

## Bible reading John 11:1-45

Hymn 345- Singing The Faith-*And can it be that I should gain*

### Jesus Raises Lazarus to Life

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So, they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

John 11:38-45 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

### Reflection

Last week's lectionary was about Spiritual Blindness. This week's lectionary is about Lazarus', death and resurrection. The two texts from last week and this week have a liberating theme. The blind man's eyes were opened and was able to see clearly and got on with his life. This week Lazarus is risen from the dead. The story of Lazarus reminds me when I was at school competing in a sack race. I can't remember how many times I fell face down; my mobility was limited because the sack limited my movement. That's how I visualised Lazarus coming out of the tomb, all bound up. Are there things in life that are binding and suffocating us? In verse 44 Jesus says "Unbind him, and let him go" Hallelujah! Jesus rose Lazarus from the dead and did not leave him sitting by the grave side all bound up. No! Jesus instructed that Lazarus be unbound and let go. Jesus realised that if Lazarus remained bound his capabilities would be very limited. There is power in being unbound! It does not matter how awful the situation is Jesus will change it and set us free. Hymn 345 says "My chains fell off; my heart was free! I rose, went forth and followed thee" There could be areas of our lives that may need unbinding. As individuals,

community and Society let's pull together and call upon Jesus Christ to unbind our fears, anxieties, worries and uncertainties and set us free. Some of us feel alienated, unloved, uncared for and scared but John Wesley said one comforting truth "the best of all God is with us". God will never abandon us no matter what the world thinks of us. Isaiah 43:2 God says "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. When you cross rivers, you will not drown. When you walk through fire, you will not be burned, nor will the flames hurt you". Its only Jesus who is able to liberate us and set us free from our fears. The time is nigh that we call upon Christ to liberate us of any chains binding us. Its only Christ who is able to fill us with hope, assurance and Joy. Hallelujah! 🙏

### **Prayer**

Dear Lord we come to you with all our fears, anxieties, worries and doubts. We are going through trying and difficult times but you have reminded us that you are omnipresent. In our time of need you have continued to comfort us just as Christ cried with Mary and Martha at the tomb. We are grief stricken, send your Holy Spirit to continue to remind us that we have a friend in Jesus. The only one who can unbind our fears and

set us free. Give us the courage and boldness to face the future with hope. Amen

*Prepared by **Rev Mary Sachikonye Methodist Minister for** (Mile Cross, Costessey, Trinity Thorpe Mariott, Hosford and Drayton) for a time as this. We are a church without walls. We should therefore, continue to proclaim the good news. I will be sending **Words of Hope** every week so that we may continue to nourish our spirits and continue to live in HOPE!*