

*This week's Revd. Morris' message: **For all the Saints ....***

In today's Gospel, we witness the most amazing of Jesus' miracles - the rising of His friend Lazarus from the dead. What drama and pathos is demonstrated in this account! It's worthwhile to read the whole of Chapter 11 to capture the full timeline and impact of these momentous events.



A few items to notice:

**1. Why did Jesus wait to go to Bethany?**

Surely, this would have made the whole situation much harder for Mary and Martha? They had sent a message to Jesus impliedly seeking healing for Lazarus and then upbraided Him when he finally came ... *"My brother wouldn't have died if you had been here..."* Jesus knew that Lazarus was dying but also that he was going to be resuscitated. [ see v14] Some commentators note the Jewish tradition that a soul is said to hover near the body for 3 days after a person's death seeking the possibility of return. So, Jesus waiting 4 days was to make it clear that Lazarus' return was indeed a mighty Divine act demonstrating that Jesus is indeed the long awaited Messiah.

**2. Jesus was so emotionally engaged with Lazarus and his sisters.** Jesus loved them all [ v5], He risked his life in returning to Judea [ v16], He literally 'snorted', was deeply troubled [ v33], He wept [ v34] and was moved by deep anger [ v37 +38]. This is no distant, heartless, foreign Deity - but rather one who knows and expresses the full gamut of human emotions.

**3. I wonder what Lazarus thought or felt about what happened?** There are no Biblical account of Lazarus' response and, indeed, he is only mentioned once more in John's Gospel as Jesus' dinner companion at Bethany at the scene of Mary's anointing of Jesus' feet [ 12:1ff]. According to tradition, he became an early church Bishop. One tradition has him and his sisters in Provence, France whilst another in Cyprus.

**4. Lazarus was resuscitated not resurrected.** Lazarus would again die. Jesus was resurrected and by virtue of His Ascension returned to sit at God's right hand in Heaven.[ Hebrews 10:12]. The 2 events demonstrated Jesus' power over death, but are totally different in impact.

**5. Not all who witnessed Lazarus' resuscitation believed that Jesus was the Messiah.** Incredible as it may seem, not even witnessing this event was sufficient proof for some. Before this, many were hostile to Jesus because they thought Him a fraud seeking to deceive the faithful. [e.g. see John 5 :18] Now, whilst they were now convinced that His miracles were real, they wanted Jesus dead because of fear of the Roman response to the Jews flocking to Him, the loss of their own privileged position in society and potentially their lives also. [ John 10: 47ff ]

**Well, what does this mean for us today?** Today we celebrate **'All Saints Day'** where we give thanks to God for all the Saints who have now passed and, in particular, remember



those who touched our own lives in some way. These are amongst the incredible **'cloud of witnesses'** who encourage us as we seek to run our own race in our lives of faith [ see Hebrews 12:1].

However, our gospel reading also reminds us that **Jesus is "the one who raises the dead and gives them life again. Anyone who believes in [Him], even though [they die] ... shall live again. [They are] given eternal life for believing in [Jesus] and shall never perish."** John 10:25+26. Jesus then asks Martha, **'Do you believe this?'** This is probably the most important question and answer in Martha's life. She says: 'Yes, Master'.

*I wonder what our answer would be to that question today? Only if we likewise answer 'Yes' we ourselves will be part of that great 'cloud of witnesses' in the congregation of the Saints with Jesus our Lord and Saviour. **Gospel reading: John 11: 32-44.***

**Some resources to dig deeper:** <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/all-saints-day/commentary-on-john-1132-44-4#:~:text=Jesus has the same reaction,Death grieves God ;>  
<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/john-11/>; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lazarus\\_of\\_Bethany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lazarus_of_Bethany);

**Upcoming Parish Activities: Midweek service :** Wednesday 10:30 a.m; **Regis Service** 11:15; **Meditation group** 6:30 p.m ; **Men's Breakfast - Why do bad things happen?** Thursday 7am; **Every Sunday Guitars and Ukulele lessons** at 3 p.m; **Bible Study**

Wednesday at 7 pm and Friday at 10:30 am; **Readings for Next Sunday:** Ruth 3:1-5 and 4:3-17; Ps 127; Hebrews 9:19-28; Mark 12:38-44 [ **See above the supposed tomb of Lazarus in modern day al-Eizariya in the West Bank 3 miles from Jerusalem.**]



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**Parish Private Facebook site :** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/292308270851142> ;

**Public Site:** <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61556418523933> ;

**Tipper's Treasure's Facebook site:** [https://](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61559040358754)

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#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY:**

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Turrbal and Jagera Peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather today. We acknowledge their continued spiritual connection to country and surrounding land, sky and water. We pay our respect to their Elders, past present and emerging and pray that we may continue to learn from and nurture one another in the spirit of Reconciliation.