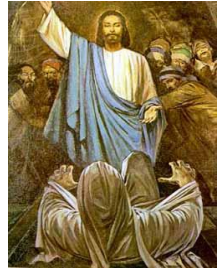


Rise Up!

John 11:1-46 (47-54)



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."

¹⁷On His arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁹and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. ²⁰When 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. ²²But I know that even now God will give You whatever You ask." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the Last Day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶and who-ever lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷"Yes, Lord," she told Him, "I be-lieve that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

²⁸And 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." ²⁹When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to Him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met Him. ³¹When 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.

³²When 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." ³³When 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.

³⁵Jesus wept. ³⁶Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!" ³⁷But some of them said, "Could not He who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

³⁸Jesus, 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." ⁴⁰Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

⁴¹So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴²I 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." ⁴³When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴The 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."

⁴⁵Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in Him. ⁴⁶But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

⁴⁷Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. ⁴⁸ If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." ⁴⁹ Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! ⁵⁰ You do not realize that it is better for you that One Man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." ⁵¹ He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, ⁵² and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. ⁵³ So from that day on they plotted to take His life. ⁵⁴ Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the Jews. Instead He withdrew to a region near the desert, to a village called Ephraim, where He stayed with His disciples.

We all have memories of deaths & funerals that shocked or deeply grieved us at the physical loss of the individual— a spouse, son/daughter, sibling, parent, or dear friend. Some outstanding memories for me, aside from the deaths of my parents, include 1) a Sem professor who died while lecturing in class when I was a student; 2) a co-pastor who was whisked away to the hospital one Sunday morning just as our worship service was starting and whose official death I sadly announced by the end of the service as word got to us; and 3) our 44-year-old kindergarten teacher of our parochial school who was fatally injured on the highway as she was driving back from the store with bakery treats for her students on an early Monday morning just before school, with an oncoming driver crossing the middle of the road.

These funeral services had 600-700 in attendance, leaving standing room only. But in all of these, the mourners did not come to hear some eulogy about all the wonderful things these servants of God had done. They came to join in on the praise of God as these souls (tho' dearly missed) were now experiencing the goal of our Christian faith & life: the joy of being in the presence of Jesus, the angels, and the saints who had preceded them! Even more, we all knew that on Judgment Day, Jesus would raise their decayed bodies from the grave and glorify them to be "fit" for heaven, which is also our sure hope that Easter proclaims. That all is possible because Jesus has paid the price for all our sins, and they trusted that. They knew that we can't hope to deserve God's gift of heaven. Rather they trusted in Jesus' gracious ransom.

As today's Gospel reading unfolds the most stunning of all Jesus' miracles, it particularly teaches crucial lessons about ¹⁾ death, ²⁾ life in God, & ³⁾ the resurrection of our bodies – i.e. *the sure HOPE of what our Christian faith is all about*. So let's delve into this stirring account and realize how Jesus will someday also say to us:

RISE UP!

As the account begins, we learn that Mary, Martha, & Lazarus lived in Bethany, a little town that was only a couple miles east of Jerusalem, on the other side of the Mt. of Olives. From the previous chapter we learn that Jesus had left Jerusalem when Jewish leaders tried to seize & stone Him, especially after He healed a man born blind! It was not yet Jesus' time to die for us, and His death must not be by stoning, so Jesus had led His disciples eastward some 20 miles over the barren hills of the Judean wilderness to a place just beyond the Jordan River. And since the previous chapter refers to Hanukkah^{Jn.10:22} (which occurs in December), we can determine that our text takes place around later-January, some 8-10 weeks from Jesus' final Passover.

A few weeks after Jesus had left Jerusalem with His disciples, Lazarus got quite ill so that his 2 sisters sent a messenger to Jesus to tell Him: **Lord, the one You love is sick**. Jesus' response to the messenger—easily heard by His disciples—was: **This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it**. Though he probably didn't understand what Jesus was implying, the messenger likely headed back to Bethany right away to share this response with Mary & Martha as it would take him another 2 days to walk back those rugged 20 miles to Bethany over the hilly, Judean wilderness.

Jesus, however, did not hurry to go to Bethany. In fact, though **Jesus loved Martha & her sister & Lazarus, yet when He heard that Lazarus was sick, He stayed where He was 2 more days**. While WE know the reason for Jesus' delay—because WE know the whole story—the DISCIPLES didn't. They thought that Jesus didn't promptly head for Bethany *because Jesus' enemies had been out to get Him*. Remember, Bethany was only 2 miles from *Jerusalem*, where Jesus' enemies were! Therefore, when Jesus said, "Let's go, now," after waiting 2 days, the disciples responded: **But Rabbi, a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet You are going back?!**

Meanwhile, as the disciples had drawn a wrong conclusion for why Jesus hadn't gone right away, the messenger had gotten back to Mary & Martha with Jesus' reply. It had to be puzzling for the sisters how Jesus could say, **This sickness will not end in death**, yet their brother had died on the day that Jesus spoke with the messenger, 2 days earlier!

God's ways are mysterious to us! Sometimes we don't understand why God doesn't act or respond more quickly to our prayers & troubles. Other times we don't understand what God is doing because He doesn't SEEM to be addressing the problem which WE think He needs to deal with from our perspective.

Thus, Jesus exhorted His disciples to live by *the light of faith in God's Word, not by the darkness of unbelief*, so that they could better see & trust God's goodness at work amid puzzling situations: **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**. Then He told them: **Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going to wake him up**. Not understanding that Jesus meant Lazarus had *died*, the disciples said: **Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better!** –i.e. "Lord, it's good for sick people to get some sleep!"

Describing the death of a believer as SLEEP is a comforting picture used throughout Scripture. Think how, when you go to bed, 1) you aren't scared but actually look forward to it, and 2) you expect to awake after a while. Similarly, believers in Jesus do not have to be scared about physically dying and, they also, can expect a glorious awakening of their bodies on Judgment Day. Psalm 116 wonderfully reminds us: **Precious in the eyes of the LORD is the death of His saints!** Christ's saving work has taken the sting out of death. For His believers, death is not the beginning of an eternal nightmare but a peaceful entry into—and an awakening from—a sleep. But because His disciples didn't understand Jesus, He had to tell them plainly: **Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.**

At this point, the apostles were probably stunned & perplexed. Then Thomas—whom we usually associate only with doubting Jesus' resurrection — responded with admirable conviction, yet some ignorance: **Let US also go that we may die with Him!** Thomas was thinking that if Jesus went to Bethany, which was so close to Jerusalem, the Pharisees might find out that He was there and attempt to come and kill Him. Like a team captain trying to fire up the rest of the team that's huddled in a circle, Thomas was saying to the others: **Let's go, guys! Let's take 'em on if they attack Jesus!** So, forgetting that Jesus is on GOD's timetable & not a victim of anybody's schemes, Thomas "cheered" on the brothers: "**Let's go die with our Master!**"

After Jesus and the Twelve finished the 2-day walk to Bethany over the hilly, Judean wilderness, Lazarus' body was now on its 4th day in the grave (Jesus' 2-day wait + 2-day walk). Because they did not regularly embalm the dead as we do, bodies were usually buried or entombed on the day or the next day of death.

Lazarus & his sisters must have been highly-regarded because quite a crowd of people had come to Bethany. But it helped that the walk from Jerusalem was not much different than walking from here, at church, to Everson Funeral Home and back, though you had to go down through the deep Kidron Valley and up over the crest of the Mount of Olives to get to Bethany. But most people were used to walking a lot each day. So it wasn't a great or difficult distance for many friends & relatives to come & grieve with the sisters. We learn later on, though, that not all those who came to pay their respects were friends of Jesus!

Word got to Martha that Jesus was not far away. Jesus likely walked near the cemetery where Lazarus was entombed so that, as people followed Martha & Mary out there, they couldn't help but witness the astounding miracle that He was about to perform. That way He could point many more to the glory of His Heavenly Father & guide them to saving faith in Himself. Martha **went out to meet Him, but Mary stayed at home.**

Martha said to Jesus, "If You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But I know that even now God will give You whatever You ask." This remark should not be viewed as expressing resentment, as if she were saying, "Why did you dawdle for 2 days before coming when You knew that we needed You so badly??" Rather, Martha realized that it would have been very difficult for Jesus to have reached Bethany in time to speak to Lazarus. After all, not even the messenger got back before Lazarus died! Thus, Martha is just expressing grief and the "if only such-&-such..." that we frequently say whenever we are frustrated about the outcome of situations in this life. At the same time, the faith of both Mary & Martha still had to learn that Jesus didn't need to be physically present in order to heal anyone -- a truth which the Gentile centurion of Capernaum in Galilee had demonstrated he knew when asking for Jesus' healing help. ^{Matt.8:5f}

Yet Martha couldn't help but remember *what the messenger reported* from Jesus: **This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son might be glorified through it.** She had probably been repeating those mysterious words to herself the past 3 days during which Lazarus had been in the grave, puzzled at what they could mean. It is in that light that she told Jesus, **But I know that even now God will give You whatever You ask.** Martha may have had a glimmering hope of a great miracle, maybe even a raising from the dead, as Jesus had already done on 2 other occasions. But she did not express it openly.

Jesus responded, **"Your brother will rise again."** Martha answered, **"I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the Last Day."** Martha's grief was struggling with the believer's sure hope in God's saving promises. She missed the physical presence of her dear brother—much less the importance of having a man in their home in their culture—yet her faith half-wondered if Jesus could do something according to His mysterious statement. She also knew that her faith should properly focus *not* on her present earthly desires but on the wonderful eternal future her brother was now experiencing. Her statement of "Christian hope" is as confident as Job's who had declared some 2000 years earlier: **I know that my Redeemer lives, & that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And [even] after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. I myself will see Him with my own eyes...How my heart yearns within me!** ^{Job 19:25-26}

Wanting to refortify Martha's confidence in His power as God, Jesus didn't want Martha to think of "resurrection" and "life" merely as "events" off in the future in another world, disassociated from God. Rather, *"Resurrection" & "Life" were His own possession & power—He is their very essence!* Resurrection & Life are only possible because Jesus, as God, makes them a reality! Thus He speaks those wonderful words that many of you learned/memorized in your catechism classes: **I am the Resurrection & the Life. He who believes in Me will live, even though He dies. And whoever lives & believes in Me will never die!** The 1st part reminds us that a person whose spiritual life is in Jesus Christ will always experience life in God, even when the body physically dies. The 2nd part builds on the 1st and, actually, points out that what we call "death" – a corpse lying without brain waves or a heart beat – is not really death in God's eyes.

The Bible *never* uses the word DEATH to mean that something "ceases to exist." Rather, God's definition for DEATH *always implies a separation*. PHYSICAL DEATH is separation of your body & soul, but *not* the extinction of your soul. SPIRITUAL DEATH is a separation of a person's soul from a true, daily relationship with God. Instead, the soul is living for itself & this world, & its master is, ultimately, the Great Deceiver, Satan. Thus, a person can be physically alive on this earth but spiritually dead; and there are *many* like that! ETERNAL DEATH is a separation of body & soul from any of God's love into eternity! The body & soul have

been reunited on the Last Day, but God's powerful & righteous command sends that body & soul to eternal misery in hell—not into “extinction.”

On the other hand, when Jesus Christ is the honest & genuine focus of your daily existence, and you have laid all your sins humbly & contritely at His cross, you will always have *life!*—to a limited degree in this sinful world, but to its fullest joy in heaven's holy glory. Jesus is your LIFE!

When Jesus asked, “**Martha, do you believe this?**” Martha was at her best. She understood that Life & Resurrection are bound up in the redeeming work of the divine Messiah, who Jesus was and whom God the Father had promised. Thus she professed, “**Yes, Lord. I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.**”

Encouraged & uplifted by Jesus' words, Martha went back to the crowded house to tell Mary that Jesus had arrived. Mary **got up quickly & went to Him. Jesus...was still at the place where Martha had met Him**, that is *near the cemetery*. Jesus didn't want to go to the house. Instead, He wanted the household to come out to Him to witness the miracle, and Mary, unwittingly, made that possible. **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.**

Once Mary got to Jesus, she said the exact same thing that her sister did, “**Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.**” Once again, we must not view this remark as expressing reproach toward Jesus for dawdling. Rather, it is an *expression of frustration over how matters turn out in this life*.

Now we witness one of the most tender moments of Jesus' ministry: **³³When 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. ³⁵Jesus wept.** Jesus, as God, cares for His people! Scripture says that **we do not have a High Priest [Jesus] who is unable to sympathize with out weaknesses....Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.** Hebr. 4:15f

Jesus' compassion was stirred by the sadness which the people were expressing over the loss of Lazarus' presence among them. He was **deeply moved in spirit and troubled**. Within Him a righteous indignation flared up against sin & what it has done to this world. He was agitated at how sin has messed up what He, as God, had once created to be so beautiful. He was righteously frustrated at how death & sorrow have to be a part of the human earthly experience because of sin.

Yet, in that indignation against Sin, Death, & the Devil, Jesus' determination to finish His work of redeeming us from this terrible mess had to have heightened. He must stay on course to complete the work of redeeming us from our sin! He would not make the words of Revelation 21 a lie: **I saw a new heaven & a new earth, for the 1st heaven & the 1st earth had passed away...And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them.... He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away!**

Thus, Jesus' bursting into tears was a result of His true humanity responding to His compassion & His divine mission to save us. Not capable of understanding that, some of the Jews thought Jesus' tears were merely for Lazarus. Others must have seen Jesus' tears as some sort of display of inability to help. They asked in puzzlement, **Could not He who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?**

It was time for Jesus to display a miracle like He had never done in His ministry. It was time for Him to show these people, and all the people to whom they would witness, that He had come to save them eternally. This miracle would not be like raising Jairus' daughter who had been dead only a very short time, or like the son of the widow of Nain whose body was just being taken to the grave. Jesus was GOING TO GIVE A SMALL DEMONSTRATION OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN ON THE LAST DAY. He was going to raise a body that had clearly been decomposing—whose internal organs would be rotting, whose life-fluids/blood/veins/& arteries would be black & disintegrating, & whose brain had lacked oxygen for 4 days & turned to mush. He was going to reverse the curse of sin & put on display the believer's sure hope! He was going to demonstrate that He was truly God's Son, the Savior of the world, and that anyone who puts their trust solely in Him will live with Him in heaven! THIS would all bring glory to His Father while sneering at the power of Satan & Death.

Thus John writes: **³⁸Deeply moved, Jesus came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. “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.” Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard Me. 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.” When He had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice** [so all could hear Him give this command], **“Lazarus, come out!”**

A hush fell over the crowd. All eyes were staring at the tomb, some with skepticism, many with curiosity. Envision Mary & Martha hugging each other, quivering with intense emotion. Suddenly, a shadow can be seen moving! **⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.** The stunned people gasped. Then shrieks of amazement & shock begin to fill the air! Peo-

ple look at each other, shaking their heads & saying, “D..d..d..do you see that?! Th..th..that’s i..i..incredible!!” Mary & Martha are likely crying with tears of joy & astonishment! God has been glorified in Christ Jesus!

But amid all the display of emotion & divine power, Jesus did not forget Lazarus: **“Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”** You can see hands nervously & eagerly ripping off the grave clothes. They see his face smiling! They hug him with thanks. And then they look at Jesus with such love, such gratitude, and such commitment to be His followers & trusting ones forever.

The raising of Lazarus from the dead was the most stunning of all miracles that Jesus performed during His 3-year ministry, outside of His own resurrection. There could be no neutral reaction to it. John wrote: **Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in Him.** What about the others? John wrote: **“Some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.** There they jealously & nervously worried: **“Here is this Man performing many miraculous signs. If we let Him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him!”** Caiaphas then declared that the only way to preserve their prestige, authority, & good life that they enjoyed in their positions over the people was to kill Jesus. So John wrote: **From that day on they plotted to take His life.**

But this vile & insane jealousy didn’t stop with Jesus. In the next chapter we learn that, several weeks later, when Jesus came back to this town on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, a **large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there** [at Bethany] **and came, not only because of Him, but also to see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well for, on account of him, many Jews were going over to Jesus & putting their faith in Him.**

Isn’t the reaction of unbelief so amazing? So foolish? So self-focused? Instead of *finally* admitting that Jesus was God & yielding their hearts & lives to Him, jealousy & spite for Jesus & His saving teachings raged within the hearts of those who envied & coveted Jesus’ influence. And in their impenitent spite, they ultimately allowed God to use them to accomplish Jesus’ crucifixion & redemption of the world!!

This is a powerful story! If you have ever feared physical death or don’t feel that you are ready to die, let this stunning miracle teach you some of the wonders that are in store for those who truly entrust their lives to Christ Jesus. Do you believe that Jesus truly is YOUR Resurrection & Life? Have you, possibly, been putting up a fight within to resist yielding to Him with your heart or your priorities? Or, in contrast, has YOUR belief & amazement of who Jesus is helped strengthen your conviction to Him – to worship Him faithfully & lovingly, to obey Him humbly, or to serve Him with optimism & gratitude. **Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and don’t lean on your own understanding.**^{Prov.3:5} On the Last Day, when He commands your body to RISE UP!—it will!

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GENERAL PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus, You who are the Resurrection and the Life,

It is not unusual that we struggle with death—our eventual death or the death of a close one. You did not create death to be a natural part of our life. Instead, it came on us because of our sin and sin’s just curse on our bodies and souls. All have sinned, so all must die. But you’ve taken away the sting of death by, Yourself, dying and sanctifying the grave for us. We are buried with You, by our baptism, into Your death so that, just as You were raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also can live a new life— a life, already now, of love & thanks, of worship & obedience, to You, putting behind the selfish, worldly-minded life of death

Give us the confidence of Your saving promises that Martha showed she understood, for Satan is always trying to undercut our trust in, & love for, You. In raising her brother from the dead, You showed us what we can expect will happen to our “sleeping” bodies on the Last Day. And in raising our lowly corpses and breathing life back into them, You further promise to glorify them to be suited for the holiness of Your heavenly glory. Not only will we experience heaven with our souls, but with the senses of our bodies. With our whole self we will praise and serve You in grateful joy.

Therefore, lift our hearts & attitudes right now, in faith, to live our days on this earth in confidence & anticipation. Send Your Holy Spirit into us, as we hear & read Your Word and take Your special Supper, that we may be strengthened in faith, encouraged in witnessing, and determined to prioritize our short earthly life around Your promises and good commands to us in Your Word. Bless our personal efforts, the efforts of our congregation, and the efforts of our Synod to take Your Gospel of forgiveness, life, & salvation to a world mired down in sin, afraid of death, insecure about the future, or even callously indifferent to the eternal curse to which they may be heading in unbelief or apathy. Let our lives in You, like Lazarus’, be a continual testimony of our faith and commitment to the truth of You, the Resurrection and the Life.

- Special prayers...
- Lord’s Prayer...