

**John 11:1-45****The Raising of Lazarus**

11 A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. <sup>2</sup> This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. <sup>3</sup> So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick."

<sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this." <sup>5</sup> So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, <sup>6</sup> he stayed where he was for the next two days. <sup>7</sup> Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."

<sup>8</sup> But his disciples objected. "Rabbi," they said, "only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?"

<sup>9</sup> Jesus replied, "There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. <sup>10</sup> But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light." <sup>11</sup> Then he said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up."

<sup>12</sup> The disciples said, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!" <sup>13</sup> They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died.

<sup>14</sup> So he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. <sup>15</sup> And for your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe. Come, let's go see him."

<sup>16</sup> Thomas, nicknamed the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let's go, too—and die with Jesus."

<sup>17</sup> When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. <sup>18</sup> Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem, <sup>19</sup> and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss.

<sup>20</sup> When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. <sup>21</sup> Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask."

<sup>23</sup> Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again."

<sup>24</sup> "Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day."

<sup>25</sup> Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. <sup>26</sup> Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?"

<sup>27</sup> "Yes, Lord," she told him. "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God." <sup>28</sup> Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, "The Teacher is here and wants to see you." <sup>29</sup> So Mary immediately went to him.

<sup>30</sup> Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. <sup>31</sup> When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus's grave to weep. So they followed her there.

<sup>32</sup> When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."

<sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. <sup>34</sup> "Where have you put him?" he asked them.

They told him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup> Then Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup> The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!" <sup>37</sup> But some said, "This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

<sup>38</sup> Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. <sup>39</sup> "Roll the stone aside," Jesus told them.

But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, "Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible."

<sup>40</sup> Jesus responded, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?" <sup>41</sup> So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. <sup>42</sup> You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me." <sup>43</sup> Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!"

<sup>44</sup> And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him go!"

**The Plot to Kill Jesus**

<sup>45</sup> Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen.

(NLT)

**Ruby Country Benefice**

*The Parishes of Ashwater, Beaworthy, Black Torrington,  
Clawton, Halwill, Highampton and Tetcott*

**Sunday 26th March 2023****Passion Sunday—5th Sunday in Lent****Welcome to Worship**

11.00 am Holy Communion, Beaworthy

11.00 am Methodist Communion, Clawton

3.00 pm Evening Service, Highampton

**Readings**

Ezekiel 37: 1-14

Psalm 130

Romans 8: 6-11

John 11: 1-45

**Collect**

Most merciful God,

who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ

delivered and saved the world:

grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross

we may triumph in the power of his victory;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**Interim Vicar (part time)**

Revd Stephen Skinner

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**Benefice Administrator**

Val Letheren val.letheren@btinternet.com 07484 880770

**PLEASE PRAY FOR:**

**The Mission Community:** for all who live and work in our Mission Community, we give thanks for Revd Stephen Skinner and we pray for Revd Dr Paul Fitzpatrick as he prepares for his new role in our Benefice

**Rest in peace** all who have recently died

**All who are mourning** the death of a loved one including the family and friends of Christine Butler and Peter Hanington

**Those who are ill** or in any kind of need and those who are vulnerable due to underlying health conditions, including Jenny Hyslop, Stephen Bowness, Doug Genini and his wife Sue, Phil Beare, Mike Edwards

**For our Benefice Schools,** all staff, pupils and parents as they prepare for the Easter Holidays

**Dates for your diary**

<b>Tuesday 28th March</b>	10.30 am	Lent Course, Black Torrington at the home of Maureen Ellis
	4.00 pm	Handbell Ringing at the home of Sue Plummer Black Torrington
<b>Wednesday 29th March</b>	9.15 am	School Easter Service Ashwater Church
	10..00 am	Morning Prayer Black Torrington Church
	11.00 am	Black Torrington PCC Meeting
	2.30 pm	School Easter Service Black Torrington Church
<b>Thursday 30th March</b>	8.00 pm	ZOOM Compline
<b>Friday 31st March</b>	7.30 pm	Highampton Church Easter Bingo Highampton Village Hall
<b>Sunday 2nd April</b>	9.30 am	Palm Sunday Procession and Holy Communion Ashwater Church
	11.00 am	Palm Sunday Holy Communion followed by APCM Halwill Church
	11.00 am	Palm Sunday Morning Service Black Torrington Church
	6.00 pm	Palm Sunday Procession and Evening Service Tetcott Church



**ZOOM MEETING**  
Meeting ID:317 183 8102  
Passcode: 848984

**Thought for Sunday 26th March 2023**

**“JESUS’ FAMILY & OURS”**

Not a lot is said about Jesus’ family – we wonder why? It is probable that his father, Joseph, died before Jesus’ public ministry began. Jesus a number of siblings: James, Joses, Simon, Jude, and several unnamed sisters. As the oldest child Jesus would have had the greatest responsibility for the care and upkeep of the whole family. Maybe he took on Joseph’s carpentry business after he had died. However, it seems that once Jesus reached the age of 30, and was baptised by his cousin John the Baptist, he set off on various evangelistic, teaching and healing missions in the area around Galilee. It appears that at various times this ministry took precedence over home life. For example we have the somewhat uncomfortable dialogue in Matthew 12: 46-50: **While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him that this was so. He replied “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” Pointing to the disciples he said “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”**

What do we make of this – who constitutes Jesus’ family? I cannot believe that Jesus abandoned his blood-line family, but I also feel that Jesus did not want to be constrained by the demands of his nuclear family either. Like any young adult he felt the call to be free to minister to the communities around Lake Galilee. This might not have always gone down too well with his siblings, but Mary realised that Jesus had a ‘higher call’ upon his life. She was supernaturally aware that this journey would involve pain and suffering, and even to death. We shall spend time considering some of her grief of family separation as we relive the story of Holy Week.

Now, Jesus had other families that offered him support on his journey – possibly the most important was that of Mary, Martha and Lazarus in our Gospel today of **John Chapter 11**. It is abundantly clear that Jesus had a deep love for this little family, who I suspect offered him a considerable amount of hospitality. It was this Mary who poured the expensive perfume on Jesus’ feet and wiped them with her long hair. A highly sensual act in gratitude for Jesus having raised her brother Lazarus back to life. Jesus’ love for them was demonstrated in the extraordinary moment when Jesus wept at the distraught emotions of Mary and Martha at Lazarus’ death. There was a mutuality of love between this family and Jesus. It sets a model for us, including in our church families. Do we feel a sense of brotherly and sisterly affection for each other? Personally, I feel our bonds of Christian love have grown over the past 3 years, and I will miss our friendships, laughter and hospitality shared through my regular appearances at our Services, Meetings and Social Events, from mid-May onwards. This has been for me the very best part of my Interim Ministry among you! I’m truly grateful.

**Stephen**