

GRACE POINTE SBC

Study Guide

Sunday Worship Gathering

Pastor Timothy McKeown
March 23, 2026

Major Points

- 1 Death and affliction can be interceded for through prayer—God invites us to bring our requests to Him just as Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus**
Philippians 4:6-7
- 2 Death and sickness can be instruments of God's glory, producing an eternal weight of glory that far exceeds our temporary afflictions**
2 Corinthians 4:17
- 3 Death is intentional—God has a purpose in death, even using it to save humanity from an eternal fallen state, as seen when He barred Adam and Eve from the tree of life**
Genesis 3:22
- 4 Funerals are not final—death is defeated and not invincible because Jesus overcame it through His resurrection, and belief in Him is not mere agreement but assured trust**
John 11:25-26

Key Quotes

“Death once had a near Chuck Norris experience.
at 1:55

“There are worse things than death when you're a believer.
at 18:00

“One short sleep past, we wake eternally, and death shall be no more. Death, thou shalt die.
at 6:30

“Delays are not God's denials.
at 37:01

“Belief to a Christian is not agreement but it's an assurance.
at 39:46

Discussion Questions

1. Pastor McKeown described death as 'intentional' — that God purposely allowed Lazarus to die for His glory. How does that idea sit with you when you think about losses you've personally experienced? Is it comforting or challenging?

2. Thomas is usually remembered as 'Doubting Thomas,' but Pastor McKeown pointed out that in John 11:16 he was actually the boldest of all the disciples. How does this change the way you think about Thomas, and what does it teach us about labeling people by their worst moments?

3. Pastor McKeown made the distinction that belief for a Christian 'is not agreement but an assurance.' What's the practical difference between mentally agreeing that God exists and having the kind of assurance Martha expressed in John 11:27?

4. The sermon highlighted that Martha and Mary both said the exact same words — 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died' — yet they responded differently. Martha went out to meet Jesus while Mary fell at His feet. What do these two different postures teach us about how people process grief in the presence of God?

5. Pastor McKeown said, 'While your heart is still beating, God has a purpose for you.' How does knowing that death is inevitable but God's purpose for your life is ongoing change the way you approach each day — especially the hard ones?

Word Studies

ἀνάστασις

anastasis

Greek

A rising up or standing up again, referring specifically to bodily resurrection from the dead — not merely survival of the soul but the restoration of the whole person to life.

ἐδάκρυσεν

edakrysen

Greek

To shed tears or weep silently, distinct from loud wailing (κλαιό); it conveys a quiet, deeply personal expression of grief and compassion.

ἐνεβριμήσατο

enebrimēsato

Greek

To snort with indignation or groan deeply within oneself, expressing intense inner agitation — whether righteous anger at death's devastation or profound emotional disturbance.

Cross References

Revelation 21:4

Fulfills the promise Pastor McKeown emphasized — that death will ultimately be destroyed and 'be no more,' completing the trajectory from Lazarus's temporary resurrection to the eternal state where God wipes away every tear.

Romans 8:28

Supports the sermon's point that God uses affliction and even death as instruments of His glory, working all things — including painful delays — together for good for those who love Him.

Ezekiel 37:1-6

The valley of dry bones vision provides an Old Testament parallel to Lazarus's raising: God commands dead bones to live again, demonstrating His sovereign power over death and foreshadowing bodily resurrection.

Hosea 13:14

God's declaration 'O Death, where are your plagues? O Sheol, where is your sting?' connects to the sermon's theme that death is a defeated enemy whose own destruction is guaranteed — the Old Testament root of Paul's triumph in 1 Corinthians 15.

Lamentations 3:31-33

Addresses the sermon's point about God's intentional delays: though the Lord causes grief, He will have compassion according to His steadfast love — He does not willingly afflict, even when His purposes require painful waiting.

Further Reading

- **Forgive: Why Should I and How Can I?**

by Timothy Keller

- **A Grief Observed**

by C.S. Lewis

- **The Miracles of Jesus: How the Savior's Mighty Acts Serve as Signs of Redemption**

by Vern S. Poythress

Scripture References

REFERENCE	TYPE	TIME	CONTEXT
John 11:1-10	Read Aloud	9:13	<i>Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, co...</i>
John 10:40-42	Read Aloud	8:26	<i>And he went away again beyond the Jordan River to ...</i>
John 11:16	Read Aloud	22:02	<i>Thomas, who is called the twin, said to his fellow...</i>
John 11:25-26	Referenced	8:15	
John 11:28-37	Read Aloud	29:56	<i>And when she had said these things she went away a...</i>
John 11:32-35	Read Aloud	30:38	<i>When Mary came where Jesus was she saw him. She fe...</i>
John 11:35	Read Aloud	32:23	<i>Jesus wept.</i>
Philippians 4:6-7	Referenced	12:35	
James 5:14-15	Read Aloud	15:37	<i>If any of you are sick, let him call for the elder..</i>
Isaiah 40:31	Referenced	19:50	
2 Corinthians 4:16-18	Read Aloud	20:37	<i>Therefore, we do not lose heart. Even though our o...</i>
Genesis 3:22-24	Referenced	23:55	
John 9:1-3	Referenced	13:28	
Hebrews 9:27	Referenced	34:51	
2 Corinthians 5:8	Referenced	36:07	
Psalms 116:15	Referenced	36:30	
John 14:2-3	Referenced	42:50	
John 17:24	Referenced	41:06	
1 Corinthians 15:26	Referenced	6:30	
Luke 16:19-31	Referenced	35:13	
Acts 8:36-38	Referenced	43:27	