

HOMILIES FROM THE HERMITAGE

(and other things)

On view of the current isolation and detachment from normal ministry, it seemed good to provide some other ways in which to keep in contact. There will be some 'thoughts' (not each day), some shared ideas and maybe some pleasantries.

CORONA 7

LAZARUS: JESUS GIVES LIFE

On Sunday Lent 3 Jesus gives the water of life: Lent 4 Jesus gives light of life

This fifth Sunday gives life in the story of Lazarus

John 11 is the story of the raising of life to Lazarus. The unfolding is slightly from the story of the Samaritan woman and the man born blind. In this case the event (the raising of Lazarus) comes at the end and the major profession of faith (Martha's) comes in the middle of events. Perhaps it is best to summate events and then develop.

Martha, Mary and Lazarus were friends of Jesus to whom they gave their home and a place of rest and peace amid His ministry. Lazarus was taken ill and Jesus waits a couple of days before going to see him. In that time comes the instruction of the passage—Jesus firstly talks of the light of light (comparing with darkness) and then goes to heal Lazarus. This is not direct: firstly he talks of Lazarus 'resting' and then takes it clear that he is dead.

Jesus then goes to Bethany where Martha comes out to greet him and here comes the profession of faith. Martha said 'If you had here my brother would not have died.' Jesus said 'He will rise again'. Martha said: 'On the resurrection on the day last.' Jesus said I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE', Martha said 'I believe that You are the Christ the Son of God'. Mary in the house come out and likewise said, 'If you had been here my brother would not have died.'

Jesus then moves to the miracle. Some said that it would be difficult because he was in a rolled tomb and that Lazarus had been there for four days. Jesus cried in a loud voice 'Lazarus, come forth.' And he comes out alive. Many of the Jews believed in Jesus.

The miracle and profession of faith are quite simple but it is worth adding some of those in the story. The hospitality given to Jesus by Martha and Mary: the sympathy of Thomas who consoles Jesus at the death of his friend. Thomas does not understand (not for the last time!) but his love and kindness are true and vibrant. It is Martha (the one who does all the work) who utters the profession of faith: Mary stays at home and later goes out to Jesus. The bringing back to life of Lazarus has the crisp and simple effect of power, Jesus comes in might, Lazarus comes back to life, and Jesus tells them to unbind him. Final practical love.

It is worth reading the longer version of the story John 11/1-45 and take in all the nuances. The story unfolds through the people involved: finally Jesus proves His claim to be the resurrection and the life. The tomb of Lazarus echoes the three days as Jesus in the tomb and His returning to life. Jesus proclaims Himself Lord of life, proves it and asks us to believe Him and His lifegiving power.