

Week Beginning: 29th March 2020

Worship Series: #6 in series



Deep Cycle

living sharing growing

Theme Verse

Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone.

John 11:40-41a

Remember This Week

God loves you so much that he lets nothing stand between you and his life-giving powerful love...not yesterday, not today, not tomorrow, not ever. God is not finished bringing deep life to this world that is wrapped in death. As a recipient of his life, you are his instruments of resurrection life, grace, and power here and now.



**Within your temple, O God,
we meditate on your unfailing love.
Like your name, O God,
your praise reaches to the ends of the earth;
your right hand is filled with righteousness.**

Psalm 48:9-10

Living God, when we feel threatened and overwhelmed with the power of darkness and death, speak your life giving Word into our lives, bringing light into darkness, hope into hopelessness, strength into weakness and life into death. Daily breathe your life-giving and life-flowing Spirit into the stench of our broken and hurting lives, that we may come fully alive now, and be a part of your miracle of life in this world. As we gather together again, however we can, to praise you as your people and bring you glory for all that you have done for us, help us to know your deep life. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



1. *Where have you seen God's life at work in your life this last week?*
2. *Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *Is there an activity or past time that makes you feel really alive? What is it?*
4. *What is 'glory'? How would you define it or recognise it?*
5. *Who or what is your Lazarus in life? What is dead that you want Jesus to make alive?*

Fear. Panic. Job losses. Uncertainty. Lives shutdown, freedoms curtailed. The global reach of COVID-19 and the societal and economical shutdowns it is triggering, is a disaster with no modern parallels. The sustained public pain is widespread. Wherever you go, whatever media you listen to or watch, there is no escaping this pandemic which is touching everyone, everywhere and will do so for a very long time. In the midst of life, we are certainly in death. We can smell it. Death. That's the reality we all face. The death rate for every community is the same: one per person and 100%. There are no shortcuts around it, no opting out of it. It will confront each of us one day, at a time unknown. But Jesus offers us a DEEP LIFE where death doesn't have the last word; where resurrection and life forever is real and available to all. And what is more, today Jesus invites us to be part of the miracle of bringing deep life to a world in need of hope like never before.

Read John 11:1-45

6. *What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?*
7. *What, if anything, strikes you about Jesus reaction to the news that Lazarus is sick?*
8. *It seems that throughout this account, Jesus has a clear understanding of what is happening, but those around him, even his disciples and close friends fail to fully grasp the situation in various ways. Which character or characters from this story do you identify with the most at the moment? Why?*





To many of us it might seem as though our current situation with Coronavirus is the end of everything, and understandably so. We have seen thousands of people put out of work by the forced closure of their workplaces, we have been asked to stay inside our homes as much as possible, life as we have come to know it seems to be coming to an end. Then there are those who have lost their lives as a result of this virus. This is the situation Mary and Martha found themselves in as Lazarus seemed to be approaching the end of his life. Life as they knew it was about to change, and so they turned to Jesus for help. Jesus' first response to the news was very confident. In verse 4 Jesus says, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."

9. *How does this statement of Jesus change the way you think about the current situation?*
10. *Where Mary and Martha saw a problem, Jesus saw an opportunity. What opportunities might this Coronavirus situation create for God to be glorified?*
11. *When the time came for Jesus and the disciples to leave and go to Mary and Martha, they questioned the wisdom of Jesus' decision to return to Judea. In what ways have you been tempted to question God's methods in your life?*

When Jesus arrived at Lazarus' tomb, Lazarus had been dead for four days already. Both Mary and Martha expressed their grief over the fact that Jesus had not been there to save their brother Lazarus. It is clear they believed that Jesus could have done something about his illness, but they were not able to comprehend what Jesus was about to do.

12. *This part of John's gospel is known for containing the shortest verse in scripture, verse 35, "Jesus wept". What do you think Jesus was weeping over? Especially if he knew Lazarus was about to be raised?*
13. *Ephesians 3:20 tells us that God is able to do more than we could ask or imagine. Have you ever been reluctant to follow where you felt God leading you in your life because it seemed impossible?*
14. *Jesus asked those who had gathered at the tomb to 'take the stone away' (v39). What do you think might have happened if they had refused to do what Jesus asked?*

In the midst of what seemed like (and was) a tragic situation, all those who loved Lazarus had an idea of what they thought was needed to fix the problem. They wanted Jesus to do as they had asked and to heal their friend and brother Lazarus. By delaying his arrival, Jesus gave them so much more than they had asked for. By raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus not only restored him to life, but he also gave a deeper life to those who came to know him as one who has power even over death. They recognised in a greater way, the truth of his identity as the Messiah.

Thankfully we don't have to worry about what would have happened if those at the tomb had refused to move the stone because they did as Jesus asked. Jesus could have single handedly moved the stone himself, or perhaps he could have called down a couple of angels to do it for him. God is not limited by our participation or lack of participation in his plans, his purposes will be done one way or another. The real miracle here is that Jesus invites those who had gathered to play a part in the miracle that occurred, to be personally involved in demonstrating the glory of God to those who expected to see nothing but a dead man.

15. *How does it make you feel to know God is inviting you to help glorify him in the world?*
16. *Can you share a time you may have really felt God calling you to do something specific? How did you feel? How did it go?*
17. *God invites us to get involved with what he is doing, yet we usually ask him to get on board with us and to bless our plans. How might you alter your approach to prayer in light of this?*

- * Praise God for the gift of life given to us through his son Jesus. Thank Jesus for the work he is doing calling people to himself and displaying his glory to the world. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you better reflect and demonstrate God's glory faithfully.
- * Pray that in the midst of the fear, confusion and trouble many people are feeling right now, that God would break into their lives in ways that we can not even imagine to bring life and hope in these challenging times.

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...

Name, You have life in Jesus. Amen.

