

## Daily Devotional, October 30, 2020 The Grace of God

<sup>38</sup> *Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.* <sup>39</sup> *“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.”* <sup>40</sup> *Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”* <sup>41</sup> *So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me.* <sup>42</sup> *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.”* <sup>43</sup> *When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”* <sup>44</sup> *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.”* **John 11:38-44 (NIV)**

I can't think of any examples of grace more powerful than Jesus standing at the opening to the tomb that held Lazarus. The days leading up to Jesus' arrival at the opening of this grave were filled with sickness, death, mourning, and a deep questioning about where Jesus was and just what he was planning on doing to relieve the misery of Lazarus' family. The family of Lazarus and the disciples of Jesus were all concerned, and they were looking to Jesus for help.

In John's Gospel, Jesus arrives at the home of Lazarus only to find the family mourning the loss of their brother. Jesus leads the family and the crowd to where they had laid Lazarus to rest. It was a dark cave with a stone covering the entrance, blocking out any light. The images in the story are quite clear. There is no life stirring on the opposite side of the stone that covers Lazarus' grave.

Jesus calls for the crowd to remove the stone and then he speaks into the dark, lifeless tomb, “Lazarus, come out!” To the absolute amazement of everyone in the crowd, Lazarus does indeed come out of the tomb... alive!

I believe that grace is the presence and power of God at work in our lives. As the Gospel of John tells us, when Jesus arrives at the tomb and speaks into the lifeless cave that holds Lazarus, resurrection takes place. There at the opening of the grave, in the presence of the Son of God, the people witnessed grace at work. The presence of Jesus changed everything; mourning turned to amazement, questioning turned to wonder, and death turned to life. This is the power of grace breaking into our world!

These past eight plus months have been challenging, to say the least! We have seen our way of life change dramatically. We have gone from an active, busy society to being asked to stay at home. Football fields presently are mostly empty, even on these beautiful, crisp Autumn days. Our businesses are quiet where once they were filled with the hustle and bustle of work. Our schools are mostly closed, with virtual learning taking the place of the live classroom. Life is different. But what is not different is the grace of God. God is still present and active. God is still at work. This gives me hope that one day, soon, we will come out of our homes, reconnect with one another, and find life filled with joy and peace, because our God is a God of grace. And I firmly believe that help is right around the corner. Believe! Have faith!

***Jesus, I come before you in humility, asking for your grace and mercy. For you know the temptations of this world. You know the weaknesses of living this human life. Though you were strong enough to withstand the temptations and did not sin, I am not so strong. I come before you to ask for your grace and mercy in my time of need. For I am weak and I sin. I need your help daily to stay strong in my faith and continue to walk in your way. Lord Jesus, forgive me and shower me with your grace. Amen.***