



WEEKLY STUDY

Week 2

In this week's message, we explored the fact that Jesus told the people standing outside the tomb to take off Lazarus' grave clothes and let him go. This is something new. Lazarus had risen from the dead, but needed help to remove the grave clothes he had been dressed in. This is a clear indicator that new life in Jesus Christ is both intensely personal and communal. Jesus does the work in us. We rely on others to help us live into that new life. May you experience both the new thing Jesus is doing in you and the active support of a community of believers.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark
Lead Pastor of Discipleship

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture, follow the daily prayer prompt, and then pray this or your own prayer.

*Jesus,
May I hear your voice calling me out of the grave and into new life today. You know where I am living in darkness and you see the grave clothes I am ready to shed in the light. Call me out Jesus, and surround me with those who want me to live!
Amen.*

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: JOHN 11.38-40

Jesus, 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."

⁴⁰ *Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"*

- Martha's response is one that we shouldn't too quickly judge. We are often blinded by the harsh realities of death. On our own, we allow our stuckness to take root and dig in—removing the hope for freedom. Martha expected an unbearable stench to come out of the 4 day old tomb, because that's what happens in death. But Jesus was about to redefine what was possible. Do you want to see the glory of God? Believe that Jesus can redeem even death itself.
- *Jesus, once again I say to you, I believe, help my unbelief. Reveal your glory in the middle of the dead areas of my life.*

TUESDAY: JOHN 11.41-44

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² 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."

⁴³ *When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The 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."

- Before calling Lazarus out of the tomb, Jesus seems to have a side conversation with God the Father. *I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of these people.* We would assume that God the Father already knew what Jesus meant in his prayer. All of the words were for the benefit of the audience (including us). Jesus is thanking God for responding to his prayer even before the evidence of the response is visibly seen. Jesus points to God and to his resurrection power with his whole life.
- *God, thank you for hearing my prayers. As I daily step into new life in you, unbind me from the grave clothes of my former life.*

WEDNESDAY: JOHN 11.45-47

Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷ Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

- How do you respond to the miraculous work of God in Jesus Christ? It's interesting how we can each respond differently to things we can't explain. Among the very same crowd of witnesses were those who believed AND those who immediately reported the miracle as a crime. The world does not always embrace new life. Perhaps we are addicted to our own sickness and would rather stick to our own established norms. As we read on, we will see that the resurrection of one man was not Jesus' ultimate purpose. This path would lead to the gift of resurrection-life for the whole world.
- *Jesus, as you stood before Lazarus' tomb, I imagine you had a sense of your own tomb. And if you had a sense of your own tomb, you had a sense of the death in me that you would bring back to life. Thank you Jesus.*

THURSDAY: PSALM 30.8-12

To you, Lord, I called;

to the Lord I cried for mercy:

⁹ *“What is gained if I am silenced,
if I go down to the pit?*

Will the dust praise you?

Will it proclaim your faithfulness?

¹⁰ *Hear, Lord, and be merciful to me;
Lord, be my help.”*

¹¹ *You turned my wailing into dancing;
you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,*

¹² *that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent.*

Lord my God, I will praise you forever.

- Like the Psalmist, we know that there will be mourning. We know that we will be thrown into pits in this life. But God is merciful. The sackcloths of despair will be removed and we will be clothed with joy so that we can offer worship to God our Savior. Can you imagine dancing out of your tears today?
- *God, your mercy extends far beyond what I deserve. Thank you for hearing my voice and my cries today. I rejoice in You.*

FRIDAY: ROMANS 13.11-12

And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.¹² The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

- These words from Paul to the Christians in Rome might remind us of Mary’s response to Jesus before her brother’s resurrection. *I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.* What Jesus wanted Mary to know was that salvation is nearer than she believed. Wake up from your slumber! How do those words hit your heart? Are you sleepwalking through areas of your life when you could be living with resurrection power?
- *Jesus, let me hear these words over my day. Wake up from your slumber...salvation is near!*

SATURDAY: COLOSSIANS 3.9-10

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.¹¹ Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

- Don’t put the old self back on when the new clothes you’ve been given are making you more and more into the image of God. Why would we want to put stinky graveclothes back on? We are all one in Christ because he has given us our new selves. Christ is all and in all.
- *Thank you God for the gift of salvation. May I fully wear this identity in Christ today.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

In this week's message Pastor Jacob said,

“Jesus does not tell Lazarus to take off his grave clothes. I think this is really important. Jesus does not tell Lazarus to take off his grave clothes. You ready for this? He tells his friends to take off his grave clothes. When you are bound up, wound up in the bandages, they cover your eyes. You are mummified. Jesus can get you standing up and you will need others to carefully unwrap all the evidence of what you've been through. He gives us to each other.”

- Can you describe what things have you bound up right now (even if you are already a follower of Jesus)?
- Who helps you to leave behind the old clothes and accept the new in Christ?
- How can you help others to become unbound from their old grave clothes?