

The Resurrection and the Life

John 11-12 · A Catholic Journey Through the Gospel of John

Part 1: Leader Preparation Guide

Session Overview

Discovery Aim: Participants discover that the seventh sign completes their tally and signs Jesus' death warrant in the same stroke: the giver of life is sentenced for giving it. They watch the Hour turn at last, from not yet to has come, triggered of all things by Greeks asking to see Jesus, and they hear the third lifted up saying close its thread: and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.

Catholic Touchstone: I am the resurrection and the life. The resurrection is not first an event but a person (CCC 994), and Lazarus is the pledge. And in Jesus' tears at the tomb, the Church's full doctrine of his humanity: true God, truly weeping, and legitimizing every Christian's grief forever.

What You Need to Know

Chapter 11 opens with the most shocking so in the Gospel: now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was (11:5-6). Not although he loved them, but because; the delay is inside the love, not against it. Prepare to sit with your group in that sentence, because everyone in the room owns a delay they are still holding against God. Jesus names the stakes early: this illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, and the glory thread begins tonight to fuse with everything else. Note also a small gift for your Session 7 file: when the disciples take Lazarus has fallen asleep literally, Jesus corrects them plainly, Lazarus is dead (11:14). The misunderstanding pattern's signature, correction, holds everywhere in this Gospel except one discourse in Capernaum. And Thomas gets his first line: let us also go, that we may die with him (11:16), loyal, gloomy, and worth remembering for the study's final session.

By the time Jesus arrives, Lazarus has been in the tomb four days, a detail with teeth: later Jewish tradition spoke of the soul lingering near the body for three days; four days means unambiguously, irreversibly dead. Both sisters greet him with the identical sentence, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died, grief's oldest arithmetic. Martha adds a brave and orthodox future tense, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day, and Jesus corrects her tense: I AM the resurrection and the life (11:25), the fifth predicate on your board. The resurrection is not a doctrine scheduled for the last day; it is a person standing in front of her at this one. Her reply is the fullest confession any human being has made in this Gospel so far: yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world (11:27), and file this for yourself: her exact creed will matter enormously in our final session. A woman gives this Gospel its central confession; Peter's counterpart came at Capernaum, Martha's comes at a tomb.

Then the two words: Jesus wept (11:35). Do not let their brevity make them small. The Greek around them is violent: *enebrimēsato* (11:33, 38), he was deeply moved, snorted with indignation, the word for a war-horse's bristling. Jesus stands at his friend's tomb knowing exactly what he is about to do, and still he shudders with anger and weeps because, as the Church has long heard these tears, death is an enemy, an intruder in his Father's world, and he will not greet it politely even while defeating it. St. Ambrose

built the Church's theology of grief on this verse: Christians weep, Christ wept first, and hope does not anesthetize love. Then the tomb: take away the stone; Martha's horribly practical protest about the odor; the prayer aloud, Father, I thank you that you have heard me, thanksgiving preceding the gift, which the Catechism analyzes as the very model of Jesus' prayer (CCC 2604); and the cry: Lazarus, come out. Your board has been waiting for this since Session 6: the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God (5:25, 28). At Bethany the group hears the preview performance. The dead man came out, and the command that follows belongs to the Church forever: unbind him, and let him go. Augustine heard in it the Lord's division of labor that still stands: Christ raises, and hands what he has raised to his people to be unbound, the ministry of loosing the Church exercises in every absolution. Log Sign 7. The tally is complete, and the seventh sign is life from the dead.

And the seventh sign signs the death warrant. The Sanhedrin convenes in panic, if we let him go on thus, every one will believe in him, and Caiaphas the high priest delivers the Gospel's supreme irony: it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish (11:50). He means cynical politics; John steps forward with the gloss: he did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad (11:51-52). The high priest of Israel, in the act of plotting the death, pronounces the doctrine of the death: one for the many, and the gathering of the scattered, the one flock of 10:16 announced from the enemy's own chair. So from that day on they took counsel how to put him to death: the plot is now formal policy. And 11:55: now the Passover of the Jews was at hand. The third and final Passover. Your sealed guesses are one narrative week from maturity. Say nothing, and feel everything.

Chapter 12 is a week of hinges. At Bethany, Mary breaks a pound of pure nard, three hundred denarii, a laborer's year, over Jesus' feet and wipes them with her hair, and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment: the house that so recently feared the smell of a four-day tomb now fills with the scent of extravagant love. Judas objects with an accountant's piety, and John's aside is acid: he was a thief. Jesus' defense reframes everything: let her keep it for the day of my burial. She has anointed a body. Then the entry: palm branches, Psalm 118's Hosanna, and the colt of Zechariah 9:9, tonight's live discovery, the king who comes humble and riding on a donkey, victorious precisely in lowliness. And then the strangest trigger in the Gospel: some Greeks, Gentile worshipers or Greek-speaking God-fearers, at the feast, ask Philip, sir, we wish to see Jesus, and at that news Jesus says the sentence your board has waited nine sessions to flip: the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified (12:23). Why the Greeks? Because Caiaphas prophesied a gathering of the scattered, and the shepherd promised other sheep, and when the nations start arriving at the door, the mechanism of the harvest must engage: unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit (12:24).

John gives us his Gethsemane standing up in public: now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour (12:27), the Hour and the freedom of 10:18 in one breath, answered by the Father's voice from heaven. Then the summit sentence of the chapter: now is the judgment of this world, now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself (12:31-32), the third lifted up saying, completing the thread, with John's gloss nailing it down: he said this to show by what death he was to die. Gold for your own preparation: Isaiah 52:13, the verse that opens the suffering servant song, reads in the Greek Bible, behold, my servant... shall be lifted up and glorified, the exact two verbs, lifted up and glorified, that John has fused into his theology of the cross. And notice whom John quotes when he summarizes the unbelief (12:38): Lord, who has believed our report?, which is Isaiah 53:1, the opening

line of the servant song itself. The evangelist is now quoting from the immediate neighborhood of a certain verse about a lamb led to the slaughter. Do not name it. The seal holds one more week. The hardening quotation from Isaiah 6 that follows (12:39-40) is where tonight's steelman lives; prepare it with both rigor and pastoral care, because they could not believe is a sentence that has kept people up at night for centuries. The public ministry then closes with a final cry (12:44-50), and the Book of Signs ends. When your group walks out tonight, the door of the public ministry shuts behind them.

Old Testament Roots and Fulfillment

- **Zechariah 9:9.** Rejoice greatly... your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass. Live discovery at the entry.
- **Psalms 118:25-26.** Save us, we beseech you, O LORD (118:25); blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD (118:26), the plea John's Hosanna transliterates. Cited in the text; the pilgrim psalm of the feast.
- **Isaiah 52:13.** My servant shall be lifted up and glorified (Greek Old Testament): the two verbs of John's cross theology, opening the servant song. Leader may read aloud at the third lifted up saying.
- **Isaiah 53:1 and Isaiah 6:10.** Quoted by John at 12:38-40: the servant song's first line, and the hardening sentence from Isaiah's call. The steelman's home address.
- **1 Kings 17:17-24 and 2 Kings 4:32-37.** Elijah and Elisha raising the dead: prostrations, effort, prayer. Leader background contrast: Jesus raises by a word, at a distance of four days.

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Ambrose of Milan (c. 339-397), Doctor of the Church, On the Death of His Brother Satyrus

Preaching at his own brother's funeral, Ambrose defends his tears with the Gospel's shortest verse: we have not incurred any grievous sin by weeping, for Jesus wept. He wept, Ambrose says, for one not bound to him by blood, and he wept knowing he was about to raise him; therefore hope does not forbid grief, it accompanies it. The Lord's tears legitimize ours forever: Christians do not grieve less than others, we grieve with a horizon.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), Doctor of the Church, Tractates on the Gospel of John, Tractate 49

Augustine lingers on the division of labor at the tomb: Christ alone cries the dead man out, for only God raises the dead; but the risen man comes out still bound, and the unbinding is given to the disciples: unbind him, and let him go. So it remains, Augustine says: the Lord raises the soul dead in sin by his own voice, and hands the raised to his Church to be loosed, the ministry of absolution she has exercised ever since. Grace raises; the Church unbinds; and the man walks free by both.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35-107), bishop and martyr, Letter to the Romans 4

On the road to his execution, Ignatius begged the Roman Christians not to rescue him, and reached for tonight's image to explain why: I am the wheat of God; let me be ground by the teeth of the wild

beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ. The grain of wheat saying was not poetry to him; it was his itinerary. Unless it falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone: Ignatius chose the falling, and the Church he fed is still eating the fruit.

Catechism Connection

- **CCC 994.** Jesus links faith in the resurrection to his own person: I am the Resurrection and the life; and he gives its sign and pledge by restoring some of the dead to life, announcing his own Resurrection, though it was to be of another order.
- **CCC 2604.** The Catechism's analysis of the prayer at Lazarus' tomb: thanksgiving precedes the event, Father, I thank you for having heard me, because the Father is the giver before the gift is seen. The model of Jesus' prayer, and of ours.
- **CCC 607.** The desire to embrace the Father's plan of redeeming love inspired Jesus' whole life, for his redemptive passion was the very reason for his Incarnation: and what shall I say, Father save me from this hour? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour.
- **CCC 605.** Christ died for all without exception: there is not, never has been, and never will be a single human being for whom Christ did not suffer. Ammunition for tonight's steelman press, alongside CCC 1037: God predestines no one to hell.

Thread Watch

THREAD WATCH

The seven signs tally (COMPLETE). Sign 7: Lazarus. Make the ceremony real: the tally the group has kept since Cana closes tonight, and the seventh sign is resurrection. Then name the irony once: the sign of life is what triggers the formal sentence of death (11:53). Giving life costs him his.

The Hour (TURNS). The board's biggest single moment: at 12:23 the drumbeat changes from not yet to the hour has come, and 12:27 confirms the freedom: for this purpose I have come to this hour. Flip the line visibly. Everything from here is inside the Hour.

Lifted up (COMPLETE). Third saying, 12:32, with John's own gloss: to show by what death he was to die. The thread closes: 3:14, 8:28, 12:32. And it has fused with glory: glorified and lifted up are Isaiah 52:13's two verbs for the servant. The cross is the exaltation.

I AM. Fifth predicate: I am the resurrection and the life (11:25). The board reads: bread, light, door, shepherd, resurrection.

The voice of the Son of God (PAYS OFF). The 5:25-28 promise gets its preview performance at Bethany: a dead man hears the voice and comes out. Name the connection; the group planted it four sessions ago.

The gathering. Three beats in two chapters: Caiaphas's unwitting prophecy of gathering the scattered (11:52), the Greeks arriving (12:20), and draw all men to myself (12:32). The one flock of 10:16 is assembling, and its arrival is what strikes the Hour.

The betrayal. Judas at Bethany (12:4-6), objecting to love with an accountant's piety, and John's aside: he was a thief. The line darkens; next session it goes to night.

Passover and the Lamb (sealed, FINAL WEEK). The third Passover is at hand (11:55), and John's unbelief summary quotes the first line of Isaiah 53, the servant song, the neighborhood of a verse about a lamb led to slaughter. Leader knowledge only. The guesses mature in Session 13. Guard the seal with your life.

Thomas. Let us also go, that we may die with him (11:16). Loyal, dark-minded, and unforgettable. Plant only; the far end is the study's last session.

Session Goals

1. Participants can articulate why the delay is inside the love, and own their version of if you had been here.
2. Participants register the fifth predicate I AM, hear Martha's confession as the Gospel's fullest so far, and see the 5:25 promise pay off at the tomb.
3. Participants complete the sign tally, and can state the irony: the seventh sign triggers the death sentence.
4. Participants watch the Hour turn at 12:23 and can explain why the Greeks are the trigger, and how the grain of wheat is the mechanism.
5. Participants hear the strongest decree reading of they could not believe, and weigh it against 12:42, 12:32, the Johannine order of rejection, and CCC 605 and 1037.

Time Note (90 minutes)

Opening prayer and Win, 12 minutes. Build, 60 minutes. Send, Live It This Week, and closing prayer, 18 minutes. If running long, the pre-chosen cuts are, in order: the Elijah and Elisha contrast (one sentence), Build question 7's discussion of Psalm 118 (name the psalm and move), and the Dig Deeper on the two anointing smells. Do not cut: the delay of 11:5-6, Jesus wept, the tomb scene with the tally completion, Caiaphas, the 12:23 turn, or the steelman. Two chapters, many hinges; keep the readings brisk and the silences where they belong, at the tomb and at the turn.

Part 2: Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer

Leader prays aloud: Lord Jesus, resurrection and life, you stood at the tomb of a friend and wept, and then you called him by name and death let go. We bring you tonight our griefs, our delays, our four-day situations that smell beyond hope. Call us by name. And as your Hour turns in this Gospel, turn our hearts with it. Amen.

Win (open the conversation)

1. Have you ever lived through a delay, an answer, a diagnosis, a door opening, that only made sense much later? Has it finished making sense?
2. What is the most extravagant, uncalculated gift you have ever seen someone give? What did the calculators in the room say?

Transition: Tonight the tally you have kept since a wedding in Cana closes, the Hour you have tracked since the same wedding turns, and the public ministry of Jesus ends. Pencils ready.

Build (inductive discovery)

Have someone read John 11:1-16 aloud. Then ask:

Question 1. Read verses 5 and 6 again, slowly, and do not soften the conjunction: Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, SO he stayed two days longer. What does that so do to our assumptions about love and delay? Two smaller catches: when the disciples take fallen asleep literally, what does Jesus do, and why does that matter to a certain argument we had in Session 7? And mark Thomas' line.

ANSWER: share after the discussion

The delay is not despite the love; it is inside it. Jesus is not detained; he waits on purpose, because he intends a gift larger than the one requested, and the two days are the price of the glory (11:4, 40). This does not make delays painless, and the chapter will not pretend it does; it makes them meaningful, which is different. The sleep correction: Jesus told them plainly, Lazarus is dead, the misunderstanding pattern's signature working exactly as always, correction, which quietly re-confirms our Session 7 finding: the one place the signature ever broke was Capernaum, and it broke by escalation. And Thomas: let us also go, that we may die with him, loyal and gloomy in one breath. Write his name in the margin; this study has an appointment with him.

Question 2. Read 11:17-27. Four days: the detail has teeth (tradition spoke of three days' lingering). Martha meets Jesus with grief's oldest sentence, and then answers his promise with perfectly orthodox future tense: I know that he will rise again... at the last day. Listen to how Jesus corrects her tense. What kind of I AM is this, for the board, and what does it change about what the resurrection is? Then read her reply in verse 27 and weigh it: who has said anything this complete in our whole study?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

I AM the resurrection and the life: the fifth predicate, and the most staggering. Martha believes in the resurrection as a doctrine filed under the last day; Jesus relocates it to the present tense and the

second person: it is not an event on a calendar, it is a person on her doorstep. He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And her confession: yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world, the fullest, most formal confession any human being has made in this Gospel so far, fuller than Peter's at Capernaum, and it comes from a grieving woman at a tomb before the miracle. Remember her exact words; this study will meet them again at the very end, in a sentence about why this Gospel was written at all.

Question 3. Read 11:28-37. Two words, verse 35: Jesus wept. But look also at the word around the tears, translated deeply moved (vv. 33, 38); the Greek is closer to shuddered with indignation, a war-horse word. He knows exactly what he is about to do, and he weeps and bristles anyway. At what? And what does his weeping settle, forever, about grief?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

He bristles, tradition has always heard, at death itself: the intruder, the enemy, the thing that was never part of the design, now standing in his friend's doorway making his friends weep. He will not greet it politely even while defeating it; there is anger in the Redeemer at the thing he came to break. And the tears settle the Christian theology of grief for all time, exactly as St. Ambrose preached at his own brother's funeral: we incur no sin by weeping, for Jesus wept, knowing he would raise him within the hour. Hope does not anesthetize love; it gives it a horizon. Anyone in the room grieving anything tonight has just been given permission by God himself, in the shortest verse in the Bible.

Question 4. Read 11:38-44, and let it be slow. Catch four things: Martha's protest at the stone and what Jesus answers; the strange shape of the prayer (what does he do before the gift arrives?); the cry itself, and which promise from Session 6 it previews; and the last command, unbind him, and who it is given to. Then do what we came to do: log the sign.

ANSWER: share after the discussion

Martha, practical to the last: Lord, by this time there will be an odor. Jesus: did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God? The stone comes away, and the prayer is thanksgiving in advance, Father, I thank you that you have heard me, gratitude preceding the gift because the Giver is certain before the gift is visible, which the Catechism holds up as the very model of Jesus' prayer and ours (CCC 2604). Then the cry: Lazarus, come out, and a dead man obeys a voice, which is Session 6 paying off before our eyes: the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God (5:25). Bethany is the preview performance. And the last command goes not to Lazarus but to the bystanders: unbind him, and let him go. Augustine heard the Lord's permanent division of labor in it: Christ alone raises the dead, and he hands the raised to his Church to be unbound, the loosing she exercises in every absolution. Now the ceremony: log Sign 7. The tally that opened at a wedding closes at a tomb, and the seventh sign is life from the dead. Leave the board in view; the next reading is going to do something terrible with it.

Question 5. Read 11:45-57. The Sanhedrin convenes over the seventh sign. Listen to Caiaphas' realpolitik in verse 50, and then read John's astonishing gloss in verses 51-52. What did the high priest say, what did the high priest mean, and what, according to John, did the high priest prophesy? And do not miss verse 53 and verse 55: what becomes official, and what feast is at hand?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

Caiaphas means cynical arithmetic: better one dead Galilean than Roman legions; it is expedient that one man should die for the people. John's gloss turns the cynicism inside out: being high priest that year, he prophesied, despite himself, that Jesus should die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. The high priest of Israel, in the act of plotting the death, pronounces the theology of the death: one for the many, and the gathering of the scattered, the shepherd's one flock announced from the enemy's own chair. Verse 53 makes the plot formal policy: from that day on they took counsel how to put him to death. And behold the irony your tally board now displays: the seventh sign, the giving of life, is precisely what triggers the sentence of death. He will die for raising the dead. And verse 55: the Passover was at hand, the third and last. Whatever your sealed guess says, it has one narrative week left to wait.

Question 6. Read 12:1-8. Inventory the extravagance: what does the nard cost, where does she put it, what does she wipe it with, and what fills the house? Then the objection: who makes it, how does it sound, and what does John tell us about the objector? And what does Jesus say the anointing is for?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

A pound of pure nard, three hundred denarii, a laborer's entire year, poured not on the head but on the feet, wiped with her unbound hair, an act past all social calculation, and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. Savor John's quiet contrast: days earlier this family feared the odor of a four-day tomb; tonight the house fills with the scent of uncalculated love. Judas objects in the vocabulary of piety, why was this not sold and given to the poor, and John's aside cuts him open: this he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief. Calculation posing as compassion. And Jesus' defense reframes her act entirely: let her keep it for the day of my burial. She has anointed a body. Whether she knew the size of what she was doing, love did; extravagance toward Christ is never waste, and somewhere in the room the betrayal line on your board just darkened.

Question 7 (live discovery). Read 12:12-19: palms, Hosanna, and a young ass. John says the disciples only understood later what they were inside of. Send the group to Zechariah 9:9 and read it aloud. What kind of king did Zechariah promise, and what is the crowd, waving palms at a conqueror, about to get instead?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion... Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass. Not a war-horse: a donkey, the mount of a king who wins by lowliness. The crowd's Hosanna is Psalm 118, the pilgrim psalm, save us now, and their palms are the flag of national triumph; they are cheering the bread king of chapter 6 and the Lazarus-wonder-worker, and the king processing past them intends a victory none of them has priced: triumphant, victorious, and humble, all three at once, within the week. Even the Pharisees preach the truth by accident tonight: you see that you can do nothing; look, the world has gone after him. The world. Hold that word; it is about to knock.

Question 8. Read 12:20-26. Some Greeks, Gentile worshipers or Greek-speaking God-fearers, ask to see Jesus, and at that news, of all news, Jesus says the sentence our board has waited nine sessions for. Say it

aloud together, flip the line, and then answer two questions: why would Greeks arriving be the trigger? And what is the grain of wheat, in verse 24, doing right next to the announcement?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified (12:23). After nine sessions of not yet, at Cana, at Tabernacles, in the treasury, the drumbeat turns. And the trigger is the doorbell: Greeks, the nations' vanguard, sir, we wish to see Jesus. Caiaphas prophesied a gathering of the scattered children of God; the shepherd promised other sheep not of this fold; the Samaritans came first, and now the Greeks are on the porch. When the world starts arriving, the Hour must strike, because the gathering has only one mechanism, and verse 24 states it with agricultural calm: unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. One seed, hoarded, stays one seed; buried, it becomes a harvest. The Greeks cannot truly see Jesus until the grain falls. Flip the Hour line on the board and let the group look at it a moment. Everything left in this Gospel happens inside the Hour.

Question 9. Read 12:27-36. Two things to hold. First, verse 27, John's Gethsemane in broad daylight: what does Jesus admit, what does he refuse to pray, and how does this square with 10:18? Second, verses 31-33: which of our threads just completed, what does John's gloss add, and, leader, read Isaiah 52:13 over the moment. What two verbs has John been fusing all along?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

Now is my soul troubled: the dread is real; the freedom is realer. And what shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour. He looks at the escape hatch and declines it by name, which is 10:18 breathing: no one takes my life; I lay it down of my own accord (CCC 607). Then the completion: and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself, the third and last lifted up saying, and John steps in with the gloss: he said this to show by what death he was to die. The thread closes: 3:14, 8:28, 12:32; the serpent-pole, the revelation of the Name, and now the magnet drawing all. Leader, read Isaiah 52:13 in its Greek rendering: behold, my servant shall be lifted up and glorified. Lifted up, and glorified: the two verbs John has been fusing since Cana are Isaiah's two verbs, and they open the song of the suffering servant. In this Gospel the cross is not the dark before the glory. The cross is the glory. And a note the leader keeps: the very next thing John quotes (12:38) is that song's first line. Say nothing. One week.

Steelman: They Could Not Believe

BUILD THE STEELMAN FIRST: present this at full strength

Read 12:37-40 first, and it is genuinely hard: though he had done so many signs before them, yet they did not believe in him... Therefore they could not believe. For Isaiah again said, He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they should see... and turn for me to heal them. The Reformed reading takes the verses at maximum strength, and it deserves a fair build. Could not, the argument runs, is inability, not reluctance: these people were not able to believe, and the agent of the blinding is God himself, quoted from Isaiah 6. Faith, on this reading, is given to the elect and withheld from the reprobate by eternal decree; the crowds of the Book of Signs did not believe because it was not granted them to believe, and John says so without flinching. Add 6:44, no one can come to me unless the Father draws him, and 6:65, and the case assembles: salvation is

unconditional election, unbelief is decreed passing-over, and human choice is downstream of both. It is a reading built from real verses, held by serious Christians, and it should be allowed to land with its full weight, including its pastoral weight: on this reading, some people at your table may be unable, by decree, to believe. Let that sit, and then press.

Question 10 (press from the text). Four probes, all from tonight's own chapters. First: read the very next verses, 12:42-43. Who believed, in the same breath as they could not believe, and what does that do to could not as absolute decree? Second: check the Johannine order everywhere we have seen it, 3:19, 9:39-41: which comes first, God's blinding or man's refusal? Third: read 12:32 again, ten verses earlier: whom does the lifted-up Christ intend to draw? Fourth: what does the Church actually teach, in CCC 605 and 1037?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

First, the text presses hard against the absolute reading in its very next sentence: nevertheless many even of the authorities believed in him (12:42), inside the very group allegedly disabled by decree; their problem was not inability but cowardice, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (12:43); and if a Reformed reader answers that such fear-bound belief was not saving faith, the concession still costs the decree reading its universality. Could not, on the Catholic reading, name the moral impossibility of a heart that has hardened itself, not a metaphysical padlock installed at creation. Second, the Johannine order is consistent everywhere the group has traced it: the light comes first, men loved darkness rather than light (3:19), the loving precedes; those who say we see choose the claim before the blindness is confirmed as sentence (9:41). Isaiah 6, in its own context, is exactly that: a judicial sentence pronounced over a people after generations of refusal, with a remnant still promised. God's hardening in Scripture ratifies and hands a person over to the refusal they have made and remade; it does not manufacture the refusal. The chapter itself has just shown seven signs met with seven refusals; the blinding is the seventh refusal notarized. Third, ten verses before the hardening text, Jesus declared the scope of the cross: I, when I am lifted up, will draw all men to myself. All. The same evangelist wrote both sentences a paragraph apart and saw no contradiction, because drawing all and judicially confirming the self-blinded are both true of the same God. Fourth, the Church's teaching is serene and ancient: Christ died for all without exception, there is not, never has been, and never will be a single human being for whom Christ did not suffer (CCC 605), and God predestines no one to go to hell (CCC 1037); a willful turning away, persisted in, is required, and the hardening texts describe precisely that persistence meeting its ratification. Grace is truly necessary, 6:44 stands, no one comes unless drawn; and because God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4), that drawing is offered to all, resisted by some, and never issued as a trap. Nobody at this table is disqualified by decree. The door of the public ministry closes tonight; it closes on a Christ with his arms open to all men, which is, John tells us, the exact posture in which he will be lifted up.

DIG DEEPER

Isaiah saw his glory. If the group has energy, note the bombshell John drops in 12:41: Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke of him. The vision Isaiah 6 describes, the Lord high and lifted up, the seraphim crying Holy, Holy, Holy, the train filling the temple: John says the glory

Isaiah saw was Christ's. The prophet's temple vision was a vision of the Son. File it with the triple witness: the New Testament's quietest, hugest divinity claims are often relative clauses.

Synthesis question. The Book of Signs closes tonight: seven signs on a full tally, the Hour turned, a final public cry, and the door shut. In one sentence: what has the whole first half of this Gospel been asking you, personally, and what has it cost the one asking?

ANSWER: share after the discussion

Every session has sharpened the same question: who is this, and will you entrust yourself to him, past your understanding, past your sign-appetite, past your aposynagōgos? Wine, water, bread, light, a voice that empties tombs: seven signs, each one a finger pointing, and the crowd kept eating the fingers. And the cost of the asking is now on the table: the seventh sign carried a death sentence in its mouth, the Hour has come, the grain has agreed to fall. The public ministry ends with Jesus crying out one last invitation into the crowd (12:44-50) and then, in effect, turning from the world to his own. Next week the doors close, the basin comes out, and we are inside the last night. If anyone's answer to the Gospel's question is still pending, tell them to bring it with them; the second half of this study is where pending answers go to be decided.

Send

1. Both sisters said the identical sentence: Lord, if you had been here. What is your version, the delay or absence you are still holding against God, and have you ever actually said it to his face, the way Martha got to?
2. The grain of wheat that refuses to fall remains alone. What in your life is remaining alone right now, a gift, an ambition, a comfort, because you will not let it fall into the ground?

Live It This Week

- **Say it to his face.** Martha and Mary both got to say if you had been here directly to Jesus, and he received it, wept, and answered. Once this week, in real prayer, say your version out loud, unedited. Lament is not unbelief; it is grief walking toward the right address.
- **One act of nard.** Do one deliberately uncalculated act of generosity this week, time, money, or attention, sized to make your inner Judas object. Let some house fill with fragrance, and give the accountant in your head the day off.
- **Pray at the tombs.** Visit a cemetery this week, or simply pray for your dead by name, and say John 11:25 over them: I am the resurrection and the life. Then the Church's ancient prayer for them: eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. The verse and the prayer belong together.

Closing Prayer

Leader prays aloud: Lord Jesus, resurrection and life, you wept at the tomb you were about to empty, and you set your face toward the Hour no one could take from you. We thank you before the gift, the way you taught us at Bethany. Take our four-day situations, our sealed tombs, our delays; call them by name. And as the grain of wheat falls, teach us to fall with you, that we may not remain alone. Glory be

to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Scripture Memory Verse

MEMORIZE THIS WEEK: John 11:25-26

Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? (RSV2CE)

Part 3: Leader Reference Card

Every passage used or referenced in Session 10, in order of appearance. Flag these in your Bible before the session.

- **John 11:1-16** · opening reading, the delay inside the love, the sleep correction, Thomas' line
- **John 11:17-27** · four days, Martha, I am the resurrection and the life, her confession
- **John 11:28-37** · Mary, the shuddering indignation, Jesus wept
- **John 11:38-44** · the stone, the thanksgiving prayer, the cry, unbind him; Sign 7
- **1 Kings 17:17-24 and 2 Kings 4:32-37** · leader background contrast, the prophets' raisings versus the word of command
- **John 11:45-57** · Caiaphas, the prophecy despite himself, the plot formalized, Passover at hand
- **John 12:1-8** · the anointing at Bethany, three hundred denarii, the thief, for my burial
- **John 12:12-19** · the entry, Hosanna (Psalm 118:25-26 in text), the world has gone after him
- **Zechariah 9:9** · live discovery, the humble king on the ass
- **John 12:20-26** · the Greeks, THE TURN (12:23), the grain of wheat
- **John 12:27-36** · the troubled soul, for this purpose, the voice from heaven, the third lifted up saying and gloss
- **Isaiah 52:13** · leader reads aloud, lifted up and glorified, the servant song's opening
- **John 12:37-43** · steelman text, they could not believe, Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10 quoted, the secret believers
- **John 12:44-50** · the final public cry; the Book of Signs closes
- **CCC 605, 607, 994, 1037, 2604** · Catechism connections