

The Gospel of John Lazarus

Interpreting the Text:

1. Is there a progressive understanding on Martha's part in her dialogue with Jesus? Is John trying to communicate that she is wrong, or following Jesus has many facets?
2. What does this gospel mean when it talks about the glory of God? How does John use language of "glory" and "glorify" throughout to frame Jesus' mission?
3. The stories that take place in Bethany have very graphic, sensory details: Jesus' tears, Mary's perfume on his feet, the stench of Lazarus' body. How do these details support John's story telling?

Applying the Text:

1. Do Mary and Martha represent two different responses to Jesus? If so, how do they differ? Can both have valid contributions to make toward Jesus' mission?
2. In this passage, Jesus displays considerable emotion. How does that affect your understanding of his character in this gospel? What does it teach us about our own emotions in our work of ministry?
3. What does "resurrection" mean in the eyes of John? Is it primarily a future hope or a literal, contemporary experience? How do we understand resurrection in our own creeds and faith systems?
4. John's gospel is often cited as being anti-Jewish in its language and framing of the Jewish people. How are Jewish people portrayed in this story? What is our obligation as readers of this text to our Jewish siblings as we tell stories like the raising of Lazarus from the dead?