



Group Discussion Guide

Under the Circumstances – Week 1: “When Life Happens”

Key Scripture: John 11:1–45, 1 Peter 5:6–7

Intro / Warm-Up

We all face seasons when life doesn’t go the way we hoped. In this week’s message, we looked at the story of Lazarus and asked:

“Is God still present when our circumstances fall apart?”

This week’s goal isn’t to fix anyone’s pain, but to help each other recognize where God might be present in it—even if the situation doesn’t change.

Discussion Questions

1. "If you had been here..."

Mary and Martha both say the same thing to Jesus (John 11:21, 32). Have you ever felt or said something similar to God?

What situation was that? How did it shape your view of God?

2. God’s delay isn’t God’s absence.

Jesus waited two days before going to see Lazarus (John 11:6). Why do you think he delayed?

What might that teach us about how God works today?

3. Faith in the middle, not just at the end.

John 11:15: “I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe.”

What do you think Jesus wanted them—and us—to believe?

Have you ever found your faith strengthened through a hard season, even if it wasn’t resolved?

4. Jesus wept.

Jesus knew he was about to raise Lazarus, yet he still wept (John 11:35).

What does that tell us about how Jesus feels when we’re hurting?

5. Circumstances are not an indicator of God's absence.

Why do you think we are so quick to judge God's love by what's happening around us?
What truth can anchor us when everything feels like it's falling apart?

6. 1 Peter 5:6-7 says to cast all your cares on Him.

What would that look like practically in your life right now?
Is there something you're holding onto instead of releasing to God?

Wrap-Up & Next Step

This week, try to reframe one frustrating or painful situation through the lens of this truth:

"My circumstances do not determine God's presence or goodness."

Ask:

- Where might God be at work that I haven't noticed?
- What would it look like to trust Him "under the circumstances"?

Encourage each other to check in midweek—send a text, pray for each other, share how you're reframing your pain with faith.