

## MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS

**Scripture:** John 11: 45-57

- Open Hearts (John 11:45)
- Closed Hearts (John 11:46-48)
- Hardened Heart (John 11:49-50)
- God's Heart (John 11:51-53)
  - At the heart of the Gospel is substitution
- Looking for Jesus (John 11:54-57)
  - Why are you looking for Jesus?

## GET TALKING

Share your experience with someone you knew growing up, or even now, who could be considered a tattletale or gossip?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read John 11: 45-57

1. Last week we learned about Lazarus's death and resurrection. Verses 45-46 detail the response of those who witnessed it. Some responded with open hearts, others closed off their heart to Jesus. When have you shared a similar situation where a group of people had very different responses to the same event?
  - a. What do you think can cause this to happen?
  - b. What do you think motivated those who witnessed Lazarus being risen from the dead to go and tell the Pharisees what Jesus had done? Can you share a time when you closed your heart to someone or something?
  - c. How do you believe those same people responded during Jesus' arrest, crucifixion, and after His resurrection?
2. Let's reflect on the unofficial meeting of the Sanhedrin described in verses 47-48.
  - a. What did they come to believe about Jesus: Messiah or false prophet?
  - b. How did they respond and why? What would you say was the reason (fear, pride, greed, all the above)?
  - c. For John to have a recording of it, someone who attended the meeting must have shared it. Some of those in attendance must have been looking for Jesus; maybe Nicodemus. What hope does that give you or those you know who have hardened their hearts against God?
3. Reread verses 49-52. Read it in different versions. God gave the high priest the words to prophesy that Jesus would die so no one need perish. Caiaphas's heart was focused on killing one man so the way of life that they had been living (their power and prestige) would not end. How often do we miss these powerful examples in the Bible of how God can use everyone and everything for His good plan? Like the pharisees, we often have a small view, looking for what will help ourselves or our way of life instead of seeing the greater picture of God's promises and plan for the whole world. Brainstorm a list of strategies you can put in your Bible study toolbox that can help you to better understand, meditate on, and apply the Word of God as you read it.
4. As a result of both the Pharisees and chief priests wanting to seize Jesus, Jesus no longer moved about publicly as His hour had not yet come. Many "kept looking for Jesus" (John 11:56) wondering if He would come to the Jewish Passover. What do you believe they were hoping would happen and why? What reasons do you have for looking for Jesus? What are you hoping happens?

## **PRAYER**

The conditions of our heart play a huge part in how we receive God's Word and His gift of salvation. Consider the condition of your own heart. Are there areas or relationships in your life where your heart has hardened or been closed off?

During your prayer time:

- Thank God for His ability to work in, with, and through you even when you don't know or ask for it.
- Confess the hardening or closing of your heart if the Holy Spirit brings anything to mind
- Ask God to reveal the hardened areas and soften your heart in response.