

⁴³ Now when He had said these things, **He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"**

⁴⁴ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was **wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."** John 11:43-44 NKJV

The horror Jesus was about to face in a few days made this dramatic miracle possible. Resurrection life called the dead man out of the grave! And death gave him up.

Jesus conquered death, hell and the grave for us so we too can be raised from spiritual death to life. *"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."* Romans 6:4

When Lazarus came out of the grave, his hands and feet were still bound with grave clothes and his face was wrapped with a cloth. He needed his friends to remove the bondages so he could walk freely and see again. Jesus instantly healed his physical body, which, after four days, would have started decaying, but he told **Lazarus's** community to loose him from his grave clothes.

When we receive the life of Christ in salvation, we too need help removing the "grave clothes" of our former sinful lifestyles. Just like Lazarus, we too need a community of people who love us to help us get free of the things that might still be sticking to us or have us bound. This is a wonderful picture of this reality in our lives.

Do you still have bits of grave clothes attached to you or binding you? This could be old sinful habits, unhealthy attachments, anger, the wrong view of yourself, gossip, slander or foul language, lying, stealing, immoral behaviour, etc. Paul instructs us in Ephesians to put off the old corrupt ways and put on the new nature in Christ.

"... put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness." Ephesians 4:22-24

Jesus never intended for us to live out our Christianity as individuals, but in community. We were never meant to try figure it out for ourselves, but those who are more mature in the faith, who have learned to follow Jesus, are to walk with those who are new in the faith, help remove their 'grave clothes' and teach them to obey Jesus and follow His way of living. (Matthew 28:20)

Lord, please open our eyes to see the needs of people around us and what we can do to help them.

- 1) What does this passage teach us about God? How does it apply to you?
- 2) Do you still have some grave clothes on that you need help removing?
- 3) Is there someone around you that needs help removing their grave clothes?

Based on today's reading, what is one thing God is saying to you?