

During Lent and Easter, we are inviting our congregation to spend time in God's word. Once a week, we will guide this time with a devotional reading from Scripture and a reflection from someone within our church family. Begin by centering yourself in prayer; ask God to reveal something new and speak to you today. Next, spend time reading the Scripture passage for the day, noting what stands out to you and what word from the Lord might be coming through the text for *you*. Then, move to reading the reflection shared below. Below, you will see that we have also included a piece of visual art for you to consider as you reflect on the passage. I (Pastor Ashley) encourage you to actually get out your Bible and engage with the text on your own first, before reading the reflections shared below. Also, we would love to hear what God was saying to you through this passage! Comment on our [Facebook post](#) for today with what stood out to you from the Scripture passage.

### **Easter Devotional: Week Two**

**Step One:** *Prior to reading the Scripture passage, spend a moment centering yourself in prayer.*

**Step Two:** Our Scripture reading today is **John 11:17-44**. Read through the text (maybe even twice), noting what stands out to you and what word from the Lord might be coming through this text for *you* today.

**Step Three:** Now, enjoy this reflection from our Teresa Hutchinson:

### **The Raising of Lazarus**



"Drawn to Love" by Hannah Garrity  
A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

The story of the raising of Lazarus may be familiar to you. In my past reading of this scripture, I mostly focused on the great miracle that was performed by Jesus. However, when I dive into what I can learn from the way of Jesus, I find 4 'ways' of Jesus that puts a new light on the story.

#### **Jesus allowed people to seek him out**

In the first few verses, we learn that when Jesus arrived at Bethany, people informed him that Lazarus had been dead 4 days. Jesus did not go to Lazarus' home. Martha learned that Jesus had come to the village and sought out Jesus immediately. Later, Martha informed Mary that Jesus wanted to see her, and Mary sought out Jesus also. By allowing Martha and Mary to seek Him first, Martha and Mary were able to show others their free will to choose and believe in Jesus. Jesus demonstrated that when people truly seek Him, that nothing is impossible.

#### **Jesus shared God's promises with the seekers**

When Martha spoke to Jesus, He told her, "Your brother will come back to life". And He reminded her that "anyone who believes in me, though he were dead, shall live again and never perish." This promise prompted Martha to get Mary. Jesus again reminded Martha, when she objected to rolling the stone away, "didn't I tell you that you will see a wonderful miracle from God if you believe?" The gospels

are filled with Jesus pointing people to God's promises, and I, like Martha, need reminding of God's power, truth, and unwavering promises.

#### **Jesus felt anger, but did not speak out**

Jesus did get angry twice after observing the Jewish leaders present. In verse 33, Jesus observed the Jewish leaders wailing - likely disingenuous wailing. Jesus felt anger, but did not address the Jewish leaders. He asked

others to take Him to the tomb. In verse 37, Jesus listened to snide remarks about why couldn't Jesus prevent Lazarus from dying in the first place. Jesus again felt anger, but did not address the Jewish leaders. I believe if Jesus had spoken his anger, he would have created a conflict that would have distracted all present from fully witnessing the miracle, and believing that he was indeed sent by God.

### **Jesus gave God the glory**

In verse 41-42, Jesus spoke to his Father saying "Father, thank you for hearing me. You always hear me, of course, but I said it because of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me." Then Jesus commanded Lazarus to come out of the tomb. In openly giving God the glory, Jesus shares His source of power and the one who sent Him to the world. Verse 45 confirms the significance of giving God the glory "And so at last many of the Jewish leaders who were with Mary and saw it happen finally believed in him."

When I consider Jesus' ways, I am prompted to re-evaluate my own ways. Do I demonstrate patience to allow people to seek out my perspective, and then allow God's words and promises to flow from my mouth? When I feel angry, do I focus on God's big plan and refrain from a harsh response? Do I pray and seek God, and then call out "praise God who hears my prayers!?" My answers to these questions are 'no' for so many situations.

And yet, I know God is faithful in his love for me (and you) and Jesus died to reconcile me with his Father. So, I am grateful for God inspiring the writers of the Bible and especially the gospels, so I can continue to seek, and learn about the ways of Jesus and his Father.

- Teresa Hutchinson

**Step Four:** Close in prayer, thanking God for what has been revealed to you today and asking the Lord to help you carry it into this day and the days ahead. Here is a prayer written by Teresa that you may use to close your devotional time today:

*Heavenly Father, thank you for being faithful to us forever. As we reflect on Easter and what Jesus taught us by how he lived on Earth, speak directly to our hearts. Remind us of your plan and your timing when we feel impatient. Fill us with your light, life, and promises so our words will reflect you to those around us. Help us to recognize that when we are angry, quick words never help move people, including us, closer to you. Help us practice constant conversation with you, recognizing your provisions, and sharing with others how you have answered prayers.  
I ask this to glorify Jesus, Amen*

**Step Five:** Join us as we continue reading God's Word this week! Here are the daily Scripture texts for further reading:

- **Thursday, Apr 15** – 1 Peter 2:1-10
- **Friday, Apr 16** – Acts 3:11-26
- **Saturday, Apr 17** – Psalm 37
- **Sunday, Apr 18** – John 20:24-31
- **Monday, Apr 19**– Romans 6:1-14
- **Tuesday, Apr 20** – John 13:31-35