

REVIVE US AGAIN

This week, in prayer and fasting we will be focusing our prayer for **Revival - revival in our city, revival in our churches, and revival in our lives**. According to dictionary.com, the word 'revival' means an improvement in the condition or strength of something. Our Senior Pastor provided this further definition. "Revival means, that which is dead will become alive again, that which is asleep will awake, that which is dormant and is dead, will come forth."

This thought brought me back to the scripture in St John 11, where Lazarus, a friend and follower of Jesus died after waiting and hoping for Jesus to come back and help his situation somehow. Lazarus had fallen deathly ill, and things were not looking good. His sisters, Mary, and Martha sent word to Jesus, who was known for His miraculous healings. Surprisingly, Jesus did not immediately rush to Lazarus' side. Instead, He waited, allowing Lazarus to die, and be buried for four days.

Read that again. JESUS, God in flesh, saviour of the whole world, the redeemer of mankind.... allowed his friend Lazarus to die. If you think it is hard to read about, rest assured, it is much harder to live. Knowing that God had the power to do something in your situation, but that He chose not to. But Jesus says something important in vs. 4. He says, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." How powerful and encouraging to know that God can get the glory even out of the most difficult of situations in our lives!

However, I know what you must be thinking..." But Lazarus did die. Jesus said, the sickness is not unto death, ...but he died. In fact, later in the chapter around vs 11, Jesus tries to gently allude to His disciples that Lazarus is no longer with us. He uses the word sleeping, but the dense disciples missed His meaning altogether, until Jesus is forced to plainly say "Lazarus is dead". Death is such a final state. One definition says it is "a permanent cessation of all vital functions". Have you ever experienced a death? Of your hope? Or your peace? Or your joy? Or your passion? Or your relationship? Or your desire? Or your relationship with God? If you have, you know that there is no more hopeless feeling.

But I want to draw your attention back to the truth of what Jesus says in vs. 4. The New Living Translation says it this way “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.” He does not say that Lazarus will not die, He says it will not end in death. Which brings me back to the dictionary definition of death. For the believer, death is not the ‘permanent cessation of vital functions’, although we may experience a temporary one. For the believer, there is a hope that reaches beyond death and into renewed life! Thank you, Jesus!

We used to sing a song that declares “Jesus’ voice makes the difference, when He speaks, He relieves my troubled mind, It’s the only voice I hear that makes a difference, and I’ll follow one day at a time!” When I think about the sound of Jesus’ voice in St John 11: 43 when He spoke to a dead corpse with such authority that life had to return to the body, I realise that it is nothing for Him to restore my joy or hope or passion.

Lazarus experienced a physical resurrection, we, too, can experience a spiritual revival through Christ. We may find ourselves in a state of spiritual death—bound by sin, hopelessness, and despair. But the same voice that called Lazarus from the grave is calling out to us, inviting us to step into the light of His life-transforming power.

In our lives, revival begins with surrender and obedience to the voice of Jesus. It involves letting go of the grave clothes that bind us—whether they be sin, doubt, or fear. Jesus stands ready to call us out of spiritual death into the abundant life He offers.

Let the story of Lazarus inspire you to seek a revival in your own heart. Allow the resurrecting power of Jesus Christ to break the chains that hold you captive. Just as Lazarus emerged from the tomb, so too you can step into a renewed and revitalized relationship with your Savior.

GETTING STARTED

Read St. John 11:1-57

1. Why did Jesus think it was important to allow Lazarus to die? **John 11: 4, 14, 40**
2. How was God’s Glory revealed in Lazarus’ death-defying experience? **John 11:45**
3. How attuned are you to the voice of Jesus in your life? In what ways can you actively listen for His voice during this week of prayer, and how might His words bring about transformation and renewal in your heart and circumstances?
4. How can you surrender the ‘dead’ areas of your life to Jesus during this week of prayer and fasting, trusting in His power to bring forth new life?

LET'S GET PERSONAL

Get your pad of paper and reflect on the following:

1. In what ways do you identify with the state of Lazarus before his resurrection, feeling bound by circumstances, sin, or despair in your own life? How might the call of Jesus to "come out" speak to those areas, inviting you to experience a revival and new life?
2. Reflect on the significance of the time Jesus spent waiting before arriving in Bethany. Are there situations in your life where it feels like God is delaying, and you're left waiting for His intervention? How can you trust His timing and purpose in those moments of apparent delay, just as Martha and Mary did?
3. Consider the grave clothes that may be binding you—whether they are attitudes, behaviors, or circumstances. What steps can you take to intentionally unwrap and release these things, allowing the resurrecting power of Jesus to bring about a spiritual revival in your life? How can you actively respond to His voice and experience the freedom He offers?