



Sermon Discussion Guide

April 5th, 2026 | John 11:17-27 | Pastor Greg Doty

Series // The Gospel of John: Taste and See Who I Am

Summary

Pastor Greg began our Easter Sunday sermon with speaking about blame. Specifically, our tendency to avoid blame at all costs and quickness to assign blame to others. Blame is actually an acknowledgement that something is wrong with the world and to make sense of the world we look to blame others for it. We see this in the creation story as Adam blames God for disobeying God's instructions, shifting responsibility away from himself. In today's passage, we meet a woman who blames God. Martha has just lost her brother and she says to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died." We tend to do the same, we place blame on God in order to make sense of the world around us. Jesus welcomes her even as she blames him, he is big enough to take that. Jesus reassures Martha that her bother will rise again, stating that he is the resurrection. What Jesus is telling Martha and us today is that when he goes to the cross, he will take our blame. The problem with the world isn't out there it is within each of us because we have rebelled against a holy God. The solution to this problem is not shifting blame around; it is someone taking up all of our blame in our place. That is what Jesus has come to do. That is what we celebrate on Easter, Jesus taking our blame on the cross and resurrecting on the third day so that we could have eternal life. That though we may eventually die, in him we can be resurrected with him.

Discussion Questions (Read John 11:17-27):

- **Icebreaker Question:** When something goes wrong in your life, what's your first instinct—do you blame yourself, others, or circumstances? Why do you think that is?

Reason for Blame

- How does blame help us "make sense of the world"?
- Why is it easier to shift responsibility than to accept it?
- In what ways do you see this tendency to blame others in everyday life?

Person to Blame

- Why do people sometimes place blame on God in difficult situations?
- How does Jesus respond to Martha's statement?
- What does this teach us about Jesus' character?

Taking the Blame

- Why is “shifting blame” not a real solution?
- What does it mean that someone must take our blame “in our place”?
- How does Jesus fulfill this role?
- How does Jesus’ resurrection give us hope?

Closing Reflection & Prayer

- Where in your life are you tempted to shift blame right now?

Invite the group to thank Jesus for taking our blame on the cross and giving us a new life in him.