

SCRIPTURE READING FOR MARCH 13, 2022 @ CAPC OAKLAND

John 11:1-44
COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE

¹ A certain man, Lazarus, was ill. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (² *This was the Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped his feet with her hair. Her brother Lazarus was ill.*) ³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, saying, "Lord, the one whom you love is ill."

⁴ When he heard this, Jesus said, "This illness isn't fatal. It's for the glory of God so that God's Son can be glorified through it." ⁵ Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus. ⁶ When he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed where he was. After two days, ⁷ he said to his disciples, "Let's return to Judea again."

⁸ The disciples replied, "Rabbi, THE JEWISH OPPOSITION WANTS TO STONE YOU, but you want to go back?"

⁹ Jesus answered, "Aren't there twelve hours in the day? Whoever walks in the day doesn't stumble because they see the light of the world. ¹⁰ But whoever walks in the night does stumble because the light isn't in them."

¹¹ He continued, "Our friend Lazarus is sleeping, but I am going in order to wake him up."

¹² The disciples said, "Lord, if he's sleeping, he will get well." ¹³ They thought Jesus meant that Lazarus was in a deep sleep, but Jesus had spoken about Lazarus' death.

¹⁴ Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died. ¹⁵ For your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there so that you can believe. Let's go to him."

¹⁶ Then Thomas (the one called Didymus) said to the other disciples, "Let us go too so that we may die with Jesus."

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was a little less than two miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁹ Many Jews had come to comfort Martha and Mary after their brother's death. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, while Mary remained in the house. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. ²² Even now I know that whatever you ask God, God will give you."

²³ Jesus told her, "Your brother **WILL RISE** again."

²⁴ Martha replied, "I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day."

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

The gospel of John one of the four stories of the good news of Jesus (Gospel means good news) which tells his life, actions, words and mission. It's believed that John's account is the last one written as his retelling of the story reflects considerable theological reflection and uses metaphors and poetic language. One example is the play with light and darkness throughout the story. John's account also contains only seven miracles – or *signs* as they're called. A symbolic number in Jewish tradition that represents the divine and also recall the days of creation in the foundational story of Genesis. In this way the John tells the life of Jesus as the recreation of the world. Today's reading is the telling of the seventh sign in the book of John

This was the Mary:: the story to which the author refers doesn't occur until John 12:1-11. This shows that the gospel is more of a reflection and reinterpretation of the life of Jesus than a newspaper-like retelling of event by event. THE JEWISH OPPOSITION WANTS TO STONE YOU:: this is what happens just before this passage in John 10:22-42.

WILL RISE:: ἀνίστημι [anistémi] :: to raise up, to rise, to rise from the dead (resurrect). Used in John 6:39, 40,44,54; 11:23, 24, 31; 20:9,

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “**I AM** the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die. ²⁶ Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

²⁷ She replied, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, God’s Son, the one who is coming into the world.”

²⁸ After she said this, she went and spoke privately to her sister Mary, “The teacher is here and he’s calling for you.” ²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to Jesus. ³⁰ He hadn’t entered the village but was still in the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ When the Jews who were comforting Mary in the house saw her get up quickly and leave, they followed her. They assumed she was going to mourn at the tomb.

³² When Mary arrived where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died.”

³³ When Jesus saw her crying and the Jews who had come with her crying also, he was deeply disturbed and troubled. ³⁴ He asked, “Where have you laid him?”

They replied, “Lord, come and see.”

³⁵ Jesus began to cry. ³⁶ The Jews said, “See how much he loved him!” ³⁷ But some of them said, “He healed the eyes of the man born blind. Couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?”

³⁸ Jesus was deeply disturbed again when he came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone covered the entrance. ³⁹ Jesus said, “Remove the stone.”

Martha, the sister of the dead man, said, “Lord, the smell will be awful! He’s been dead four days.”

⁴⁰ Jesus replied, “Didn’t I tell you that if you believe, you will see God’s glory?” ⁴¹ So they removed the stone. Jesus looked up and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me. ⁴² I know you always hear me. I say this for the benefit of the crowd standing here so that they will believe that you sent me.” ⁴³ Having said this, Jesus shouted with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his feet bound and his hands tied, and his face covered with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “**UNTIE HIM** and let him go.”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged you, enraged you, or surprised you in these texts?
- What is the miraculous sign in this story?
- How does this story, or this sign, speak to our life and world today?
- What invitation do you hear the Spirit of God speaking to you – or to us, as a church – to act, speak, be or change through this word of scripture?

the resurrection on the last day :: This same word is used in John 3:16 to describe what Jesus will not do. “¹⁶ God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him

I AM :: one of the unique characteristics of John’s gospel are the seven **I AM** statements that Jesus makes. They seem to echo the same structure of seven miraculous signs in John which echo the seven days of creation in Genesis 1. The **I AM** statements include:

“**I AM** the bread of life.” (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51)

“**I AM** the light of the world.” (John 8:12)

“**I AM** the door of the sheep.” (John 10:7,9)

“**I AM** the resurrection and the life.” (John 11:25)

“**I AM** the good shepherd.” (John 10:11, 14)

“**I AM** the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6)

“**I AM** the true vine.” (John 15:1, 5)

Jesus began to cry :: This is the only time in all the gospels that Jesus is described in this way.

UNTIE HIM :: Lazarus had been wrapped in burial cloths by which he is still bound. Is Jesus making a simple statement about the cloth, or a wider one about freedom from death and/or constraints?