

**UNLIKELY HEROES WHO BELIEVE FOR BREAKTHROUGH**

**APRIL 2, 2017**

**INTRODUCTION**

In the Gospel of John, Jesus performs seven significant miracles that John refers to as “signs.” The last of these “signs” was raising Lazarus from the dead. John states that “many” of those who saw this resurrection believed in Him. It seems amazing to me that you could witness this type of miracle and not believe. Even the example of the Israelites in Exodus shows us that unbelief seems to be our default thought process. Will you be like the Israelites, who saw God’s miraculous hand rescue them time and time again, yet with each new obstacle they doubted, grumbled, and complained, or will you believe for a breakthrough?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Has a friend ever let you down? How did it make you feel?
  
2. In John 11:1-16, Martha and Mary sent a messenger to let Jesus know that their brother, Lazarus, was ill. Instead of coming right away, Jesus waited two days before going. Why do you think Jesus delayed instead of rushing to help? (See John 11:14.)
  
3. Read John 11:17-37. What did Martha and Mary expect from Jesus? Have you asked God for something and were disappointed with the response? In hindsight, have you recognized this as God’s will? Why or why not?
  
4. Though Martha is disappointed that Jesus was not there in time to save her brother, she affirms her faith in Him as Messiah. As David said on Sunday, an affirmation of faith can bring about a breakthrough in your walk. Read the following Scriptures, write the affirmation statement found in each, and list what God does in response.

SCRIPTURE	AFFIRMATION	GOD’S RESPONSE (OUTCOME)
Genesis 22:1-13		
1 Samuel 17:4-11, 32-37, 45-50		
Daniel 3:16-26		

5. Has there been a time in your life that you affirmed your faith, and then you saw God respond?

## Study Questions for Community Groups

6. When Jesus asked for Mary, in the midst of her mourning, she got up, went to Him, and fell at His feet. Is there an action step you need to take to have a breakthrough in your faith?
7. In John 11:33, the Greek word used for “deeply moved” is *embrimaomai*. This word can mean “to have indignation on”, “to blame”, “to sigh with chagrin”, and “to groan”. The Greek word used for “troubled” is *tarassō*, which can mean “to stir or agitate”. As a result, “Jesus wept” (John 11:35). Why do you think He displayed such deep emotion?
8. Does knowing that God has such profound empathy for you affect your view of Him and His plan for your life?
9. Have you experienced a personal breakthrough of belief in your life? If so, share it with your group.

## SCRIPTURE

<sup>17</sup>On His arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. <sup>18</sup>Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, <sup>19</sup>and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. <sup>20</sup>When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet Him, but Mary stayed at home. <sup>21</sup>“Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if You had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup>But I know that even now God will give You whatever You ask.” <sup>23</sup>Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” <sup>24</sup>Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” <sup>25</sup>Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die; <sup>26</sup>and whoever lives by believing in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” <sup>27</sup>“Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that You are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.” <sup>28</sup>After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” <sup>29</sup>When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to Him. <sup>30</sup>Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met Him. <sup>31</sup>When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. <sup>32</sup>When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell at His feet and said, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” <sup>33</sup>When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. <sup>34</sup>“Where have you laid him?” He asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. <sup>35</sup>Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup>Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!” <sup>37</sup>But some of them said, “Could not He who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?” John 11:17-37 (NIV)

## APPLICATION

Pray and work through the following homework questions that David gave on Sunday:

- What questions do you need to **ask** of God about the area in your life in which you long for a breakthrough?
- What do you need to **affirm** in your belief of God as you seek a breakthrough?
- What public **action** do you need to take as part of your belief for a breakthrough in Jesus?