

Entering into Lent: A Reflection on the Raising of Lazarus

Reflection One

INTO THE PASSAGE

Read **John 11**. Using your holy imagination, place yourself in the passage.

- Where do you see yourself?
- Are you one of the disciples, Martha, Mary, one of the crowds of Jews, or Lazarus?
- What do you see, smell, hear, and feel?
- What are you thinking?
- How do you emotionally respond to this experience?

THE DISCIPLES RESPONSE: JOHN 11.1-6

Jesus surprises the disciples in the opening verses of John 11 and overturns their expectations.

Your Response

- When your timetable is frustrated, how do you respond?
- How do you feel when the Lord does not seem to meet your expectations?
- When have you been surprised by the expectations of what it means to follow Jesus?

Reflection Two

MARTHA AND MARY'S RESPONSE: JOHN 11:17-38

- How would you describe Martha and Mary's state in this passage?
- What are their feelings?
- In regards to their community, how might their position have been changed with Lazarus' death?
- Are there any other descriptors that come to mind?

YOUR RESPONSE

- In your life, where are you feeling vulnerable?
- What are your positions in the different communities to which you belong?
- What or who are you mourning?
- What have you lost that you want or need restored?

Notes:

In this passage Jesus responds to the news of the death of his friend Lazarus and comes to the aid of his friends Martha and Mary. Because of the social customs of first century Palestine, these women are now one of the most vulnerable members of their society. They may have no one to protect or represent them in legal matters. (See Luke 18:1-8 for another example.)

Deuteronomy 24:17 "You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice; you shall not take a widow's garment in pledge. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this."

"after burial...the real problems began for the survivors, especially for women. There was no paid employment available for them, no social security. Their support had gone; they could be reduced to begging unless someone looked after them... Men were inclined to ignore widows and orphans, however, and the Psalms reminded them that God cared especially for them."(excerpted from Handbook of Life in Bible Times)

Reflection Three

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS: JOHN 11.38-44

Again, using your holy imagination, describe the experience of Lazarus.

- What would he have felt?
- What do you think he was saying after his resuscitation?

YOUR RESPONSE

- What in your life has died and needs to be brought back to life?
- Do you have any hope of that happening?
- What would you say if you were brought back to life?
- What would you say if that which in you has died were brought back to life?
- What help did Lazarus need to pursue his new life?
- Do you have any grave clothes that you are carrying? Who might be willing to help you remove them?

Reflection Four

THE CROWD'S PLACE: JOHN 11:45-57

Take a few minutes to re-read the passage. Once again, picture yourself in this scene. There are two groups that respond to Jesus, those that put their faith in him, and those that went to the Pharisees.

- Of which group do you see yourself being a part?
- Contrast the tones and attitudes of the two crowds. How would the sounds, attitudes, postures, and emotions be different between the two?

YOUR RESPONSE

- What is your response to Jesus' work in this passage?
- What is your response to Jesus' work that you witness?

Take a few minutes to think of his works that you've seen, or experienced this past season. What is your response to Jesus' work in you?

Reflection Five

JESUS' COMPASSION

In this passage we see Jesus deeply moved by the death of Lazarus and Martha and Mary's grief. [John 11:31](#) says, "Jesus wept." Much has been written of this short verse. We know Jesus had great compassion and love for his friends, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary.

- What are the factors that you think cause Jesus to be moved so deeply by the death of Lazarus?

YOUR RESPONSE

- For what in your life do you think Jesus has compassion?
- What has Jesus given back to you that you've lost? What more might he want to give back to you?
- Where do you feel resistance to letting Jesus come and touch you?
- As you move into the Lenten Season, what areas would you like to offer in prayer?