Lazarus will soon be raised from the dead, it does not keep him from stopping and mourning with the sisters.

## **SCRIPTURE AND QUOTES**

### **Psalm 88:18**

<sup>18</sup> You have taken from me friend and neighbor— darkness is my closest friend.

### **John 11:21-37**

<sup>21</sup> “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.” <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” <sup>24</sup> Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; <sup>26</sup> and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” <sup>27</sup> “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

<sup>28</sup> 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.” <sup>29</sup> When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup> 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. <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?”

### **Romans 12:15**

<sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

### **Isaiah 53:4**

<sup>4</sup> Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

### **Matthew 5:4**

<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

### **Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Lament for a Son***

"It is said of God that no one can behold His face and live. I always thought this meant that no one could see God's splendor and live. A friend said perhaps it meant that no one could see God's sorrow and live. Or perhaps God's sorrow is splendor." - Nicholas Wolterstorff



## QUESTIONS

1. The title of this week's sermon is "Lament." What does it mean to lament?
2. How does lament differ from grief?
3. What are some circumstances in life that might lead us to lament?
4. Why is it important that we learn to lament?
5. What Bible verses give you comfort during times of lamenting?
6. In times of great loss, what brings the greatest comfort to you and what annoys you the most?
7. Jesus shows deep compassion and empathy for both Mary and Martha in John 11:21-37. How can we model His compassion in our interactions with others who are grieving or suffering?
8. Pastor Paul said that "God enters into our mourning." How does it impact you to know that God grieves with us in our pain?
9. What lessons did you learn from John 11:21-37

## PASTOR PAUL'S SERMON QUESTIONS

1. Is there some pain or sorrow you have buried that needs to be brought before God so that He can comfort you?
2. Who sat with you during a difficult time, and is there someone in your life with whom you need to sit during this season of mourning?

## BOOKLIST

- *A Grace Disguised* - Jerry Sittser
- *Lament For A Son* - Nicholas Wolterstorff
- *Tracks of a Fellow Struggler* – John Claypool
- *A Grief Observed* – CS Lewis
- *Out of Time* – Victoria Cull
- *Notes on Grief* – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- *A Whole in the World* – Amanda Held Opelt
- *Everything Happens for a Reason and Other Lies I've Loved* – Kate Bowler
- *Still, Notes on a Mid-Faith Crisis* – Lauren Winner

