**Week 4 - DWTS Aftermath (tragedy and loss)**

**This Week’s** **Overcomers**: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus

**Scripture Reference:** ReadJohn 11:1-44

**Their Scars:** Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were certainly no strangers to Jesus. Scripture seems to indicate they were close. So when Lazarus became deathly ill, the sisters immediately sent word to their faithful friend, Jesus. No doubt they were aware of His ability to heal and had no reason to think their friend, the gracious and affectionate rabbi, would delay in rushing to their brother’s aid.

As his illness progressed, Lazarus must have wondered why his friend was nowhere to be found. His sisters, Mary and Martha, were no doubt vacillating between the terror of losing their brother and the anger that comes with feeling betrayed. When Jesus finally arrived, it was days after they had buried their brother. Martha was the first to speak to Jesus and through her tears she questioned what for her seemed to be His failure to help them in their time of greatest need. Both sisters felt as though Jesus had let them down.

**Their Healing:** Words do no justice to the mind-numbing shock that accompanies unforeseen tragedy or the stark rawness which comes with losing a loved-one. Loss of any kind leaves us feeling a wide range of emotions: vulnerable, betrayed, angry, empty. We find ourselves desperately trying to make sense of what we are experiencing and it is in this cacophony of emotion we find ourselves asking questions about the God we want to believe loves us: *Where is He? Doesn’t He care? Why did He let this happen?*

The reality is Jesus never abstains from the chaos of tragedy; His place is always at the side of those hurting, even when we don’t realize it. This week’s Overcomers faced heartrending losses. Their pain stemmed not just from the intrusion of death in their lives, but from the utter disappointment that comes with feeling as though prayers have gone unanswered. And yet Jesus did not rebuke their tearful accusations; He did not brush off their confusion at how the week’s events had played out. Quite the opposite, He acknowledged their pain with tears of His own. To Mary and Martha’s credit, they held to their faith in His ability to make sense of their loss. They clung, against all odds, to the notion that Jesus loved them and was working in their situation even as they believed Him to have been absent in their moment of greatest need. It was then they saw that Christ’s resurrection power is capable of more than we can understand.

Lazarus, four days dead, was restored to them. The story of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha shows us that Jesus can deliver anyone from anything – no hurt lies beyond His ability to heal. Through them we learn God can bring healing from the ashes of our tragedy.

**Discussion Questions:**

* Think about the range and level of emotions displayed in this story:
  + What do you think Lazarus was thinking as he lay dying?
  + Why do you think Mary stayed in her house when Jesus first arrived?
  + Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus, even as He knew He was about to restore Lazarus to life. What does this say about how Jesus views our feelings in the midst of tragedy and loss?
* Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4.
  + Look up the words “compassion” and “comfort”. What are some of the ways God comforts and shows compassion?
  + What does God intend for His followers to do with their experiences in tragedy and loss?
  + How does comforting others help us deal with our own painful situations?
* As a group, how can we encourage one another toward healing?