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***In His Own Words:***  
“Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life”  
John 11: 1-7, 17-44

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***Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:***

“I could never myself believe in God, if it were not for the cross. The only God I believe in is the One Nietzsche ridiculed as 'God on the cross.' In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it? I have entered many Buddhist temples in different Asian countries and stood respectfully before the statue of the Buddha, his legs crossed, arms folded, eyes closed, the ghost of a smile playing round his mouth, a remote look on his face, detached from the agonies of the world. But each time after a while I have had to turn away. And in imagination I have turned instead to that lonely, twisted, tortured figure on the cross, nails through hands and feet, back lacerated, limbs wrenched, brow bleeding from thorn-pricks, mouth dry and intolerably thirsty, plunged in Godforsaken darkness. That is the God for me! He laid aside his immunity to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death. He suffered for us. Our sufferings become more manageable in the light of his. There is still a question mark against human suffering, but over it we boldly stamp another mark, the cross that symbolizes divine suffering. 'The cross of Christ ... is God's only self-justification in such a world' as ours....' 'The other gods were strong; but thou wast weak; they rode, but thou didst stumble to a throne; But to our wounds only God's wounds can speak, And not a god has wounds, but thou alone.' - John Stott

“Who is to say which is more incredible - a man who raises the dead or a God who weeps?” - Ken Gire

“Behind every agonizing “No” from God is his “Yes” to something better, his “Trust Me” with the timing, and his “I AM with you right now”. - Walter Henegar

***Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:***

- After reading through the passage together, ask your group what makes an impression upon them from the passages and why it strikes them.
- How does this self-portrait from Jesus intersect with you today? Is there anything fresh? Does it resonate with or confuse you at all?
- Which of the people in the story do you identify with the most: Martha in her honest questioning, Mary in her beaten down grief, the crowds who are trying to figure out what in the world is going on, Lazarus in the tomb?
- What is the tension between asking our questions, crying our tears, and drying our tears? Do you have the freedom to lament and complain to God? In your experience is the church a community that welcomes and enables lament like this? Does the Christian community push too quickly to fixing problems and resolving grief? Why, or why not? When is it appropriate to quit our lament and dry our tears? What empowers that?
- What are some places that you are longing for resurrection and life - personally, relationally, and culturally?