

## Raising of Lazarus

*John 11.1-45*

Many of you like me will be in isolation, waiting, praying and looking forward to the day when the drama will end, and restrictions will be lifted.

This reading from the Gospel of John set for this Sunday, is one of the most dramatic moments in the whole story of Jesus.

Previously during his earthly ministry Jesus had raised two other people from the dead the first, mentioned in the Gospel of Luke, being the son of the widow of Nairn, and the other mentioned in all three synoptic Gospels was Jairus' daughter, when Jesus ordered those present not to tell anyone what happened.

By contrast in today's story Jesus stands in front of a large crowd and puts his reputation on the line as he prays, giving thanks to God for opening the eyes of those around him to his glory, as he calls Lazarus to "come out" of the tomb.

Can you imagine what a heart-stopping moment it must have been as the "dead" Lazarus walked out of that tomb.

The theologian Tom Wright describes that moment as, "*shuddering horror and overwhelming joy mixed together like dark mud and liquid gold*".

A feeling of awe, and thanks, and hope.

The lesson of this breathtaking miracle is that Christ **can** restore those who are both spiritually and physically dead.

But there is another story that looms behind this story of the resurrection of Lazarus

On their way to Bethany the disciples warned Jesus that to go back to Judea would be to court his own death.

However Jesus, meanwhile, had been praying for his dear, now dead friend.

Praying that his body would not decay in the days after death and burial, but that by the time Jesus arrives in Bethany, Lazarus will be ready to come back to life.

We cannot help but connect the fate of Lazarus and the fate of Jesus.

Jesus, in praying for Lazarus and then raising him to life, must have been aware that he was walking towards his own death, and praying his way into the Father's will, for what was to come for him, thereafter.

Of course – there are differences.

Lazarus came back into ordinary human life, and at some time in the future he would become ill again and one day he would die.

But the journey Jesus would make would be **through** death and out the other side, into a new sort of life.

But just for the moment let us consider not only the power of God to do these things, but the patience, faith and prayer of Jesus.

If Jesus needed to spend time faithfully praying and waiting – how much more will we.

Keep well. Keep safe  
With Every Blessing  
June