# Fifth Sunday in Lent April 2, 2017 **LUTHERAN**

## LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014. An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.

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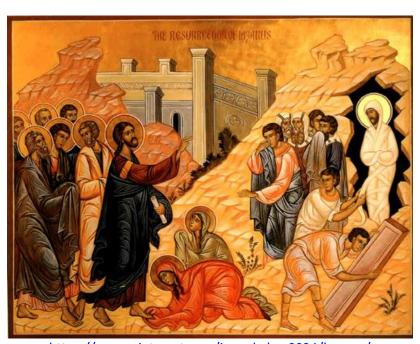
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March 30, 2017 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44130

(Presented as a part of the bible study/worship weekday service (currently on Fridays at 7:00pm) in a house church setting, a newly formed assisted living site and used by Lutherans in Africa.

E-mail puritaspastor@hotmail.com for details.



https://www.pinterest.com/jannekebos0034/lazarus/

## **Hymn of the Day**

<u>Lutheran Service Book</u> (LSB) 430 The <u>Lutheran Hymnal</u> (TLH) Not Listed "My song is love unknown"

My Song Is Love Unknown is a <u>hymn</u> by <u>Samuel Crossman</u>, written in 1664.

The <u>hymn tune</u> to which it is usually sung is *Love Unknown* by <u>John Ireland</u> (1879-1962). Ireland composed the melody over lunch one day at the suggestion of organist and fellow-composer <u>Geoffrey Shaw</u>. <u>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My\_Song\_Is\_Love\_Unknown</u> This article includes information about several variations on this hymn.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iv7OZSoA22w
"Dom (Kelly) is joined by Emily Ogilvie as they accompany the St Martins Church Choir"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMart4wXsI0
King's College, Cambridge
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOEjZb-rHc0
"Sylvia Burnside, accompanied by the New Irish Orchestra" (one of my favorites)

The Holy Bible, <u>English Standard Version</u> **(ESV)** Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

## **Ezekiel 37:1-14; RCL (Revised Common Lectionary), Jeremiah 31:31-34** (Next Week (Palm Sunday): Isaiah 50:4-9a; RCL, the same reading)

"Sometimes, biblical texts are so familiar it appears difficult to say anything genuinely new about them. Such, I imagine, is the case with <a href="Ezekiel 37">Ezekiel 37</a>; the famous "dry bones" passage. Even as I peck out these thoughts, a version of "Ezekiel connecta dem dry bones" is coursing through my head. What a fun tune! I imagine each of you has heard it a time or two in your own life. If not, google one up posthaste..." <a href="http://www.patheos.com/Resources/Additional-Resources/What-About-Dem-Dry-Bones-John-Holbert-04-04-2011">http://www.patheos.com/Resources/Additional-Resources/What-About-Dem-Dry-Bones-John-Holbert-04-04-2011</a> John Holbert is an Emeritus professor at Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, Texas.

### The Valley of Dry Bones

37 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; [a] it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup> And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. <sup>3</sup> And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord God, you know." <sup>4</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. <sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath[b] to enter you, and you shall live. <sup>6</sup> And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, <sup>[c]</sup> and the bones came together, bone to its bone. <sup>8</sup> And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon

them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GoD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." <sup>10</sup> So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

<sup>11</sup> Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.' <sup>12</sup> Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GoD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup> And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. <sup>14</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD."

- a. Ezekiel 37:1 Or plain; also verse 2
- b. Ezekiel 37:5 Or spirit; also verses 6, 9, 10
- c. Ezekiel 37:7 Or an earthquake (compare 3:12, 13)

"Ezekiel prophesied during one of the worst times in Israel's history. Because she had enjoyed such a long period of peace and prosperity, Israel had become complacent toward God. Many people had rejected their covenant God, the One true God, in favor of false gods. "I have been broken (God said) over their whoring heart that has departed from me and over their eyes that go whoring after their idols."

Ezekiel delivered a stern word of warning from God. Ultimately he called Israel to repentance... " And I will lay the dead bodies of the people of Israel before their idols, and I will scatter your bones around your altars."

By the time we come to Ezekiel's message here in chapter 37, Israel could only be described in terms of her deadness toward God. Thus she is depicted as a valley of dry bones... And he said to me (Ezekiel), "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live."

It was an eerie, macabre sight. "Son of man," God said, indicating Ezekiel's essential smallness in the grand scheme of things, as well as his inability to fix Israel, I want you to tell me something. "Can these bones live?"

It was a troubling question and an impossible situation. Ezekiel had preached and preached. Still, he had seen God's people wander away from God despite his words of warning...

God then said to Ezekiel, "prophesy to the bones!" That is, keep preaching My Word to them and something marvelous is going to happen. "I will cause breath to enter (them), and (they) shall live. And I will lay sinews upon (them), and will cause flesh to come upon (them), and

cover (them) with skin, and put breath in (them), and (they) shall live, and (they) shall know that I am the LORD."

What a powerful word of Scripture that is. God is the One who gives life, both physical life and the new birth in Christ! ...

If I was not a Lutheran, at this point I would say "can I get an Amen!?" Wow! God brings the dead to life! By His grace and mercy and through the power of His Spirit, He causes dead, dry bones to live and not only to live, but, to live in communion and fellowship with Him!..."

<u>http://lcmssermons.com/?sn=2783</u> Rev. Alan Taylor St. John Lutheran Church, Galveston, Texas

Enjoy a Baptist preacher, Rev. C. L. Franklin, preaching on Ezekiel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67nR827F-aw

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\_id=39 gives an extensive description of the historical context, literary background, and theological symbolism of this reading. Rolf Jacobson Professor of Old Testament and Alvin N. Rogness Chair in Scripture, Theology, and Ministry, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

## **Psalm 130, RCL, Psalm 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16** (Psalm 118:19-29 or 31:9-16; RCL, Psalm 31:9-16)

"Psalm 130, best known by its Latin incipit De Profundis, "Out of the Depths," has inspired church musicians for centuries, usually in the context of a Requiem Mass.

One need only mention Johan Sebastian Bach's magnificent cantata Aus der Tiefen rufe ich, Herr, zu dir (BWV 131) inspired by Luther's 1523 paraphrase, Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir, for corroboration. A cursory check, however, reveals that no fewer than thirty-six other works by major composers such as Mozart, Handel, Mendelssohn, and Schoenberg could also be cited...

Psalm 130 has obviously played a major role in the Catholic and evangelical piety of the Western Church. But what accounts for this popularity? One reason may be its association with a sub-group of the Psalter known since the days of Augustine (354--439 CE) as the Penitential Psalms (Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143). These psalms often express deep sorrow for sin and ask God for help and forgiveness. Psalm 130 encourages fervent prayer to God (verse 1) the source of forgiveness to those who wait for the Lord (verses 4--6)...

Our psalm is also part of a collection of psalms known as the "Songs of Ascents" (Psalms 120-134). Though this is the clearest example of a collection in the Psalter, due to their common superscription "a song of (Psalm 121: "for") ascents," and the only one that includes the constitutive psalms in a self-contained unit, the function of the collection as a whole continues to baffle interpreters... <a href="https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\_id=1232">https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\_id=1232</a>
<a href="Mark Throntveit">Mark Throntveit</a>
Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

## My Soul Waits for the Lord A Song of Ascents.

130 Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD!
 O Lord, hear my voice!
 Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

- <sup>3</sup> If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?
   <sup>4</sup> But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.
- <sup>5</sup> I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;
- <sup>6</sup> my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.
- O Israel, hope in the LORD!
   For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.

   And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

## Romans 8:1-11; RCL, Hebrews 5:5-10 (Philippians 2:5-11; RCL, the same reading)

"Romans 8:1-11 is an absolutely wonderful statement of the Good News--and also the source of much misunderstanding.

First, the Good News: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." The Greek is even stronger, since the very first word is no. Condemnation has buried in it the word judgment; literally the word is down judgment and thus condemnation. The judgment has occurred, and the prisoner is sentenced. But in this case there is no condemnation. When does that happen? Now: Paul's eschatological now; today there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. How so? Implicitly because of justification, a dominant theme earlier in the letter.

We could quit right now, and the preacher may well decide to do so. Five minutes in the office or in someone's living room remind the pastor that many people feel condemned by God. They know they are sinners and see no way out. Verse 1 is a powerful opening for addressing that burden..." (continued after the reading)

8 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [a] <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life has set you <sup>[b]</sup> free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, <sup>[c]</sup> he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. <sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of

the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus <sup>[d]</sup> from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

- a. Romans 8:1 Some manuscripts add who walk not according to the flesh (but according to the Spirit)
- b. Romans 8:2 Some manuscripts me
- c. Romans 8:3 Or and as a sin offering
- d. Romans 8:11 Some manuscripts lack Jesus

"Second, the source of misunderstanding. Our text uses several times the word *flesh*, making what seem to be almost nonsensical statements such as "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (verse 8). If that is the reality, why even try to live in God-pleasing ways? The key is what Paul means by *flesh* (*sarks*). To understand his usage, we turn first to its apparent twin, *body* (*soma*). For Paul the *body* is neither good nor bad in and of itself. The issue is how the body is used. When the body is used as God intended, the body is good. But when the body is used inappropriately and opposed to God's intention, it is for Paul a sinful body. Paul's shorthand expression for a body that is misused is the term *flesh*. And so to live inappropriately is called living *according to the flesh* (*kata sarka*). With that understanding in mind, we turn again to the passage.

In verses 2-4 Paul discusses the new life...

In verses 5-8 Paul delves further into the old life. Once more flesh and Spirit are contrasted. The language Paul uses is that of *mindset* 

With the earlier verses clearly in view, Paul in verses 9-11 defines the Roman believers. Negatively, believers "are not in the flesh." Rather (definition one) they "are in the Spirit." How do they know that? "The Spirit of God dwells in" them. The presence of the Spirit marks those who belong to Christ (verse 9). Further, (definition two) Christ is in them, and even though the body dies, "the Spirit is life because of righteousness." "The Spirit is life" in the sense of life-giving...

While Paul is not a classic Trinitarian thinker, it is striking how closely Spirit, Christ, and God are associated with each other. It is also remarkable how hard it is to distinguish the Spirit and Christ and even God from one another.

Verses 2-11 raise one of the most basic questions in life: who is in charge? who calls the shots? what is our mindset? what is important to us? In a time in which anxiety and worry seem to constitute the air we breathe, how we walk, who dwells in us, and on what we focus may be exactly the questions we need to explore.

https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\_id=964 Walter F. Taylor, Jr. Ernest W. and Edith S. Ogram Professor of New Testament Studies, Trinity Lutheran Seminary' Columbus, OH



"The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 11th Chapter"
"Glory to You, O Lord"

John 11:1-45 (46-53) or John 11:17-27, 38-53; RCL, John 12:20-33 (John 12:12-19 (Palm Sunday Procession) and Matthew 26:1-27:66 or Matthew 27:11-66 or John 12:20-43; RCL, Mark 11:1-11 or John 12:12-16 (Liturgy of the Palms) or Mark 14:1-15:47 or Mark 15:1-39, (40-47)(Liturgy of the Passion.)

"It is significant that the story of Lazarus, unique to the Gospel of John, is the Gospel reading for the last Sunday in Lent, the Sunday immediately preceding Palm/Passion Sunday. For the Synoptic Gospels, the cleansing of the temple is the impetus for the plot to kill Jesus (Mark 11:18; Luke 19:47-48). In the Gospel of John, the temple scene is moved to the beginning of the Gospel, immediately following the Wedding at Cana, and it is the raising of Lazarus to life that incites the plot for Jesus' arrest and death (11:53, 57). In John 11:46-57, the chief priests and the Pharisees are told what Jesus did and "from that day on they planned to put him to death." Moreover, the chief priests want to get rid of the evidence as well, and plan to put Lazarus to death "since it was on account of him that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus" (12:9-11). It is Jesus' very claim, "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25) that provokes his death in the Fourth Gospel. The repercussions of the raising of Lazarus are not included in the lectionary reading, or any time in the three-year lectionary cycle (12:1-11 only on Holy Monday), and should either be read or referenced in preaching on this text..." (continued after the reading)

#### The Death of Lazarus

11 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. <sup>3</sup> So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." <sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

<sup>5</sup> Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup> So, when he heard that Lazarus<sup>[a]</sup> was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. <sup>7</sup> Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." <sup>8</sup> The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" <sup>9</sup> Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. <sup>10</sup> But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." <sup>11</sup> After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." <sup>12</sup> The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." <sup>13</sup> Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, <sup>15</sup> and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." <sup>16</sup> So Thomas, called the Twin, <sup>[b]</sup> said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

#### I Am the Resurrection and the Life

<sup>17</sup> Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup> Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles<sup>[c]</sup> off, <sup>19</sup> and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. <sup>20</sup> So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. <sup>21</sup> Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup> Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." <sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. <sup>[d]</sup> Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

## **Jesus Weeps**

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." <sup>29</sup> And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup> When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. <sup>32</sup> Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." <sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved <sup>[e]</sup> in his spirit and greatly troubled. <sup>34</sup> And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup> Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup> So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" <sup>37</sup> But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"

### **Jesus Raises Lazarus**

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." <sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would

see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup>So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup>When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." <sup>44</sup>The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

## The Plot to Kill Jesus

<sup>45</sup> Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, <sup>46</sup> but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. <sup>47</sup> So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. <sup>48</sup> If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." <sup>49</sup> But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. <sup>50</sup> Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish." <sup>51</sup> He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. <sup>53</sup> So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

- a. John 11:6 Greek he; also verse 17
- b. John 11:16 Greek Didymus
- c. <u>John 11:18</u> Greek *fifteen stadia*; a *stadion* was about 607 feet or 185 meters
- d. John 11:25 Some manuscripts omit and the life
- e. John 11:33 Or was indignant; also verse 38

"...The raising of Lazarus is the last of Jesus' "signs" in the Gospel of John. Chapter 12 functions as a bridge chapter before the narrative halts in time for Jesus' last meal and words to his disciples (chapters 13-17). The actual raising of Lazarus is narrated in only two verses (11:43-44). The events, discussion, and details *prior* to the main event receive the bulk of the narrative space. Previously in the Gospel, Jesus performs a sign, which is typically followed by dialogue and a discourse by Jesus that interprets the sign (5:1-47; 9:1-10:21). Why does Jesus comment on the sign before actually raising Lazarus from the dead? On one level, it seems that what precedes the miracle is just as important. In other words, Jesus' interpretation of the meaning of the sign is perhaps as, or more, critical than the sign itself. Why is the structure changed for this last sign and what does it suggest for the preaching on the raising of Lazarus? How do these details in the story leading up to Lazarus finally walking out of the tomb contribute to our understanding of the meaning of this sign?..."

<u>http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\_id=42</u> <u>Karoline Lewis</u> Associate Professor of Preaching and the Marbury E. Anderson Chair in Biblical Preaching, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn

"Today we come to another one of those memorable chapters in the Gospel of John. So far during this Lenten season we've had: John 3, Jesus and Nicodemus; John 4, Jesus and the

Samaritan woman; and John 9, Jesus heals the man born blind. Now today we have John 11, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. But that's not all Jesus raises here in this chapter, as we're about to hear. Thus our theme today: "Raising Lazarus—and Other Things as Well."...

So this brings us to the first thing Jesus is raising in this story. He's raising the stakes on the miracle he's about to perform. It would have been miraculous enough if Jesus had gone right away and healed Lazarus of his illness before he died. But by waiting and not going until Lazarus has died, Jesus is raising the stakes, making it that much more amazing and astounding, what he's about to do...

Secondly, Jesus raises the sights. He raises the sights of Martha, in regard to the resurrection...

Jesus goes to the tomb, and he speaks his powerful, life-giving word: "Lazarus, come out." It's a good thing that Jesus specifies "Lazarus," or else all the tombs in the vicinity would have emptied out! Christ's word has that kind of power. Jesus Christ has life within himself, and he has the power to give life by his mighty word. "Lazarus, come out." And he does come out. Jesus raises Lazarus.

Jesus raises the stakes on his miracle. Jesus raises the sights of Martha. Jesus raises the body of Lazarus. And now another thing Jesus raises: He raises the ire of Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. He raises their ire, he raises their anger, so much so, that now they step up their plans to get rid of him...

And so the last thing that Jesus raises in this story is—Jesus raises our hopes. He lifts our eyes toward heaven. He lifts our spirits and raises our hopes. We look forward with raised expectations, and this hope will not disappoint us. No, this hope is as good and as sure as Christ's own resurrection. This hope enlivens our hearts and gives us joy—a radiant joy that radiates out to others. We live life now with a lively vigor, even in the midst of sorrows and setbacks, knowing that our future is secure in Christ. And we have hope for our loved ones who have fallen asleep in Jesus. They will get up. Death is not the end. We will meet again.

And so, because Christ has raised our hopes, we now raise joyful songs of praise to our living Lord, to him who raised Lazarus from the dead and who will raise us as well. <a href="http://steadfastlutherans.org/2014/04/raising-lazarus-and-other-things-as-well-sermon-on-john-111-53-by-pr-charles-henrickson/">http://steadfastlutherans.org/2014/04/raising-lazarus-and-other-things-as-well-sermon-on-john-111-53-by-pr-charles-henrickson/</a> Rev. Charles Henrickson currently serves at St Matthew Lutheran Church in Bonne Terre, Missouri



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