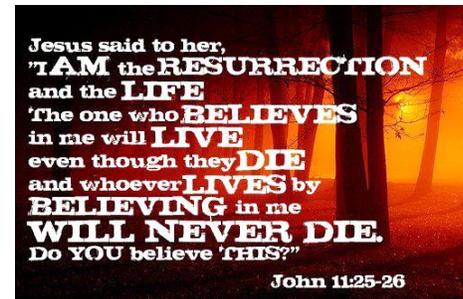


## Lent 5 2020 3/29/2020 John 11:1-53 Ezekiel 37:1-14

Grace and peace from God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Amen

There is no getting around it...the scripture lessons for this Fifth Sunday in Lent are powerful....powerful...not so much in the display of the high and mighty....O please forgive...a resurrection of a man in a grave is certainly amazing...and the same could be said for the valley of dry bones...yes, yes...these are the dramatic and powerful acts of God...but, just for a moment....I am thinking of the more subtle aspects of the scripture references...to the emotions that are evoked through the story of Jesus...and the raising of Lazarus...and even to the story of the bones in the valley of the dead. The emotions...the feelings...we do not always speak to these things...perhaps because they are so real...and at times so raw.



Please find yourself for a moment...take a deep breath...and breathe in the spirit of God...and listen and pray...this prayer.

*Let us pray, O Jesus, you have gazed into the hundred hearts that are amazed before you, thick with curiosity, we stand and sit and wonder. Confronted with the fears of unknowing, caught in our self-made righteousness, lost in our death of deaths...we are before you...listening to your Word, hopeful for its meaning, desirous for a new word, a new hope, a new ideal. Come and dwell within us...allow the wind of your spirit to brush us, let the water of your redeeming cleanse us, bring to us the light of your grace...remove the darkness of our fears and liberate us with your Gospel. Amen*

Well we are two weekends into our **“Stay at Home”** practice. These times confront us with another reality, that calls for us to open our hearts in new ways to those around us. This is an unsettling time, but it can also be a creative time, for us to ponder the more important things in our lives, our family, our friends...and our relationship to our God. Our God, who graciously loves us...even...even in this time of a pandemic.

The lessons for the Sunday speak to the darker times of life, with the valley of dry bones, and the death of Jesus' dear friend, Lazarus. Darker times that lead to brighter times, hopeful signs of a resurrection unto a life eternal.

I believe that we need these kinds of lessons, that touch on the real-life situations of real-life people. We are afforded a brief look into how an ancient culture handled their most challenging situations, lost in the valley of the dry bones, in the disconnections and disassociations of life. We are there too, in this time of the COVID 19, isolated in our homes, cut off from work (and our prayers for those who have lost jobs and who are out of work in this time.) Practicing public distancing seems to be an awkward dance. And yet in this time, I have seen people and families sharing more time together, a coming together during this isolation. So, it seems that the opposite is true as well...from isolation to a larger sense of community, of a deeper care for one another.

The Gospel speaks to this deep care for one another, in the story of the raising of Lazarus. Read that Gospel lesson and see the depth of the relationships in that family of three, Mary, Martha and Lazarus. See also the reaching out, the call for Jesus and the disciples to come and be near. See also the delay of Jesus, waiting on the outskirts of the town...waiting, why? For the right time...for that moment when people would be open to the power of God's Word. Ready to hear about the gift of new life...a resurrection victory. Perhaps?

These lessons speak to the transformative power of our God. Beyond the coronavirus, beyond the disassociations, beyond our fears...it is the very spirit of God at work within us. What looks utterly

hopeless can suddenly become filled with an unrealized potential.

If...if we can humble ourselves for a moment in our life to accept the fact and the truth indeed that there is a God who deeply loves us...who cares to keep a redemptive hand in the mix...of life.

I pray for you and yours in this most challenging of times, let us draw closer to one another, even as we practice the distance, let us never weary of giving of ourselves for the sake of the other, and let the power and presence of Jesus lead us into that new day, when we will celebrate the resurrection together, in worship, together, safe in the embrace of Jesus.

*Pastor Dave Beard*

## **Worship in the Home**

**FLC Website:**

**faithsd.net**

[Fifth Sunday in Lent, In Home Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup> Worship](#)

**YouTube: Worship for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent from Faith Lutheran Church San Dimas  
Pastor David Beard, Preaching**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nacY2qx5AMl>

**Check out this resource online from the ELCA.**

Available now on the [ELCA worship blog](#) is a weekly post, "[Worship in the Home.](#)" Although various formats of livestreaming worship work well in many contexts, you are encouraged to worship as you are able in homes on Sunday and throughout the week. Consider ways to pray and sing using this resource at home.

