

# Clarence Park Baptist Church

Question for Week following service 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021



## Big Idea of the Series

Everyone one of us will experience times of wilderness in our lives. These are the times of loss and hardship perhaps caused by bereavement, a loss of employment, broken relationships, illness or loneliness and isolation. What does God want to teach us through these situations?

And how can they help us to grow not just closer to God but deeper in our worship to him?

*(this series is based on resources by [engageworship.com](http://engageworship.com))*

## Week 3 – A SORROWFUL Journey

Exodus 3:1-10, John 11:1-43, Psalm 88, Psalm 63

## Preparation

1. Watch the sermon from the church YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/HBLAlp5TH4k>
2. Read the passages on the next page and reflect on the questions before meeting with the rest of the group to explore your journeys together

## Group Study

- Begin with a time of prayer – asking God to help you learn something new

## Exodus 3:1-10 New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

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### Moses and the burning bush

**3** Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup>There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. <sup>3</sup>So Moses thought, 'I will go over and see this strange sight – why the bush does not burn up.'

<sup>4</sup>When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, 'Moses! Moses!'

And Moses said, 'Here I am.'

<sup>5</sup>'Do not come any closer,' God said. 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.' <sup>6</sup>Then he said, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. <sup>8</sup>So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey – the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. <sup>9</sup>And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. <sup>10</sup>So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.'

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## John 11:1-43 New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

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### The death of Lazarus

**11** Now a man named Lazarus was ill. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup>(This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay ill, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) <sup>3</sup>So the sisters sent word to Jesus, 'Lord, the one you love is ill.'

<sup>4</sup>When he heard this, Jesus said, 'This illness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it.' <sup>5</sup>Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup>So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed where he was two more days, <sup>7</sup>and then he said to his disciples, 'Let us go back to Judea.'

<sup>8</sup>'But Rabbi,' they said, 'a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?'

<sup>9</sup>Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the day-time will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. <sup>10</sup>It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.'

<sup>11</sup>After he had said this, he went on to tell them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.'

<sup>12</sup>His disciples replied, 'Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.' <sup>13</sup>Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

<sup>14</sup> So then he told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead, <sup>15</sup> and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.'

<sup>16</sup> Then Thomas (also known as Didymus<sup>a</sup>) said to the rest of the disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

## Jesus comforts the sisters of Lazarus

<sup>17</sup> On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. <sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was less than two miles<sup>b</sup> from Jerusalem, <sup>19</sup> and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. <sup>20</sup> When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

<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?'

## 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 odour, 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!'

*Footnotes:*

a. [John 11:16](#) *Thomas* (Aramaic) and *Didymus* (Greek) both mean *twin*.

b. [John 11:18](#) Or about 3 kilometres

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## Questions for discussion / Reflection

Reflect and share your experiences together using the following questions.

Take time at the end to ask what is God teaching you this week to help you grow as a disciple of Jesus?

1. Is there anything from the readings or message this week that stood out to you?

2. Opposite are the opening verses of **Psalm 88**. Open your own bible and read the whole of the Psalm.

- a) Are there any phrases which offend you?
- b) Why in the context of our Exodus reading are texts like **Psalm 88** included in the bible?
- c) How do they help us to understand God?

### Psalm 88:1-6 (NIVA)

LORD, you are the God who saves me; day and night I cry out to you. May my prayer come before you; turn your ear to my cry. I am overwhelmed with troubles and my life draws near to death. I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am like one without strength. I am set apart with the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, whom you remember no more, who are cut off from your care. You have put me in the lowest pit, in the darkest depths.

3. In **John 11** we read that "Jesus wept". The bible is full of many other passages where people cried like Hagar in **Genesis 21:14-21** as she expresses her suffering as she sees her own child die.

- a) Reflecting on **Exodus 3:17** do you think that the emotions that we express in our everyday lives could be considered as prayers before God? .... Why do you think that?

4. In **John 11:33** Jesus wept, later in **Luke 19:41** we read that Jesus wept over Jerusalem.

- a) What does this teach us about Jesus' humanity?
- b) What does this teach us about Jesus' compassion?
- c) How might this help us in our own lives as we face our own struggles?
- d) How does Jesus actions help us understand verses like **Isaiah 53:4** & **1 Thessalonians 4:13**?

### Isaiah 53:4 (NIVA)

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

### 1 Thessalonians 4:13 (NIVA)

Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.

5. When we are hungry our bodies remind us to eat and when we are thirsty our bodies remind us to drink. In **Psalm 63** David talks about how his "**soul thirsts for the Lord**" (v1), and how he longs for his "**soul to be satisfied with the richest of foods**" (v5). Wilderness sorrow for many reminds us that we need to remember God and to seek his presence.

- a) What advice from your experience can you share with the group or others, to help them remember and to discover God even in the depth of our sorrows?

## Prayer

Take some time to share prayer needs, pray for one another, for the church and for our local community before finishing with the words of the grace.