

## Gratitude at the Graveside

### Scripture Reading — John 11:38-44

*Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me." — John 11:41*

One of the most striking things about Jesus' raising of Lazarus from the dead is the intimacy of this story. Jesus' human connection of friendship, caring, and grief with Mary and Martha over Lazarus's death shows that Jesus is like us. Jesus built friendships. He expressed feelings and emotions. He experienced sorrow and empathy. Further, I believe that when Jesus cried out for Lazarus to come from the tomb, that cry rose from a grief not only for his friend but also for all humanity stuck in death's grip. As he stood before that tomb of death, Jesus' heart broke for you and me too.

But death and grief don't win the day here. They don't have the last word. God is the one whose breath animates every living thing. And Jesus the Son is so intimately connected to the Father that there's no doubt about the Father hearing his prayers. Jesus prays aloud for the benefit of those around him: "Father, I thank you that you have heard me."

Then Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. With the power of God, Jesus looks death square in the face without fear, though he knows how frightened we are by it. Jesus can stand at the graveside with gratitude because he knows God's plan to bring us life through his own death. And today he wants you and me to know it too. Believe the good news.

### Prayer

*Help us, living God, to find comfort and joy in the good news that you have shattered death's grip on us through your Son, Jesus. We pray in his name. Amen.*

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