

## Be Free

The story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, found only in John's Gospel, reveals who Jesus truly is. It is the final miracle recorded before Jesus enters Jerusalem for the Passover.

In the story, Jesus receives word that his close friend Lazarus is seriously ill. Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, and often stayed with them. Yet when he hears the news, he deliberately waits two days before travelling to them. This delay was intentional: Jesus knew Lazarus would die, and through what followed God would be glorified.

By the time Jesus arrives, Lazarus has been dead and buried for four days. Martha meets Jesus outside the village and says, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." Jesus gently reassures her that "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die." Martha affirms her faith that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.

When Jesus reaches the village, he sees Mary and others grieving. Deeply moved by their sorrow, Jesus cries with them. At the tomb he asks for the stone to be removed. After praying, Jesus calls out loudly, "Lazarus, come out!" Amazingly, Lazarus emerges from the tomb, still wrapped in burial cloths. Jesus then tells those present to remove the grave clothes and let him go.

This moment must have been shocking as a man once dead stands alive before them. The miracle reveals Jesus' power to bring life out of death, hope out of despair, and joy out of mourning.

There is also an important lesson in the image of Lazarus still bound in grave clothes. Like Lazarus, many people believe in Jesus yet remain bound by invisible burdens of fear, worry, grief, guilt,

unforgiveness, or hidden struggles. These things can restrict our lives and drain our joy.

Scripture encourages us to bring our burdens to God so that we can be freed from them.

As we approach Holy Week, we remember that Jesus carried our sin, sorrow, and brokenness to the cross. Because he is the resurrection and the life, despair does not have the final word. Jesus calls each of us out of the tombs that bind us, inviting us to step into the freedom and fullness of life he offers.