



Week 1 – Sunday 22 February - Jesus is tested in the wilderness.

Week 2 – Sunday 1 March - Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

Week 3 – Sunday 8 March - The Samaritan woman

Week 4 – Sunday 15 March - Jesus heals a man born blind.

Week 5 – **Sunday 22 March - The Death of Lazarus**

Week 6 – Sunday 29 March *Palm Sunday* - The betrayal, judgement and death of Jesus

Holy Week: (Monday 30 March to Saturday 4 April)

Week 5 – Sunday 22 March

HOME GROUPS AND CLASSES GUIDE:

1. Open in Worship and Prayer: this is to invite God into the meeting. For example, you can light a candle, sing together, or use a YouTube Hymn or song.
2. Open your Bibles and read the Bible verses for this week (take turns?) see below.
3. Reflect on the Bible verses and the reflection written by a Minister or Lay Preacher.
4. Connect with each other and take the reflection deeper by answering the Questions.
5. Works out: What have we learned that we can apply in our lives in this session? Keep each other accountable for promises made or important steps taken. Pray for and over each other (after taking prayer requests).

WORSHIP SONG:

Name Above All — Living Lamb | Worship Ballad for Prayer

https://youtu.be/kOqNYN0p4fM?si=YQ9dVH6SYNtQB__B&t=73

BIBLE READINGS:

First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Ezekiel 37:1-14	Psalm 130	Romans 8:6-11	John 11:1-45

The Death of Lazarus

John 11:1-45 New International Version

11 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) ³ So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.” ⁴ When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” ⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two

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more days,⁷ and then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.”⁸ “But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?”⁹ Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world’s light.¹⁰ It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light.”¹¹ After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.”¹² His disciples replied, “Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.”¹³ Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.¹⁴ So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead,¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”¹⁶ Then Thomas (also known as Didymus^[a]) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

Jesus Comforts the Sisters of Lazarus

¹⁷ On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.¹⁸ Now Bethany was less than two miles^[b] from Jerusalem,¹⁹ and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother.²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.²¹ “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died.²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”²⁴ Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”²⁷ “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”²⁸ After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.”²⁹ When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him.³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet entered the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him.³¹ When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.³² When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.³⁴ “Where have you laid him?” he asked. “Come and see, Lord,” they replied.³⁵ Jesus wept.³⁶ Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

³⁸ Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.³⁹ “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”⁴⁰ Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”⁴¹ So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me.⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”⁴³ When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.

The Plot to Kill Jesus ⁴⁵ Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MCSA Conference Theme: “Relocated and Repositioned for Mission and Ministry. The Other Side Awaits.”• BMC Sub-theme for the series: Shaped for Lent moving toward Holy Week• Bible Reflections Theme Focus: From the Tomb to Testimony – When God Delays but Does Not Deny	Bible Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psalm 130 – Waiting on the Lord from the depths• Ezekiel 37:1–14 – God breathing life into dry bones• Romans 8:6–11 – The Spirit who gives life• John 11:1–45 – Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life
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The story of Lazarus is not only about resurrection; it is about relocation. Lazarus moves from life to death and back to life; Martha and Mary move from faith shaped by expectation to faith shaped by encounter; and Jesus draws the community from mourning into mission. What begins in a home marked by love and friendship ends in a public sign that redefines how life, death, and hope are understood.

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The tomb becomes a threshold, not an ending, a place where God's glory interrupts despair and repositions faith for a new future. Jesus deliberately delays. Love does not rush, but it also does not abandon. In Wesleyan spirituality, this delay speaks powerfully of prevenient grace, God is already at work even when God feels absent, silent, or late.

Martha names her theology honestly: "*Lord, if you had been here...*" It is a confession shaped by loss, disappointment, and unfulfilled expectation. Yet Jesus does not rebuke her grief; instead, He repositions her faith. He moves her from belief in a distant, abstract resurrection toward trust in a present, embodied Savior:

- "*I am the resurrection and the life.*"

Here, resurrection is no longer merely an event at the end of time; it is a person who stands before her, speaks her name, and calls her into deeper trust.

Psalm 130 gives voice to those who wait in the depths, not passively, but with active, disciplined hope. "*Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord*" is not a prayer of resignation, but of longing and expectation. This waiting is faithful waiting, rooted in the conviction that God hears even from the lowest places.

Ezekiel 37 expands the horizon further: God does not only revive individuals but restores whole communities who have declared themselves dried up, cut off, and beyond hope. Resurrection, in this vision, is communal, public, and restorative, a divine act that rebuilds identity, purpose, and vocation.

Paul, writing in Romans 8, presses the truth even deeper: resurrection life is not postponed to eternity alone; it is already breaking into the present through the Spirit who dwells within believers. To live "*according to the Spirit*" is to participate now in the life that raised Jesus from the dead. This is sanctifying grace at work, shaping hearts, renewing minds, and empowering lives that reflect God's future in the present.

Lent, then, is not simply a season of denial, but a season of reorientation toward the life God is already breathing into us.

In raising Lazarus, Jesus does something profoundly communal and deeply missional. He invites the people to roll away the stone, and later commands them to unbind him and let him go. Resurrection belongs to God alone, but liberation becomes the shared responsibility of the community. The miracle does not end with new life; it continues with restored dignity, freedom, and reintegration. Mission begins where the Church participates in God's life-giving work by removing obstacles, unbinding what constrains, and making space for others to live fully.

For the Church in Lent, this text decisively repositions us:

- *from spectators of suffering to participants in God's restoring work*
- *from grief that paralyses to hope that mobilises*
- *from waiting at tombs to witnessing on the other side*

Lent, therefore, is not merely preparation for Easter; *it is training in resurrection-shaped living*. It teaches us how to trust while stones are still in place, how to believe while tears are still falling, and how to live as people of hope even while tombs remain open. The other side awaits, not only after death, but in the faithful, courageous, Spirit-filled lives we are called to live now.

GROUP QUESTIONS :

(Choose 3 – 4 reflection questions depending on group size and time)

1. **Jesus delayed before going to Lazarus:** Where have you experienced God's delay in your life or faith journey, and how has that delay reshaped you?
2. **Martha believed in resurrection "on the last day.":** What would it mean for you to trust Jesus as *resurrection and life right now*, in your present struggles?

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3. **Jesus asked the community to roll away the stone and unbind Lazarus:** What “stones” or “grave clothes” might the Church today be called to remove so that others can live freely?
4. **Ezekiel speaks of dry bones becoming a living community:** Where do you sense God calling Bryanston Methodist Church to speak life into places that feel dry, exhausted, or hopeless?
5. **Mission follows resurrection:** How does being “relocated and repositioned” by Christ change how you see your calling in the world this Lent?

DAILY MEMORY VERSE AND PRAYER

MONDAY, March 23

Memory Verse: “See, *this boy is alive.*” — 1 Kings 17:23

Prayer: God of life, when hope feels lost, remind me that You still hear our cries and restore what seems gone.

TUESDAY, March 24

Memory Verse: “*Made us alive together with Christ.*” — Ephesians 2:4–5

Prayer: Merciful God, thank You for Your grace that raises me into new life. Help me live as one made alive in Christ.

WEDNESDAY, March 25

Memory Verse: “*He is God not of the dead, but of the living.*” — Matthew 22:32

Prayer: Faithful Lord, strengthen my trust when answers seem delayed. Teach me to hope in You, the God of the living.

THURSDAY, March 26

Memory Verse: “*Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.*” — 1 Samuel 16:12

Prayer: Lord, You see beyond appearances. Shape my heart to discern Your call and serve with love and humility.

FRIDAY, March 27

Memory Verse: “*For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain.*” — Philippians 1:21

Prayer: Sovereign God, give me courage to trust You through suffering and surrender my life fully into Your hands.

SATURDAY, March 28

Memory Verse: “*After three days he will rise again.*” — Mark 10:33–34

Prayer: Redeeming God, strengthen me to follow Jesus faithfully, even when the road leads through the cross.

FAMILY TIME BY MAGOGODI NKUNA

Week 5

Opening song: Thath’indawo yakho - Mpumi Mtsweni

Read: John 11:17-38

When Things Don't Go Our Way Have you ever felt like you did everything right, but things still went wrong? Maybe you studied hard but failed the test, or practiced netball every day but didn't make the team. It's normal to feel disappointed and wonder: "Jesus, where are You? Why didn't You help me?" In the Bible, sisters Mary and Martha felt the same way. Their brother, Lazarus, was dying, so they sent for Jesus. They expected Him to rush over and heal him. Instead, Jesus arrived four days "late." By then, Lazarus had died. Martha said to Jesus, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died." She was heartbroken and probably thought Jesus had missed His chance to help. What the sisters didn't know was that Jesus had a much bigger miracle in mind. He didn't do what they expected; He did something far greater! Instead of just healing a sick man, He showed His power over death by calling Lazarus right out of the grave. So, when you don't make the team or are excluded from a friend group, it doesn't mean Jesus has forgotten you. Sometimes, He says "wait" or "not this time" because He is growing something even stronger inside of you, or preparing a different path you can't see yet.

Reflection time For Preteens (Ages 10–12)

1. Can you think of a time when you prayed for something to happen right away but it didn't happen when you wanted it to? How did that make you feel?
2. Can you see anything good that came out of it? Maybe you learned a new skill, met a different friend, or became more patient?

For Teens (Ages 13–18)

1. When Jesus didn't show up for four days, Mary and Martha felt abandoned. When you feel like your prayers are being met with silence, does it change how you view Jesus?
2. We often ask Jesus to "fix" our problems (like Martha asking for a healing). What if we prayed a different prayer like asking for courage or wisdom as we go through challenges?

Family Activity

The "Trust" Jar Activity

1. Write it Down: Think of something that hasn't gone your way recently and write it on a piece of paper.
2. The Hand-Off: Place your paper inside a jar or a box. This represents you giving that disappointment to Jesus, just like Mary and Martha had to leave Lazarus in His hands. 3. 4. The Prayer: Ask a parent or guardian to pray over the jar. Prayer Focus: Ask Jesus to give everyone wisdom to understand His path, courage to keep going when things are hard, and patience to wait for His perfect timing to prevail.

Close in Prayer.