



FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT – MARCH 22, 2026

Ezekiel 37:12-14

Romans 8:8-11

John 11:1-45

Today we have the familiar story of the raising of Lazarus by Jesus after Lazarus had died days before.

When we know the end of the story, it takes away from the drama of the full story.

It's kind of like watching a replay of a Packers game when you know the score already. It takes away the tension and the excitement of the game.

So, let's go in the gospel story – and find ourselves in the story.

As we heard Jesus was informed of Lazarus, his good friend, being very ill. The disciples are ready to leave to see Lazarus and his family. Jesus does not leave but stays where he is for two days. Really? What a friend?!

After that time Jesus heads out to Bethany where Lazarus lives. Thomas, a disciple, knows Jesus is heading into enemy territory and says, "Let's us go along, to die with him." You can feel pressure on the disciples. I would assume on Jesus as well.

Jesus then meets Martha who is not happy. She lets Jesus have it, "If you had been here my brother would not have died." She cools off a bit states that she trusts in God answering her prayers.

Then after Mary meets Jesus, and many people are crying, we see Jesus cry. Can we picture this moment? The one who will raise Lazarus is overcome with grief. He is just like us.

Jesus goes to Lazarus' tomb and the miracle happens. He raises Lazarus from the dead.

Then the phrase I invite us to hang onto for our lives. "Untie him and let him go free."

Jesus is referring to the ancient custom where one would wrap the dead body with strips of cloth from head to toe.

The story is filled with a lot of emotion. Some of us have been on that path with the illness of a loved one and their eventual death.

We were worried and anxious, extremely sad when the loved one passed. We might have been or still are very angry with God because of the death of our loved one.

In a couple of weeks, we will hear Jesus carry the cross for us. His loved ones will watch and walk with him. They will worry, be anxious, angry and all the emotions we have felt. Jesus will have plenty of emotion as well. Let's not make him a robot. The cry from the cross, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" is not from a robot.

But on Easter God the Father will say, "Untie him and let him go free."

He says that to us as well. Where are we tied up emotionally?

Where are we angry? Where is our worry? Where is our life just a mess? Where do we need to surrender into the loving arms of the Lord? We just can't fight any longer.

May we hear the command of Jesus to the angels in our prayer; "Untie them and let them go free."

Prayer: Bringing Home the Word