

**ROAD TO EASTER**  
**THE RAISING OF LAZARUS**

Thursday, February 22  
Reading: John 11:38-44

**John 11:41** *So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42 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!"*

At the tomb, Jesus gave the order to remove the stone from the entrance. This command would risk defilement and Martha was concerned about the stench of decomposition it would release. Jesus however reminds her of His previous promise.

Jesus' prayer was for the benefit of the people. Like Elijah before him (1 Kings 18:37), Jesus' prayer was that this miracle would bring glory to the Father and recognition that He was the One sent from God. The tension reached its climax as Jesus cries out, "Lazarus, come forth!" Jesus had claimed that the dead would hear His voice and come out of their graves (John 5:28) and that His sheep hear His voice (John 10:27). The early Church Father Augustine commented that if Jesus had not specified that Lazarus come out every corpse in the graveyard would have come out! The power of death had to surrender in the face of the command of Christ!

**LESSON ONE:** "Stench of Death." Death is not pretty. In fact, some Bible teachers believe that Jesus was as upset by the presence of death as He was by the unbelief of the people. Martha's concern over the stench of death was real. Today we try to make death as pleasant as possible. Funeral directors dress up the body and make them look as "natural" as they can. Beautiful coffins and flowers abound. There is nothing wrong with all that. It helps the grieving to adjust. But it cannot hide the fact that death is an awful thing. It entered the world as a result of sin and spreads through all humanity (Romans 5:12). However, we have the wonderful promise that Christ was victorious over death (1 Corinthians 15:54-55; 2 Timothy 1:10). How does this truth help a Christian face death with courage?

**LESSON TWO:** "Power of Christ." This was the apex of Jesus' miracles. Though He had raised others from the dead (Jairus' daughter - Mark 5; widow of Nain's son - Luke 7), this was the only resurrection that occurred four days after death. The One who spoke the universe into existence, now commanded life to return to Lazarus. This same power calls us out of darkness and sin to new life in Him (1 Peter 2:9). We are also called to live as saints of God (1 Corinthians 1:2). How is Christ's power evident in your life? Are you in some way still bound by the wrappings of the world?