

THE SIGN OF LAZARUS



*Resurrection Changes Everything
Sukirtha Joseph Premnath (Suki)*

“Take the stone away.”

“Lord, there will be an odor. He’s been dead four days.”

“Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”

Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me....

Lazarus, come out!”

Lazarus came out, still wrapped in his grave clothes.

“Unbind him and let him go.”

It was the last sign Jesus performed in the gospel of John.

A sign of the Kingdom.

A sign of things to come.

The raising of Lazarus was a foreshadowing of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

It was also a foreshadowing of the end of the age when the dead will rise to enter their destiny.

It was also the foreshadowing of the final awakening of the Body of Christ.

The world has already concluded that the church is dead.

A few gullible souls still carry the banner of Christendom.

They are whistling in the dark.

It is now the post-Christian era, according to the wise of this world.

But the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

“Take the stone away.”

“Lord, there will be an odor. He’s been dead four days.”

“Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”

From all appearances the church, like Lazarus, is dead and buried.

But wait!

The one who called Lazarus out of his tomb has a surprise for this world.

The Risen Lord is calling his church out of the tomb.

Raising it from the dead.

Refining it with the fire of heaven.

Flooding it with resurrection life.

The Lord of heaven and earth is doing this without our help.

So where do we fit in all this?

We do three things:

We recognize that we, along with countless believers, are like Lazarus in the tomb.

We answer when the Master says, “Come out!”

We shake off our grave clothes, and live by his power.

We recognize that we, along with countless believers, are like Lazarus in the tomb.



By Chris Powers



Finding Release (study)
Lauren Wright Pittman

We are not standing outside the tomb, waiting for Jesus to resurrect a dead church.

We are part of that dead church.

Whether we belong to the hottest mega church in town, or the best house church in the western world, or a struggling main-line church in a bustling suburb, we are in that tomb with all the other stumbling saints.

We're part of the problem.

We are as needy as any believer.

Like Lazarus, we cannot raise ourselves from the dead.

We need more than brains and money and "creative ideas".

We need a resurrection!

When Jesus received word that Lazarus was deathly sick, he deliberately waited two more days. He waited until Lazarus was dead---beyond human help.

Likewise, the Lord has allowed the church to stumble and stagger and fumble and fall until it has reached a point where human tinkering is useless.

Jesus knew when it was time to go to Lazarus.

"Our friend Laz'arus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him out of sleep. "The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Laz'arus is dead; and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

John 11

And Jesus knows when it's time to resurrect the church.



Resurrection from the Dead
Suki

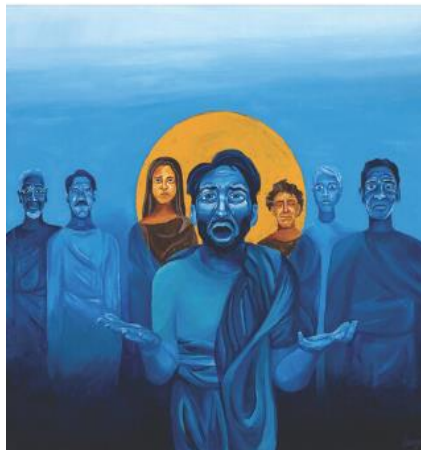
Now that the church knows it's beyond human help, it is ready for a visit from the Master.

We answer when he says, "Come out!"

"I know your works; you have the name of being alive, and you are dead. Awake, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God."

Revelation 3

From deep in that tomb, from far away in the region of the dead, he heard the words,
"Lazarus! Come out!"



Unbind Me
Lauren Wright Pittman

Suddenly the power of the world to come flooded that cold corpse, burned away all sickness and death, stood him on his feet and nudged him toward the mouth of the tomb.

We are beginning to hear what Lazarus heard.

And, like Lazarus, we will find ourselves on our feet and moving toward the light.

***"Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,
and Christ shall give you light."***

Ephesians 5



Lauren Wright Pittman

We shake off our grave clothes, and live by his power.

The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped with a cloth.

Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

John 11

Lazarus was wrapped in those grave clothes---death and the past were still clinging to him. And now the Lord says, "Unbind him, and let him go," to the angel of the resurrected church. All the extras that have wrapped themselves around the church over the centuries are now to be torn away like useless grave clothes.

Doctrines that have nothing to do with the call of the Lord.

Traditions that have no connection to the Kingdom of God.

Disciplines that detract from our simple obedience.

Forms of worship that dull our eyes and ears to the HOLY.

"Prophecies" which deviate from the clear warnings of the Master.

These grave clothes are now to be shaken off and pulled away.



By Chris Powers

The church that comes out of that tomb is the church Jesus will send into the world with the final Kingdom Call.

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and put you to death; and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away, and betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold. But he who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come."

Matthew 25

The same Lord who raises us from the dead anoints us with fresh power and sends us out



By Suki

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men; for they will deliver you up to councils, and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you up, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel, before the Son of man comes.

Matthew 10

Prayer- Lord, call us out the tombs we've been living in. Unbind us from the grave cloths. Take the stone away from our hearts and minds. Lord this is the only way we can truly face what's ahead of us. This is the only way we can endure to the end. This is the only way we can have the life to carry to the nations. We acknowledge we have been in a tomb and cannot leave it without your help. Help us, resurrect us. Wake us up from our sleep. Give us your light so we can rise up to our destinies. And Lord unbind us from anything that is holding us back. Tear it away so we can shake off these grave clothes and live by your power.

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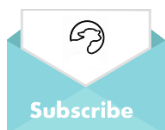
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[Maranatha Mirror Messages](#)

[mmirror.net](#)

maranathamirror18@gmail.com

586-530-6983 (text or call)



THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN

