

February 11, 2024

**Encounter:
Grieving Sisters**

Scripture: John 11:17-44

Big Idea: Jesus encounters grieving sisters where they are at. He offers the ministry of hope and resurrection to one, and the ministry of tears and presence to another.

The Challenge: Grief and loss shape the soul. How do we move forward when we experience the pain of this cracked and broken world? Jesus encounters two different people, in two different stages and places of grief. To one, he offers theological truth, the other he offers his tears.

Pastoral Prayer for this Message:

- There would enormous amounts of compassion for people in our congregation who are experiencing loss. That we would embody the presence and ministry of Jesus to those who are struggling.
- We would be able to experience the surprising and hope of Jesus as He is the one who calls the dead and dying, to become alive again!

Questions for Discussion:

1. Encountering Martha vs. 17-27

- How have you experienced grief before? What was shaping about that season in your life?
- Martha expresses disappointment saying, "If you would have been here, my brother would not have died." Have you experienced this type of complaint or lament before God before?
- In Martha's grief, she does hold onto the hope of Jesus in verse 22. How can these theological truths we know, buoy us in seasons of loss and difficulty?
- Jesus encounters Mary with theology, asserting His identity (vs. 25). How does Jesus' resurrection bring us hope, not just in the distance future, but in your day-to-day life and struggles?

2. Encountering Mary vs. 28-36

- It says that Mary "got up quickly" after she heard the personal invite of Jesus to meet. This was after Mary was experiencing sadness, loneliness, and depression after Lazarus' death. What does obedience look like when we are in a challenging season of sadness or loneliness?
- In the same way as Martha, Mary expresses disappointment at Jesus tardy appearance (vs. 32). How do you think we should approach God with our complaints or disappointments? Are we even allowed to do this (see Psalm 142:1-2)?
- What does it say about God, that Jesus (who is God) weeps with Mary? How does this inform the way that we work through seasons of grief and loss?
- How do you summarize Jesus' approach and encounter with two different people, experiencing the same grief? Why do you think He chose to respond to them in this way?

3. Death to Life vs. 38-44

- Jesus demonstrates authority of the grave and death. What area of your life are you currently facing decline and death in, and what role do you have to play to allow Jesus in to do this work?
- Have you ever been baptized before? If not, why not?