Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. (John 11:43-44)

Almighty One, you are our sure hope and confidence. You bring life out of death and healing to the sick. We give thanks for your abiding love. In gratitude, we ask that you would fill us with all hope and courage that we would boldly reach out to those in need. Your love for us is incredible and humbling. In Jesus' holy name we pray. Amen.

Introduction

Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, had died. When Jesus arrived a few days later, he comforted the sisters in their grief. But then he went to the tomb where Lazarus was buried, and he did something quite unexpected! Jesus proved that he is the Resurrection and the Life!

Read: John 11:17-44

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

The Biblical Context

Throughout his ministry among the people, Jesus demonstrated the active power of God by performing miracles and signs, such as healing the sick, casting out demons, commanding the elements, and raising the dead to life.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus is shown to have divine mastery over the forces of darkness — including sin, death, and the power of the devil. This is reason he came into the world, "that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

Like Lazarus, we trust and believe that even though "the wages of sin is death ... the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23)!

Discussion Questions

1. How long had Lazarus been in the tomb when Jesus arrived to visit him and his sisters? What did Martha say to him about this? Do you think she said this in a confident or accusing way?

2. What did Martha mean when she said, "I know that [Lazarus] will rise again in the resurrection on the last day"? Do *you* believe that all the dead will rise in the end, and you will see your loved ones again?

3. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (v. 25). Why does Jesus want us to focus our faith on him rather than on the circumstances we are facing?

4. What was the first thing Mary said when Jesus came to her? Do you think she said this in a confident or accusing way? How was Mary's response different from Martha's?

5. How did Jesus react when he saw Mary crying? Why? Did anyone else notice his response?

6. When Jesus went to the tomb, Martha didn't want to remove the stone. Why not? Did she stop Jesus from opening the tomb?

7. What did Jesus do when he went to the tomb? How does this story show that the Word of God has the power to give life? In what way does God's Word give *us* eternal life?

8. Read Romans 6:11-14. Is there anything a living person can do to make themselves dead? On the other hand, is there anything a dead person can do to make themselves alive? How does this describe our sin as well as our need for a Savior?

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