

The Call to Faith

John 11:17-27; Mark 5:35-36; Mark 9:23-24

Easter 2020

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" **-John 11:25-26**

- For Martha and Mary, Jesus' arrival produced a crisis of faith (Matt 11:3, 16:15-16; John 20:27-29).
- Disappointment with Jesus led to a newfound faith.
- The unbelieving crowd gathered at Lazarus's tomb were either drawn closer to Jesus by the miracle, or pushed further away (John 11:45-46).

While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." **-Mark 5:35-36**

- True encounters with Jesus are met with a call to faith (Matt. 9:28; Mark 1:15; John 1:7, 3:18, 4:39, 6:29, 20:27, 20:31).

And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible for one who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" **-Mark 9:23-24**

- Martha, Jairus, and the boy's father found that hope in Jesus isn't just for the future, but for today as well.
- Practically, what does this mean for us today?
 1. It means that belief in Jesus is not just an exchange of pleasantries, but a whole-hearted self-risking trust in Jesus himself.
 2. Jesus calls us to believe. Hope in Christ is not blind hope, it is rooted in his life, his death, and his resurrection.

KNOW: Faith does not have to be perfect, but it does have to be present. As John Stott has stated: "Faith is taking hold of Jesus Christ personally. There is no merit in it, it is not another work. Its value lies not in itself, but entirely in its object: Jesus Christ."

DO: Believe in Jesus and know life and hope!

Recommended Reading:

The Case for Easter by Lee Stobel

For Children:

God Gave Us Easter by Lisa Bergren and Laura Bryant

The Donkey Who Carried a King by R.C. Sproul

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families/Others

1. What are some "crises of faith" in your own life that have helped to produce faith in you? Are there any that have, even for a time, pushed you away from God?
2. Jesus calls Himself "the resurrection and the life." What do you think He means by that?
3. Jesus performed mighty miracles for the people in the three stories we spoke about on Sunday. It produced faith in them. How do we develop our faith when, generally speaking, we don't see the same type of miracles? Were those miracles just for them, or were they for us, too? Explain.
4. In the same way, these individuals (Mary, Martha, Jairus, the boy's father) saw Jesus face-to-face. How do we have face time with Jesus in our world today (cf. 1 Peter 1:8-9)?
5. Jesus said that the "work" of God is to believe in the one He has sent (John 6:29). Deep down, what does it mean to "believe" in Jesus? Do you struggle with your believing at times? What do you do when that happens?