

Application Guide: “That You May Believe” (John 11)

Sept. 4th, 2005: John Schmidler, Director of Family Ministries at College Park, preached on Jesus’ miraculous work of raising Lazarus from the grave. He emphasized that the story in serves to help us move our focus off of all the things Jesus does and onto whom Jesus is. The story reveals that the central point of the gospel is not about our problems but God’s glory.

1. *Introduction: The gospel is not a way to get people to heaven; it is a way to get people to God. The aim of the gospel is the display of God’s glory...* (John Piper)
 - a. In what ways has the culture pulled you into a mindset that elevates the glory of man (e.g. – personal prosperity, success in business, fame in Hollywood, feats in sports, etc) in a way that usurps the glory of God?¹ Are you still tantalized by these things or has God’s glory caused them to become “strangely dim”?
 - b. If we truly believe that the point of the gospel is to help people see God, why is so much of evangelism focused on scaring people about hell or seeing our relatives in heaven? If the gospel is about knowing God, then why is so much of church life about coming up with “Christian” social activities and entertainment rather than pursuing him?
 - c. If we believe that the most precious gift God can give us is God himself, how will we pray and live in relation to God?
2. *“It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has not light” (v. 10)*
 - a. What does it really mean to follow Christ, to trust in the Lord? What does it look like for him to be the light to our path (cf. Prv. 3:5-6; Ps. 119:105)?
 - b. How can we tell we are trying to “light our path” by our own means rather than through Christ? How can we tell whether or not trials are the result of sin? What obstacles in your life are preventing you from experiencing God’s power?
3. *“I’m glad I was not there, so that you may believe” (v. 15)*
 - a. How has God used suffering in your life to help you better see his glory? How have trials helped you find the greater satisfaction that comes in knowing God rather than having comfort in our circumstances, prosperity, etc?
 - b. What are some areas of your life you need to redirect your focus from your problems or how you want God to solve them and onto God’s glory? What are some ways you need to embrace the trials God brings into your life?
4. *“Move the stone” (v. 39).*
 - a. What are some things God is asking you to do amidst your trials so as to make your faith real, to put it into action? How can we balance our role and God’s role in spiritual growth (cf. Phil. 2:12-13)?
5. *“Many believed, but some...” (vv. 45-46).* How you respond to trials reveals who you worship.
 - a. Do you allow your life circumstances to mold you into Christ’s image or harden you and lose your joy? Have trials in your life revealed a dependence on God or on self?

¹ A personal example – On Monday, Sept 5th, 2005, during the U.S. Open match between Andre Agassi and Xavier Malisse, the commentator stated (rather ironically) during one part of the match, “Xavier is dehumanizing Andre and bringing him down to mortal status.” How often do we immortalize people in our culture?