

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

March 9, 2008

[] = Instructions for worship planners and worship leaders: delete from the worship folder
() = Information for the congregation: include in the worship folder and/or PowerPoint.

[Note: **Worship Alive Plus!** is designed to be useable/adaptable in planning contemporary, blended and “fresh traditional” worship.]

[Revised Common Lectionary © 2007 WorshipOutlet.com by Julie Koenemann and Rev. Maxwell Quinn]

WORSHIP THEME: “A Real Faith Builder”

At one time or another in life all of us cry out for a miracle. No doubt Mary and Martha cried out for a miracle prior to the death of their brother Lazarus. At least, they thought they needed a miracle prior to his death! Martha even reminded Jesus that her brother had been dead for four days and would stink when Jesus commanded that Lazarus’ tomb be opened. Little did the sisters realize Jesus was in the process of building faith via a “delayed” miracle, and one way beyond the intensity of the one for which they asked! Jesus didn’t resuscitate Lazarus; He resurrected him! Now, that’s a REAL faith builder. Jesus was building faith in Himself as the resurrection and the life! Need a miracle? Need a real faith builder? Maybe it seems already too late for one? Or is it?

+ WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS +

[Worship Planners: A Worship CD and/or the praise team can play in the background 10-15 minutes before the service.]

INVOCATION AND INTRODUCTION OF TODAY’S THEME

Pastor: We continue our Lenten journey, as we proclaim the name of the One we worship:

People: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Pastor: In this Lenten season, we are well aware of the hurts and pains of life – we are not immune from sorrows.

People: In the midst of our sorrows, we walk in faith in Jesus.

OPENING PRAYER:

[This prayer is offered as an idea]— Lord Christ, You called forth Lazarus from the tomb, four days after he had entered it. There is nothing that is impossible for You, for You bring us forth from the dead as well. Fill us with faith, that we might live as those who recognize miracles in our lives, and celebrate them. Before Your wonder, we bow. Amen.

TIME OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Pastor: We confess the weakness of our faith.

(A time of personal reflection and confession)

Pastor: Father, here and now, we confess to You and each other that we have fallen short.

People: We confess, Father, our faith is not as strong as it ought be.

We say we believe, but then live as if we don't.

We seldom expect our prayers, and are surprised when they are.

Our discipleship is based on convenience, and our stewardship is half-hearted.

We live in fear, and fail to step out boldly trusting Your promises, Your power, Your presence.

Forgive us, we pray. And give us hearts to receive what You desire to give.

Pastor:

Here is the Good News. Jesus entered a tomb for us, as the sacrifice for our sins. The tomb could not hold Him, nor could the tomb hold Lazarus, when Jesus called Him forth. The tomb cannot hold us either. Jesus gives us new life through His death and resurrection, and fills us with His Spirit, that we might have faith to receive His gifts, and faith to experience the wonder of His miracles in our lives. In faith, we live. In faith, we rejoice. In faith, we walk. In faith, we recognize the presence of Jesus in our lives.

RESPONSE

Unashamed Love

[HMS 18:1470]

Lamont Hiebert

Chorus

**Of a childlike faith And of my honest praise
And of my unashamed love Of a holy life
And of my sacrifice And of my unashamed love**

You're callin' me to lay aside The worries of my day
To quiet down my busy mind Find a hiding place
Worthy You are worthy I open up my heart and let
My spirit worship Yours I open up my mouth
And let a song of praise come forth Worthy You are worthy

Ending

Worthy You are worthy (2X) You are worthy (3X)

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You Are My King (Amazing Love)

[ATBS 2:249; MSPW2:82; SD 209; WT 2:72; WT 3:73; WT 5:76]

Billy Foote

I'm forgiven Because You were forsaken
I'm accepted You were condemned
I'm alive and well Your Spirit is within me
Because You died And rose again

Amazing love How can it be That You my King Would die for me
Amazing love I know it's true It's my joy to honor You

You are my King You are my King
Jesus, You are my King Jesus, You are my King
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He Will Come And Save You

[BOB 81; ATBS 1:164; HMS 10:827; HMS 11:905; SD 1:7]

Bob Fitts / Gary Sadler

Say to those Who are fearful-hearted Do not be afraid
The Lord your God is strong With His mighty arms
When you call on His name He will come and save

Chorus

He will come and save you He will come and save you
Say to the weary one Your God will surely come He will come and save you
He will come and save you He will come and save you
Lift up your eyes to Him You will arise again He will come and save you

Say to those Who are brokenhearted Do not lose your faith
The Lord your God is strong With His loving arms
When you call on His name He will come and save

Ending

He is our refuge In the day of trouble
He is our shelter In the time of storm
He is our tower In the day of sorrow Our fortress In the time of war
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[Traditional Options:]

Christ The Life of All The Living [CH 90; LBW 97; LW 94; LSB 420; ELW 339]

Come Thou Almighty King [LSB 905; ELW 408; LBW 522; LW 169; CH 8; HFG 341; CW 193;
H82 365; NCH 275; PH 139; UMC 61; WC 5]

TIME OF GREETING

[Optional: Children's Message and/or Dismissal to Children's Church]

+ WE HEAR GOD'S WORD +

[It is suggested that the introductions be read out loud as well as the Scripture itself]

FIRST READING Ezekiel 37:1-14 (NIV)

Dry bones come to life when the breath of God blows upon them.

¹The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. ³He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "O Sovereign LORD, you alone know." ⁴Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!' ⁵This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. ⁶I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD." ⁷So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" ¹⁰So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. ¹¹Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.'" ¹²Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. ¹⁴I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.'

SECOND LESSON Romans 8:6-11 (NIV)

The flesh is death. The spirit is life.

⁶The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. ⁹You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

GOSPEL John 11:1-45 (NIV)

Lazarus' death provides an opportunity for Jesus to demonstrate He is the Resurrection and the Life.

¹Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. ³So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." ⁴When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." ⁵Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. ⁷Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." ⁸"But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?" ⁹Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light. ¹⁰It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light." ¹¹After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." ¹²His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." ¹³Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. ¹⁴So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, ¹⁵and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we

may die with him.”¹⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.¹⁸ Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem,¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother.²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.²¹ “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died.²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”²⁴ Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”²⁷ “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”²⁸ And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.”²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him.³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him.³¹ When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.³² When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.³⁴ “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied.³⁵ Jesus wept.³⁶ Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.³⁹ “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”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!”⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him.

MESSAGE “A Real Faith Builder”

[NOTE: See “Sermon Starters & Seasonings” provided at the end of this service]

+ WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD +

[NOTE: Optional location for Confession/Absolution, using materials found earlier in this service]

RESPONSE

Faithful Father

[BOB 50; HMS 19:1501]

Brian Doerksen

Chorus 1

**This is my song of praise to You For who You are and all that You do
From the moment my life began You have been faithful**

Father I can't explain This kind of love
This kind of grace I know I still break Your heart
And yet You run to welcome me

Father I love the way You hold me close

And say my name I know when my life is through
My heart will find its home in You

Ending 1

You will be faithful forever faithful My Father

Chorus 2

**This is our song of praise to You For who You are and all that You do
From before the world began You have been faithful**

Ending 2

Forever faithful Father

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Sing A Song

[WT 6:62]

Brad Avery | David Carr | Mac Powell | Mark D. Lee | Tai Anderson

Chorus

**A song of Your faithfulness A song of Your grace
And of Your loving kindness To the glory of Your name
With everything that's in me Lord Listen to me say
I want sing a song for You I want to sing a song**

I want to sing a song for You Lord Lord for You I want to sing a song
And I want to lift my voice to heaven And listen to the angels sing along

I want to live my life for You Lord Lord for You I want to live my life
I want to praise the name of Jesus Pray above all things You're glorified

Ending 1

And I sing about Your mercy And I sing about Your love
Your goodness Lord Your righteousness I want to sing

Ending 2

And we'll sing holy holy holy We'll sing holy holy holy
We'll shout holy holy Are You Lord Almighty Yes You are Lord

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[Traditional Options:]

O Christ Who Shared Our Mortal Life [LSB 552]

Jesus, Grant That Balm and Healing [TLH 144; LSB 421; LW 95]

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth, and all was perfect.

Sin entered the world, and with sin came death. And all the universe was subject to decay.

But God did not abandon His fallen creation. He sent prophets to call people back to Him, but to no avail. When the time was right, He sent forth His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to be the Resurrection and the Life, and to call people to follow Him. Most did not. Jesus was a threat to those who trusted in themselves, and was put to death as a means to silence His message.

His message would not be silenced. Though He died, He stepped forth from the grave, as the Resurrection and the Life.

He calls all to follow Him, to live by faith in Him, and promises that, as they do, they will live for all eternity.

He calls us forth from the tomb of our sinfulness, and in His death and resurrection, we are restored to Life, and will live for all eternity with Him.

I live by faith in Him.

[NOTE: The following are contemporary song options for speaking the Apostle's Creed: *Because We Believe* ATBS 119; SPW 6; INTEGRITY 12 **OR** *This Is What I Believe* GB 249 **OR** The Apostles Creed Integrity 8 **OR** you may choose to do the thematic contemporary creed written specially for this service **OR** use the historic Apostles' Creed]

[OR...]

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

OFFERINGS

[Anthem by Praise team, choir or soloist:]

Hope Of The Nations
[HMS 18:1438]

Brian Doerksen

(PRE-CHORUS)

In history You lived and died You broke the chains You rose to life

Chorus

**You are the hope living in us You are the Rock in whom we trust
You are the light shining for all the world to see You rose from the dead conquering fear
Our Prince of Peace drawing us near Jesus our hope living for all who will receive
Lord we believe
(REPEAT)**

Jesus hope of the nations Jesus comfort for all who mourn
You are the source of heaven's hope on earth Jesus light in the darkness
Jesus truth in each circumstance You are the source of heaven's light on earth
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PRAYERS¹

[Prayer Topic Starters]

- Thanks for:
 - Your grace, which is new to us every day.
 - The ability to recognize miracles in our lives.
 - Calling us forth from our tomb.
 - Your compassion and love.

- Please give us:
 - Discernment to recognize Your miracles in our everyday lives.
 - Faith to walk in those miracles.
 - Health and strength and comfort and new life for those in need.

- Cause us by Your Holy Spirit and Your Word to:
 - Rejoice in Your miracles in our lives..
 - Share our faith with those around us
 - Pray for those who govern us.
 - Pray for those in the armed forces.
 - Pray for our enemies.

- Local congregational and individual concerns

The Lord's Prayer

[Consider having the congregation sing the Lord's Prayer using the Malotte version using one of the lower keys such as B flat.]

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

¹ Formal language and "perfectly read" prayers are not recommended for contemporary worship. People appreciate the touching sincerity of informal prayer. "Heartfelt" prayer also teaches/models simple prayer language that anyone can use at home, in the car, the office, etc. These "**Prayer Topics Starters**" are offered to help facilitate spontaneity.

[A communion option to insert for churches celebrating the Lord's Supper on this day]

+ The Lord's Supper +

Here our Lord gives to us His own Body and Blood for the forgiveness of all our sins.

WE PREPARE

Pastor:

We approach Your table Lord, to share in this banquet, because we are members of the body of Christ. Even as Jesus Christ is the head of our Body, so we join together today to celebrate the miracle of life, acknowledging His presence in these forms of bread and wine.

People:

We come just as we are, in grateful thanksgiving. God pours out abundant blessings upon us. Life and joy and peace and forgiveness and new life. In faith, we receive what He desires to give.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING OF THE PEACE

Pastor: We profess the mystery of the faith.

People: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ is present. Christ will come again.

Pastor: Christ brings forth new life in us.

People: We receive His gifts in faith.

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: And also with you.

(Worshippers may turn to one another and share the peace which comes from the Lord with words such as, "God's peace to you.")

DISTRIBUTION SONGS – [choose as many you need]

Still

[SD 41:9; SSA]

Reuben Morgan

Hide me now Under Your wings
Cover me Within Your mighty hand

Chorus

**When the oceans rise And thunders roar
I will soar with You Above the storm
Father You are King Over the flood
I will be still and know You are God**

Find rest my soul In Christ alone
Know His power In quietness and trust

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Walk By Faith

[WT 7:61]

Jeremy Camp

Chorus

**Well I will walk by faith Well even when I cannot see
Because this broken road Prepares Your will for me**

Will I believe You when You say Your hand will guide my ev'ry way
Will I receive the words You say Ev'ry moment of ev'ry day

Help me to rid my endless fears You've been so faithful for all my years
With one breath You made me new Your grace covers all I do
Yeah yeah yeah Yeah yeah yeah

Ending 1

Well I'm broken But I still see Your face
Well You've spoken Pouring Your words of grace

Ending 2

Well hallelujah hallelu Well hallelujah hallelu

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I Will Never Be

[ATBS 2:139; HMS 11:920; HMS 14:1149; MSPW 1:34]

Geoff Bullock

Chorus

**Fall like fire soak like rain Flow like mighty waters
Again and again Sweep away the darkness
Burn away the chaff And let a flame burn
To glorify Your name**

I will never be the same again I can never return
I've closed the door I will walk the path
I will run the race And I will never be the same again

There are higher heights There are deeper seas
Whatever You need to do Lord do it in me

And the glory of God fills my life And I will never be the same again

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[Traditional Options:]

Lord Jesus Christ, The Church's Head [LSB 647; LW 293]

Savior When in Dust to You [LSB 419; ELW 601; LBW 91; LW 93]

COMMON DISMISSAL

Pastor: We have tasted the grace of God in the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In this meal is the power of God Himself – the power to work wonders in our lives.

People: In faith, we live in His promises.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: May the Father continue to bless us
May the Son, Jesus Christ, call us forth into Life.
May the Holy Spirit inspire faith in our hearts, that we might live in power and peace.

People: In faith we receive. In faith we live. In faith we are the children of God. Amen.

CLOSING SONG

Let The Praises Ring

[HMS 18:1451]

Lincoln Brewster

Chorus

**In You in You I find my peace In You in You I find my strength
In You I live and move and breathe Let everything I say and do
Be founded by my faith in You I lift up holy hands and sing
Let the praises ring**

O Lord my God in You I put my trust O Lord my God in You I put my hope
O Lord my God in You I put my trust O Lord my God in You I put my hope

O Lord my God to You I give my hands O Lord my God to You I give my feet
O Lord my God to You I give my everything O Lord my God to You I give my life
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On Our Side

[WT 7:50;

[Lead lines on www.praisecharts.com and www.songselect.com;
church charts on www.iwillworship.com]

Chris Tomlin | Ed Cash | Jesse Reeves

Chorus

**If God is on our side Who can be against us
If God is on our side We won't be afraid
Though the mountains may fall And the sky will crumble
There ain't nothin' Gonna stand in our way**

Ev'ryone around the world Hear the joyful sound
See the heavens open up Hear the music coming down
Nothing's gonna separate us From the Father's love
I can't help but celebrate 'Cause we're not alone

Come one down to the riverside Wash it all away
Leave behind your troubled mind For an uncloudy day
Nothing's gonna separate us From the Father's love
I can't help but celebrate 'Cause we're not alone

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[Traditional Option:]

Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus [ELW 802; LSB 685; LBW 487; LW 381; TLH 409]

March 2008 Worship Alive Plus

Songs & Hymns

Music charts downloadable through:

www.Praisecharts.com
www.worshipkitchen.com
www.Wordmusicnow.com

www.songselect.com
www.worshiptogether.com
www.musicnotes.com

Chord charts free downloads available at:

www.Iwillworship.com

www.pwarchive.com

Mp3 downloads available through:

www.Songtouch.com
www.Walmart.com

www.Worshiptogether.com
www.Itunes.com

New Songs to consider:

Everything Glorious

(Recorded on David Crowder's *Remedy* & Passion's *Everything Glorious*)

Lisa Gungor & Michael Gungor, © 2006 worshiptogether.com songs (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)
sixsteps Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing) [Lead lines and chord charts on www.songselect.com,
www.praisecharts.com, www.pwarchive.com, and www.Iwillworship.com]

Keep watch on SongSelect & Praisecharts for the music for this amazing new song:

With One Voice (Recorded on New Life Church)

Chris Ochterbeck, © 2007 New Life Church (Admin. by New Life Church of Arkansas,
Inc.)

SSS – SERMON STARTERS & SEASONINGS

The following ideas are merely intended to help get your own creative juices flowing and prepare your heart for God's Spirit to inspire and speak through you.

Theme: “A Real Faith Builder”

John 11:1-45

At one time or another in life all of us need a miracle. No doubt that Mary and Martha needed a miracle prior to their brother, Lazarus', death. At least that's what they thought; that they needed it prior to his death. In fact, Martha even reminded Jesus that her brother had been dead for four days and would stink as Jesus requested that Lazarus' tomb be opened up. Little did the sisters realize that Jesus was in the process of building faith via miracles; miracles that are small to a real “faith builder” like raising someone from the dead. Jesus didn't resuscitate Lazarus, He resurrected him! Now, that's a REAL faith builder and that's exactly why Jesus did it. Jesus was building faith in Himself as the resurrection and the life! Need a miracle? Need a real faith builder? Is it already too late for one? Or is it?

Theological Reflections and Practical Applications

11:1 Bethany, a small village on the southeast slope of the Mount of Olives, was located about two miles from Jerusalem (v. 18).

11:2 Mary who anointed: The anointing had not yet taken place (12:1–3). When John wrote, the anointing was well known, so he used the event to distinguish this Mary from other women with the same name.

11:3 The message simply states the facts. There is no request or plea, yet it implies a belief that Christ can and will heal him.

11:4 Not unto death means not having death as its final result. **may be glorified:** By raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus would demonstrate His deity in an undeniable way.

11:5–8 stayed two more days: God's purpose was to glorify His Son (v. 4) and to cause the disciples to grow (v. 15). Had Jesus immediately rushed to Lazarus's bedside and healed him, Lazarus would not have died and Jesus would not have been able to manifest His glory by raising Lazarus. God's timing to accomplish His purpose is perfect. The disciples were skeptical. In their minds, for Jesus to go back to Judea would mean death.

11:9, 10 Twelve hours are the daylight hours during which work can be done. Jesus is saying that work must be done when there is opportunity. “I still have time, I will not die until my work is finished.”

11:11–14 Lazarus sleeps: Death is often referred to as sleep (Gen. 47:30; Matt. 27:52; 1 Thess. 4:13). However, in no way do these passages teach a state of soul-sleep or unconsciousness. Death for the saint is restful sleep from the problems of this world, but a full consciousness of another world (Phil. 1:23).

11:15 Jesus was not **glad** that Lazarus was dead. He was glad for the opportunity the disciples would soon have to see an amazing miracle. The disciples had already believed (2:11), but each new trial offered an opportunity for their faith to grow (compare 2 Pet. 1:5–8).

11:16 the Twin: In Thomas, the twins of belief and unbelief contended with each other for mastery. He seems to have combined devotion to Jesus with a tendency to see the dark side of things. Jesus said, “Let us go,” that the disciples might believe (v. 15). Thomas said, **Let us also go, that we may die.** While the Lord saw their development in faith, Thomas saw their deaths. Yet in his loyalty, he followed anyway.

11:17–20 Note the contrast in personalities. Martha is a woman of action, whereas Mary is a woman of quiet reflection (Luke 10:38–42).

11:24 Pious Jewish belief included acceptance of the resurrection (compare Dan. 12:13), a belief rejected by the Sadducees (compare Matt. 22:23; Acts 23:8).

11:25–27 Christ is **the resurrection** for those who believe and are physically dead. He is **the life** for those who believe and have not yet died. When Jesus asked Martha if she believed, she responded with words similar to the ones John used to describe the purpose of his book (20:31). In order to have eternal life, a person must place his or her faith in Jesus, who is **the Christ, the Son of God**, who came into the world to bring eternal life to those who believe.

11:28–30 secretly: Martha told Mary privately that Jesus had come so Mary could meet the Lord alone.

11:31 followed her: The secrecy (v. 28) was spoiled. **To weep** means to lament and bewail. It refers to a loud expression of grief, wailing, and crying, not merely the shedding of tears.

11:32 if You had been here: Mary said the same thing to the Lord as Martha had (v. 21). No doubt they had expressed this thought to one another often in the previous few days.

11:33, 34 Groaned means to be deeply moved. **Troubled** means to be stirred up, disturbed. Jesus was moved by the mourning of Mary and indignant at the hypocritical lamentations of His enemies.

11:35, 36 Wept simply means “shed tears.” Jesus did not weep aloud in hopeless grief like the others (v. 33). He knew what He was about to do, but His compassion for their pain moved Him to tears. It may also be that He truly felt empathy for the pain of death that Lazarus had endured.

11:37 Some people misinterpreted Jesus’ tears as powerlessness. They complained that He had healed others, but now was impotent.

11:38, 39 a cave: Having a private burial place indicates that the family was wealthy.

11:40–42 Did I not say: Christ’s statement here is apparently a reference to vv. 25, 26 and to the reply of the messengers in v. 4. Perhaps on both occasions more was said than is recorded. The key to receiving is believing.

11:43, 44 cried: This loud cry was either the result of strong emotion or in order that the multitude might hear. **Lazarus:** In a rhetorical flair, Augustine once said that if Jesus had not designated Lazarus by name, all the graves would have been emptied at His command (5:28). Raising Lazarus from the dead is the seventh sign of Jesus’ Messiahship, the greatest miracle of all, giving life back to the dead.

11:45–48 Place refers either to Jerusalem or to the temple. The real concern of the Jewish leaders is seen here. They were not as upset at Jesus’ supposed blasphemy as they were about losing their positions of authority.²

Quotations

In the Face of Death

Look carefully at the scene described in John 11

In this scene there are two people: Martha and Jesus. And for all practical purposes they are the only two people in the universe.

Her words were full of despair. “If you had been here ...” She stares into the Master’s face with confused eyes. She’d been strong long enough; now it hurt too badly. Lazarus was dead. Her brother was gone. And the one man who could have made a difference didn’t. He hadn’t even made it for the burial. Something about death makes us accuse God of betrayal. “If God were here there would be no death!” we claim.

You see, if God is God anywhere, he has to be God in the face of death. Pop psychology can deal with depression. Pep talks can deal with pessimism. Prosperity can handle hunger. But only God can deal with our ultimate dilemma—death. And only the God of the Bible has dared to stand on the canyon’s edge and offer an answer. He has to be God in the face of death. If not, he is not God anywhere.

Jesus wasn’t angry at Martha. Perhaps it was his patience that caused her to change her tone from frustration to earnestness. “Even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

Jesus then made one of those claims that place him either on the throne or in the asylum: “Your brother will rise again.”

²Radmacher, Earl D. ; Allen, Ronald Barclay ; House, H. Wayne: *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary*. Nashville : T. Nelson Publishers, 1999, S. Jn 11:1-48

Martha misunderstood. (Who wouldn't have?) "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

That wasn't what Jesus meant. Don't miss the context of the next words. Imagine the setting: Jesus has intruded on the enemy's turf; he's standing in Satan's territory, Death Canyon. His stomach turns as he smells the sulfuric stench of the ex-angel, and he winces as he hears the oppressed wails of those trapped in the prison. Satan has been here. He has violated one of God's creations.

With his foot planted on the serpent's head, Jesus speaks loudly enough that his words echo off the canyon walls.

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25).³

Faith in the One Who loves us

The phrase the friend of Lazarus used is worth noting. When he told Jesus of the illness he said, "Lord, the one you love is sick." He doesn't base his appeal on the imperfect love of the one in need, but on the perfect love of the Savior. He doesn't say, "The one *who loves you* is sick." He says, "The one *you love* is sick." The power of the prayer, in other words, does not depend on the one who makes the prayer, but on the one who hears the prayer.⁴

Seen through the eyes of Faith

"Jesus did not come to make God's love possible, but to make God's love visible."

Unknown

Look Up

Men talk about Bible miracles because there is no miracle in their lives. Cease to gnaw that crust. There is ripe fruit over your head.

Thoreau, Journal, June 1850

Faith and Belief

Belief acknowledges that God can; faith lives as if He already has.

Maxwell A. Quinn

Obedience

Every miracle demonstrates the need for obedience – "roll the stone away."

Greg Osborn, Sermoncentral.com

Illustrations

Faith Recognizes a Miracle

A man was putting tin roof on his barn when all the sudden he slipped and began to slide down the roof. He cried out to God to save him when no sooner he got the words out of his mouth a nail caught his pants

³Lucado, Max: *God Came Near : Chronicles of the Christ*. Portland, Or. : Multnomah Press, 1987, S. 84

⁴Lucado, Max: *The Great House of God : A Home for Your Heart*. Dallas : Word Pub., 1997, S. 89

and stopped him. When he stopped he said, "never mind God I took care of it". The problem isn't that God doesn't perform miracles anymore the problem is we're not looking for God to perform miracles.

David Yarbrough, Sermoncentral.com

Where's the Faith?

Blow the trump and ring the bell;
Dress it up and make it sell;
Fill it with the rich and well;
And count the heads.
We're doing well!
But where's the faith?

Read the creed and get it right;
Hold it fast with all your might;
Close the door and bolt it tight;
We've no need for further light!
But where's the faith?

Build the church and make it grow,
Cushioned pews in classic row;
Made for comfort we love so.
Come in, relax, enjoy the show!
But where's the faith?

Like James said, that's a whole lot of religious activity, but it's not saving relationship of faith with our Lord Jesus Christ. But...

In the sickroom on the bed –
Invalid, helpless, but not dead
Hear her praying through the pain,
"May my suffering be your gain."
There's the faith.

Here a loving mother gives,
With all the reason that she lives,
To strive against unnumbered odds
And bring her children to know God.
There's the faith.

'Surprising, isn't it, where the faith is found;
Not where reigns the world renown,
But in the din of work and strife,
Where the Cross meets daily life.
There's the faith.

Karl Eckhoff, Sermoncentral.com

Seeing Where Your Feet Land

The African impala can jump to a height of over 10 feet and cover a distance of greater than 30 feet. Yet these magnificent creatures can be kept in an enclosure in any zoo with a 3-foot wall. The animals will not

jump if they cannot see where their feet will fall. Faith is the ability to trust what we cannot see, and with faith we are freed from the flimsy enclosures of life that only fear allows to entrap us. (*Illustration by John Emmons*)

On the Lighter Side ☺

Faith in the One Who Delivers

Some time ago "Reader's Digest" told the story about a company who mailed out some special advertising business post cards with a mustard seed glued to it with the following caption that went something like this: "If you have faith as small as this mustard seed in our (particular product), you are guaranteed to get excellent results and be totally satisfied." -- Signed, The Management

A few months later one recipient of this promotional piece wrote back to the company and said, "You will be very interested to know that I planted the mustard you sent on your advertising card and it has grown into a very healthy bush producing wonderful tomatoes!"

Scott Malone, Sermoncentral.com

Faith counts on a Miracle

Television interviewer and journalist Larry King describes three farmers who gather daily in a field during a horrible drought. The men are down on their knees, looking upward, and praying the skies will open and pour forth a much-needed rain. Unfortunately, the heavens are silent, and the petitioners become discouraged, but they continue to meet every morning to lift up their request to God.

One morning an uninvited stranger approaches and asks the men what they are doing. They respond, "We're praying for rain."

The newcomer looks at each of them and shakes his head, "No, I don't think so."

The first farmer says, "Of course we're praying. We are down on our knees pleading for rain. Look around; see the drought. We haven't had rain in more than a year!"

The outsider continues to nod his head and advises them their efforts will never work. The second farmer jumps in and says, "We need the rain; we aren't asking only for ourselves, but for our families and livestock."

The man listens, nods, and says he still isn't impressed. "You're wasting your time," he says.

The third farmer can't take any more, and in anger he says, "Okay, what would you do if you were in our shoes?"

The visitor asks, "You really want to know?"

The three landowners answer, "We really want to know! The future of our farmlands is at stake."

The guest announces, "I would have brought an umbrella!"

A Todd Coget, Sermoncentral.com

Walking by Faith

One day a 6-year girl was sitting in the classroom. The teacher was going to explain evolution to the children.

The teacher asked a little boy:

Teacher: Tommy do you see the tree out side?

Tommy: Yes.

Teacher: Tommy, do you see the grass out side?

Tommy: Yes

Teacher: Go out side and look up and see if you can the sky.

Tommy: OK. (He returned a few minutes later) Yes, I saw the sky.

Teacher: Did you see God?

Tommy: No.

Teacher: That's my point. We can't see God because he isn't there.

A little girl spoke up and wanted to ask the boy some questions. Teacher agreed and she asked the boy:

Little girl: Tommy, do you see the tree outside?

Tommy: Yes.
Little girl: Tommy do you see the grass outside?
Tommy: Yessssss. (getting tired of the questions by this time)
Little girl: Did you see the sky?
Tommy: Yessssss.
Little girl: Tommy, do you see the teacher?
Tommy: Yes.
Little girl: Do you see her brain?
Tommy: No.
Little girl: Does that mean she doesn't have one?
For we walk by faith, not by sight -- 2 Corinthians 5:7

Video Resources

What is Faith? [Introduction to Message or within the Message]

A man-on-the-street interview conducted in Las Vegas demonstrates the lack of understanding of what faith actually is. This video is available as a download from www.sermonspice.com. Simply type in the name of the video in the search bar. The video costs \$20 and runs 2:57. This video can serve as an introduction to the message, or can be inserted within the message when talking about the need to understand what faith is.

Impossible [Alternate means of a Benediction]

Do we limit what God can do in our lives because we do not have faith? This video proclaims that our tendency to think things are impossible actually become self-fulfilling prophecies. This video is available as a download from www.sermonspice.com. Simply type in the name of the video in the search bar. The video costs \$10 and runs 4:47. This video best serves as an introduction to a message about God building faith in our lives – faith that is able to receive what God wants to give. The video could also be used as a means of 'benediction' – sending people forth in an inspiring way.