

# Life Matters

## Worksheet 7



In the Netflix series 'The Crown' there is a fascinating conversation about the Queen and her relationship with her eldest son, Prince Charles. The conversation was about why the Queen's relationship with Charles was different to her other children. The answer given was that Charles, as heir to her throne, was a constant reminder of the Queen's own mortality. That Charles was being groomed to be the future King upon the Queen's death was a visible aide-memoir that she would die.

We need to keep in mind that this drama series is not based upon fact! Whatever the real state of the Queen's relationship with her eldest son and the truth behind it, the point that the Crown makes is an interesting one. Nobody likes to be reminded of their own mortality. Nobody likes to think or talk about death.

The problem is that death affects every single one of us. The pain of loss and separation when a loved one dies is real and tangible. Death hurts us and is awful.

My Grandfather died in his mid 90's. He lived a good, long life. He had a 'good innings' as we would say. Yet, if I was given a choice in the matter then he would still be with us talking about his greenhouses and his visit to Canada!

### QUESTIONS:

- **Why is the death of loved ones so very painful to us?**
- **Would you really want to live forever?**

Death has been described as our greatest and last enemy. The only real answer to death is, of course, life. Why can't we live forever? There is a problem with the answer to this question. The problem is that the older we get, the more that our body breaks down, and the more problems we face. If we could live forever with our 25-year-old bodies, then that would be ideal. However, thinking of my grandfather, as much as I wished that he was still alive, I'm not sure that he would enjoy the pain and confusion of being over 110!

What about life after death? If we can't live forever as our 25-year-old self, then what about coming back from the dead? Who really wants to be a ghost though? There is something incredible about having a real body. Though it breaks down and suffers from infections, our bodies are wonderful things. What if we could be butterflies though?

Caterpillars are interesting insects. Their sole aim in life is to eat! I'm sure that many of us can identify with that goal! They can increase their body mass by 1000 times in their life span of about 12 months. Caterpillars also have 12 eyes, which is very useful for spotting their next lunch. They can be quite pretty colours, however they aren't the prettiest creatures on this earth. That all changes though when they die. To become a beautiful Butterfly, the caterpillar must die. This insect goes through death but has something far

greater on the other side. Now this insect can fly. Now this insect looks stunningly beautiful. There is no comparison between the caterpillar and the butterfly. That is the effect of the new life that the Butterfly has. It is far, far, better!

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## **QUESTIONS:**

- **What happens to a Tomato seed when it is planted?**
- **Can you think of anything else where death brings better life?**

We have previously seen that Jesus died. There is no doubt about it. Roman soldiers do not make mistakes with executions. In John 19 we have the account of what happens to the body of Jesus after his execution. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had been secret followers of Jesus. They have now become public with their discipleship. They go to Pilate, the Roman governor and ask for the body of Jesus. Please note what they are asking for. They do not ask for Jesus, they ask for his body. That is how you deal with the dead.

In verse 39 we read the detail of what occurred. "Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about 35 kilograms. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs." These two men were carefully dealing with the body of their friend, in the same way that everyone else did at that time, in that customary way. This procedure would have taken several hours. If there had been any sign of life, then these two friends would have tried to arrange medical intervention. They are working on his body, but there is no sign of any life. Jesus is dead.

The wrapped body of Jesus is placed into a new tomb. A large stone was put in place. Early on the Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb and is alarmed because the stone had been moved away from the entrance. She runs back to get John and Peter. They go to investigate, still completely unaware of what has really happened. They go into the tomb and see the linen cloths lying on the floor, with the face covering neatly placed nearby. Peter and John were stunned and went back to where they were staying.

If you think that someone may have stolen the body, then we must look at the details. The resurrection of Jesus is far too important to just dismiss. The implications of this being true are huge for us. Practically, if you were to steal the body of Jesus then you would do it quickly. That is how theft works. If you were to steal a body from a tomb, then you would not stop and unwrap the body and remove the face covering, placing them carefully and neatly in a pile. You would grab the corpse and run away as quickly as possible. The theory of Jesus' body being stolen does not make practical sense.

If the crime of stealing his body has occurred, then what about motive. Why would someone steal a dead body? What is the purpose? What would be the benefit? Why hide a body? The disciples never gain power or riches as a result of their testimony about the resurrected Jesus. All they gain is persecution and eventual punishment and execution.

## **QUESTION:**

### **• Why doesn't Thomas believe like the others do?**

The following Sunday, Jesus again appears to the disciples and this time Thomas is there. Jesus offers to show Thomas the marks upon his body. He is showing the 'war wounds' that he has suffered on the cross. Jesus is not angry with Thomas, even though he doubted him. The first words of Jesus are remarkable, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.'" What a gracious man Jesus is.

We see here the call of Jesus to Thomas to believe. The call is to stop doubting and to believe. Thomas should have believed what the other disciples had told him. They had seen Jesus with their own eyes and had kept on telling Thomas about this. Why doesn't he trust what they say? We spend most of our lives believing what other people tell us. We are constantly told to 'eat 5 a day' and so we try to. We believe the message that we have been given without even investigating the claim. We believe because we trust the messenger. There are times that we don't believe the messenger, so we don't believe the message. Think about the politicians that align with our political views and beliefs. We generally trust what they say but don't trust the 'other lot'. We often trust medical Doctors, but when the message is not what we want to hear, then often we ask for a second opinion. Do we mistrust the message or the messenger at that point?

## **QUESTIONS:**

### **• What makes us believe?**

### **• Is it the message or the messenger or a combination of the two?**

When we examine the life of Jesus, we see a man that we can trust. We discover a man who never told a lie, who gained no political power. A man who gained no wealth. A man who gained a very small number of followers in his lifetime and a man who was executed by the religious leaders and the Roman powers. Yet this is a man who is worshipped by more people today than at any other time in history. Why do billions of people around the world trust in the resurrected Jesus?

As we turn our attention back to doubting Thomas we see in his reaction, the faith that we need today. John was in the room as Thomas spoke to Jesus and the conversation is recorded for us in John 20:28. There Thomas says to Jesus, "My Lord, and my God". Thomas realises that Jesus is Lord, and that Jesus is God. He has spent three years following Jesus and it is the resurrection that makes all the difference to him.

The resurrection of Jesus is one of the key events in the bible. It is vital because it gives us all great hope in the face of our greatest enemy. What is the only solution to death? It is life. Here in the resurrection of Jesus, we have our great hope. We are not promised to live forever in this body. Jesus shows us what life, death and resurrection life is like.

In chapter 21 of John, we read there of Jesus resurrection life with his disciples. Jesus eats with them. Jesus speaks to them. Jesus still has the war wounds in his body but is not in pain or decay. This is what a resurrected body is like. Jesus calls us to follow him. The call is to live, die and live again with a new body that will eat, speak but not have pain or decay. That is real life. That is eternal life. That is what the resurrection of Jesus points to and promises. Whatever your problems in this world, death is our greatest enemy. Yet resurrection is the greater answer to this great enemy. There is nothing in this world, that a good resurrection will not solve!

## **QUESTION:**

- **Are you willing to trust Jesus to give you eternal, resurrection life?**

How would you like to explore this life in Jesus Christ that John wants you to know? This is your opportunity and invitation to do that. There are currently millions of people around the world who have experienced what life in Jesus Christ is really like. Why not commit to spend some time for the next few weeks exploring this for yourself? These videos and studies will be appearing twice a week and we will attempt to answer any questions you have via our email address [info@lfec.org](mailto:info@lfec.org)

In the next video and study, we will be looking at what Jesus teaches us about God. Look out for these on YouTube, Facebook or on our website: [www.lfec.org](http://www.lfec.org)