

Date:

More miracles of Jesus

PRAY Dear Lord, please help me to understand what it means to experience 'the power of his resurrection' (Philippians 3:10) today.

READ John 11:1-45

REFLECT

For Jesus, this miracle was a very personal demonstration of his power. Lazarus, Martha and Mary were his close friends. He had eaten with them (Luke 10:38-42), cried with them (11:35) and come to love them deeply (11:3). His relationship with them reminds us of a vital truth about Jesus; in addition to being the Son of God, he was also a real man. He understands what it's like to be human. He's been where we are (Hebrews 4:15).

For the religious leaders, this miracle was the last straw. Jesus was enjoying growing popularity and it frustrated his opponents no end. 'Eventually, though, public attention will shift,' they must have thought, 'and we'll be back in the headlines.' But when Jesus brought Lazarus back to life, the chief priests and Pharisees went over to the dark side for good (11:49-53). There was no way to stop someone with the power over life and death.

But that's exactly what Jesus claimed; he was the resurrection and the life (11:25,26). Instead of seeing this as a threat, his followers then and now understand what a wonderful promise it is: believing in Jesus is the way to eternal life (John 14:6). The Bible teaches that the resurrection of Jesus was the ultimate validation of his divine nature and mission (1 Corinthians 15). This miraculous raising of Lazarus as well as the raising of Jairus' daughter were early signs of the greatest resurrection that was soon to come, when God raised his own Son, Jesus Christ, from the dead.

There's an interesting detail buried in this dramatic miracle. Earlier, Martha had been the fussy complainer, too distracted to be with Jesus (Luke 10:38-42). Now she's the one with time to talk with Jesus about the deepest truths concerning his resurrection (11:24). Just because we've had weak moments, or times of confusion about Jesus, doesn't mean we can't keep growing in our faith. Thank God.

APPLY A popular country song says, 'Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die.' How do you feel about that?

PRAY Are you able to use Martha's words as your prayer? 'Yes, Lord ... I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who has come into the world.'

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: MORE MIRACLES OF JESUS

After you've completed the five readings in this section, get together with another person or group to talk about the things you've learned. Begin by sharing the insights you gained from your own reflection on the passages. Then use the following questions to help you continue the conversation.

- 1 Why do you think some people are sceptical about the healing power of Jesus? What's your opinion about the possibility of healing today?
- 2 Have you or someone close to you ever experienced what you would consider a miraculous healing? What happened?
- 3 Have you prayed and not been healed? How has that affected your faith in Jesus?
- 4 What have you learned about Jesus in looking at the way he handled demon possession? Do you think it's okay to watch movies or television programmes about demon possession? Why?
- 5 Like the friends brought the paralysed man, how could you bring more of your friends to Jesus? Is that your responsibility?
- 6 Why is it so significant that Jesus raised Jairus' daughter and Lazarus from the dead? What did that signal to the religious leaders of that time? What does it signal to you?