

## Daily Devotion March 31, 2020

### John 11:38-44

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

**38** Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. <sup>39</sup>“Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

**40** Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

**41** So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

**43** When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” <sup>44</sup>The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

I encourage you to read the whole chapter with the wonderful interactions between Jesus and Mary and Martha. They are so real and rich in meaning and hope!

Most of you know I don't use the King James Version of the Bible often, I do happen to love its rendering of the raising of Lazarus. Jesus, after weeping and being emotionally moved, commands those around him to open Lazarus' tomb.

There's instant protest. Lazarus had been dead for a few days, and everyone knew that rolling that stone away wouldn't be pretty.

Martha calls out: ***But Lord, he stinketh!*** I love that. John is the Gospel of Signs. Traditional theology tells us there are seven signs, and the raising of Lazarus is that ultimate seventh sign, revealing Jesus' identity as the Christ. But, as much as this sign is about Jesus, it's also about us. Because in many ways we are all Lazarus.

We are all dead and lifeless. We are all wrapped up corpses, bound in the grave clothes which the world lays on us. We are stiff and we have all begun to smell a little rank.

### **We stinketh.**

Until – until! – Jesus calls us out of the tomb. Until he orders everything that binds us and holds us down, to be stripped off of us and tossed aside. Until he breathes his holy breath into us again and makes us a new creation.

The Body of Christ, the church – we are all Lazarus. **We stinketh**, until Jesus calls us out, frees us, and gives us life. In fact this is what binds us together — we have all been called out of the tomb and unwrapped.

In this sense, the raising of Lazarus isn't just a miracle that Jesus performed thousands of years ago in a land far, far away. It's the work of Jesus today.

And, I don't know about you, but I'm glad that Jesus still calls us out, because I still need it. I **still stinketh**. And some days **I stinketh** more than others.

I still find myself from time to time bound up and wound up; by the expectations of others, by my own insecurities, by my sin.

But, the promise of the story of Lazarus is that, like Lazarus, Jesus loves us. He weeps for us. He is deeply moved by us. And he brings life to our death, freedom to our bondage, and a shining light to our every darkness.

Know that God is with you this day. God will bring light to your darkness. Forgiveness to your sin. Hope for tomorrow.

PRAYER **written by Jamie Tworkowski**

**Conversations will not be canceled.**

**Relationships will not be canceled.**

**Love will not be canceled.**

**Songs will not be canceled.**

**Reading will not be canceled.**

**Self-care will not be canceled.**

**Hope will not be canceled.**

**God Bless**

Roger

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