

Fifth Sunday in Lent – 2026

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Romans 8:1-11

John 11:1-53

Lazarus, come forth. Jesus would pay for those words. It isn't by divine fiat that the Lord Christ raises the dead. Lazarus, come forth. It isn't by raw omnipotence that Jesus raises dead Lazarus. Lazarus, come forth. The power of that statement is saturated in blood. Jesus paid for those words. On a holy cross, Jesus paid, paid in full.

Martha was worried about the stench. The odor of sin clings to us. The odor of death is foul and putrid and calamitous and ugly. After this episode, Lazarus would be the aroma of the resurrection. After this episode, Lazarus would embody the aroma of Christ among those who were being saved (2 Corinthians 2:15). "Take away the stone" (John 11:39). Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done. What did they expect? What did those who were gathered there expect? Martha had complained bitterly. "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:21). The Word was made flesh for no other reason than to "be here" (John 1:14). God was made man for no other reason than to "be here." And there He stood, the Lord of all creation, at the mouth of a tomb. He was there. With His authority, with His blood, with His death and resurrection, the Son of God was there.

Lazarus, come forth. The voice of God reaches deep into our calamity. Is there anything in your life that God has not addressed? Is there something that He's forgotten, something that He has overlooked? Do you make your problems bigger than Christ's cross, bigger than the Lord's empty tomb? I do. I forget. Self-centered me, self-pitying me – I forget the power of Christ that was unleashed at Lazarus' tomb. Life, not death, is the victor. "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25-26). Do you believe this?

Death does not roll over meekly. Death is armed with malice, seeking to control all that God created. Sin is death's authorizing force. Lazarus, come forth. Jesus paid for those words. Sin and death were put on Him. The pure and holy and omnipotent Son of God willingly laid down His life. The Eternal and Glorious and Almighty Son of God took up the poor form of a servant, allowing His subjects to mock and spit and whip and crucify Him. He paid. Sin enveloped Him. He became sin, saturated with our muck, our profane ways and deeds and words and thoughts (2 Corinthians 5:21). And His Father punished sin. Death does not roll over meekly. Death is trampled under a nail pierced foot. Death is swallowed up in victory. Death was shattered by a perfect God who bore it all and paid with His blood. Lazarus, come forth. Jesus paid for those words.

Lazarus was a walking Easter. And some hated it. To unbelief, Lazarus was a reminder of God's authority, and they hated it. The chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus (John 12:9-11). They wanted Lazarus to pay for Jesus' words. Was he brave? Afterwards, what kind of man would

Lazarus be? Are you brave? Thomas seemed to be. When Jesus said that they needed to go to Lazarus, irrespective of the threat posed there, Thomas was bold and faithful and trusting and brave. “Let us also go, that we may die with him” (John 11:16). Thomas knew that no servant is above his master (Matthew 10:24). God is for us. What more do you need to be brave? Death has no sting (1 Corinthians 15:55-57). What more do you need to be brave? We shall not die, but live. Heaven is our home. We are strangers here.

Life is what God defends. The glory of God is a living man, a living woman, a living child. You were dead in trespasses and sin and God made you alive in Christ, it is by grace you have been saved (Ephesians 2:5). The glory of God is a believing man, a believing woman, a believing child. Lazarus, come forth. Jesus paid for those words. Jesus paid for your baptism. Jesus paid for you to eat His body and drink His blood. “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’” (John 11:44). You are unbound. Unbind this son of Adam from his guilt for I have paid for his sins – he is mine. Unbind this daughter of Eve from her guilt for I have paid for her sins – she is mine. Your sins are forgiven. Jesus paid for those words.

Roll away the stone. What did they expect? This is the Son of God. This is He who commands the waves, who feeds the multitude, who cures the leprous and gives sight to the blind. Our faith is in Him. Our faith is entirely, unreservedly, magnificently in Him.