

March 25, 2020 - A mini-Service by Theresa Grimes

Hello Church family! Below is another mini-service for you to reflect on this week! Stay well!

Opening Prayer:

Healing and Empowering God, we are sometimes so sure that things will not work out, we doubt even your ability to put things right in our lives. We lack such faith. But Jesus came to show us that our most dreaded enemy--death--can be overcome by faith. Heal our doubts and our longings for assurance and give us spirits of trust and hope. In Jesus' Name, we pray. AMEN.

Prayer of Confession

God, we confess that we are frightened by death. We have experienced the loss of loved ones and have heard, all too often, of the horrible losses sustained by the young people who live in lands of warfare and strife. In this scripture today we encounter Lazarus and his family. They too, long for Lazarus to be alive again. Jesus' power to resurrect Lazarus confuses us. We long for that type of healing for our loved ones. And so, when their bodies cannot be healed and they die, we slip away from our faith, proclaiming that it is a nice story. Give us courage to face our fear. Give us awareness that you have offered to all those who have gone before us, a place in your kingdom. Help us move away from the prison of death to the light of eternal life and hope. In Jesus' Name, we pray. AMEN.

A reading from John 11:1-45

John 11:1-45 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

THE DEATH OF LAZARUS

11 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. **3** So the sisters sent a message to Jesus,^[a] "Lord, he whom you love is ill." **4** But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." **5** Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, **6** after having heard that Lazarus^[b] was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. **7** Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." **8** The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" **9** Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. **10** But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." **11** After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." **12** The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." **13** Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. **14** Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. **15** For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." **16** Thomas, who

was called the Twin,[c] said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

JESUS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

17 When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus[d] had already been in the tomb four days. **18** Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles[e] away, **19** and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. **20** When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. **21** Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." **23** Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." **24** Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." **25** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.[f] Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, **26** and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" **27** She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah,[g] the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

JESUS WEEPS

28 When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." **29** And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. **30** Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. **31** The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. **32** When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." **33** When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. **34** He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." **35** Jesus began to weep. **36** So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" **37** But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

JESUS RAISES LAZARUS TO LIFE

38 Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. **39** Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." **40** Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" **41** So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. **42** I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." **43** When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" **44** The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." **45** Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Offertory Prayer:

From your hands, O God,
come the blessings that make life possible,
even the very gift of life itself.
In gratitude and thanks,
receive from our hands this portion of our labors.
By your Spirit's leading,
may we use these gifts to bless the life of others
with the assurance of love,
the promise of hope,
and the course of justice.
This we do to your glory. Amen.

Blessing:

Lord, unbind us from our fears and doubts. Be with us in our witness to the power and love of Jesus Christ. AMEN.