

Today we're celebrating All Saints Day when we're asked to remember all the saints who have gone before us.

This can be a time of mixed emotions as we remember the loss our Christian family members and friends – it is good recall those precious memories that we all carry ,even though they can be tinged with sadness.

We're going to be looking at the Biblical narrative of the raising of Lazarus – we'll start with a video clip of the events...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JR1ku3kE2IY>

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<iframe width="853" height="480"  
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2IY" frameborder="0" allow="autoplay;  
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You may recall that I have mentioned before that when you're on an Ordination Course (especially in your last year) there's advice given to ALL the students about if you're ever going to be given a church to look after – be wary of a church with a graveyard....

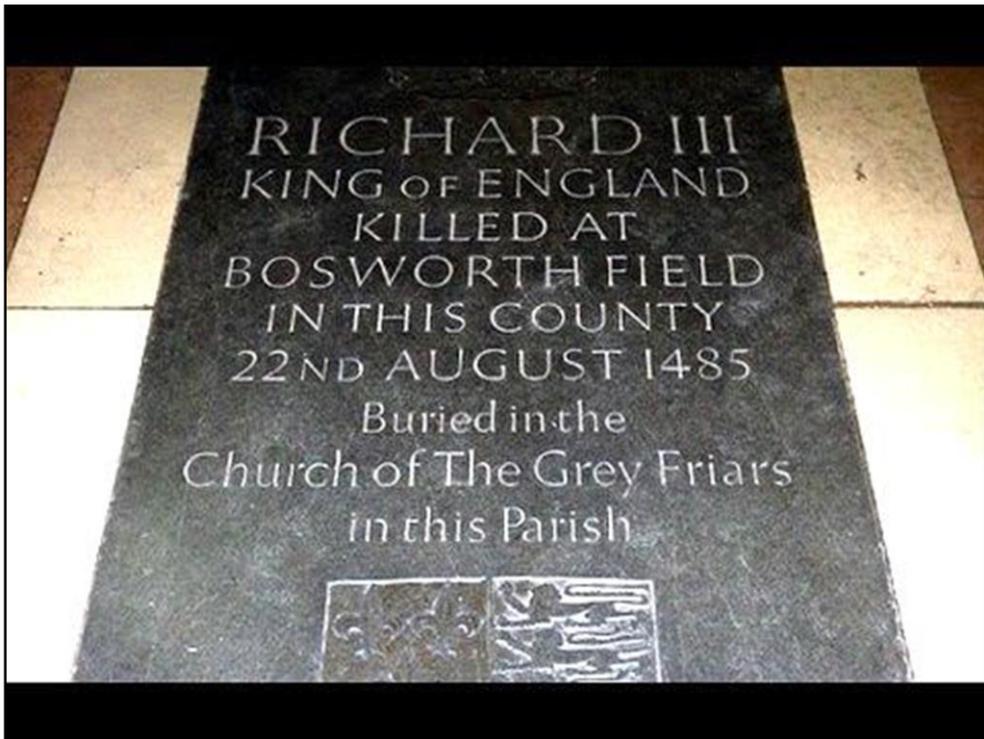


‘Cos moving a gravestone causes a stink!!

And in more ways than one...here’s a relatively recent example...



Does anyone know what this is?
It's what turned out to be the grave of Richard III
in Leicester and when they uncovered his
bones...



It caused a stink!!

Why?

Because no end of places all want to reintern his remains including York Minister.



The Tomb of Lazarus

So back thinking about the raising of Lazarus –
and this photo is suppose of the inside of his
tomb



And this is it from the outside – not so much a stink now as a tourist trap?

Except the snag is that it now forms part of a Mosque and so the Christians have had to build a church nearby & it's in the contested West Bank.

So in many ways the tomb of Lazarus is still causing a stink.



The thought of Lazarus's death and the thought of his being resurrected brought a mix of grief, disbelief and a sense of crossing social taboos to his two sisters – move the stone and there would be a stink!



So the stone gets moved away and...



Have you ever thought what the tomb looked like from the inside looking outwards? Lazarus would have woken perhaps not aware of where he was with the light to guide him out of the darkness; out of the place of death.



Everyone braced themselves for the nasty smell – all are ready for the smell, not for the sensation that happened.



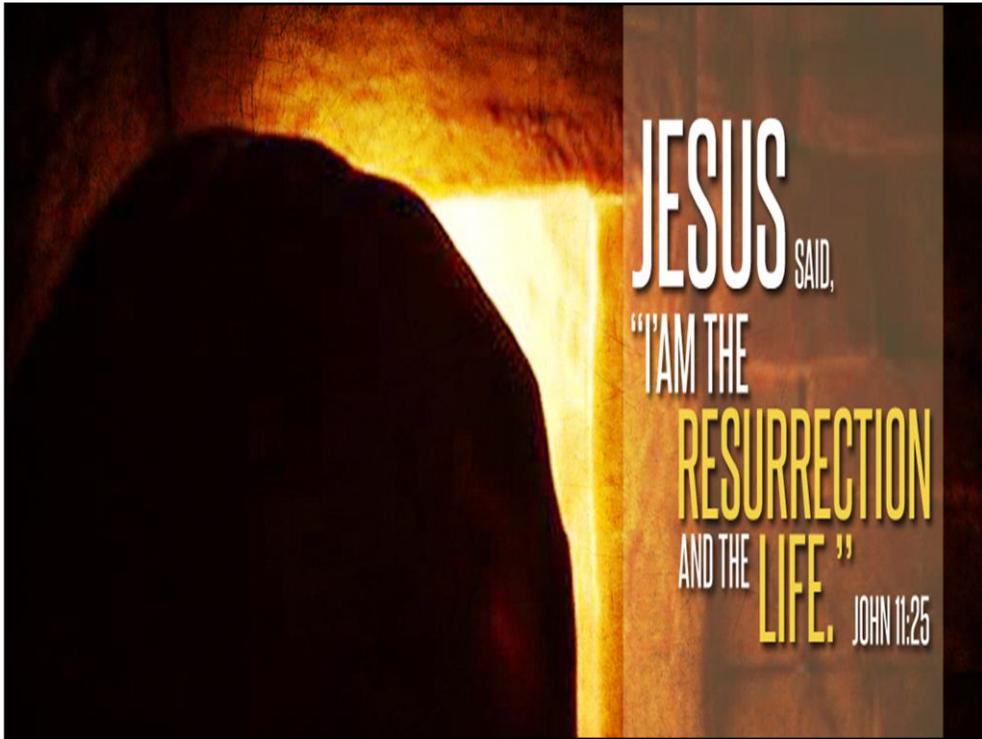
It's not a smell that comes out, but Lazarus. Jesus calls Lazarus by name – otherwise every dead body in the tomb would have been raised to life!

This raising to life would cause a stink! And the verses which follow tell us of the decision by Caiaphas the High Priest that Jesus must die.

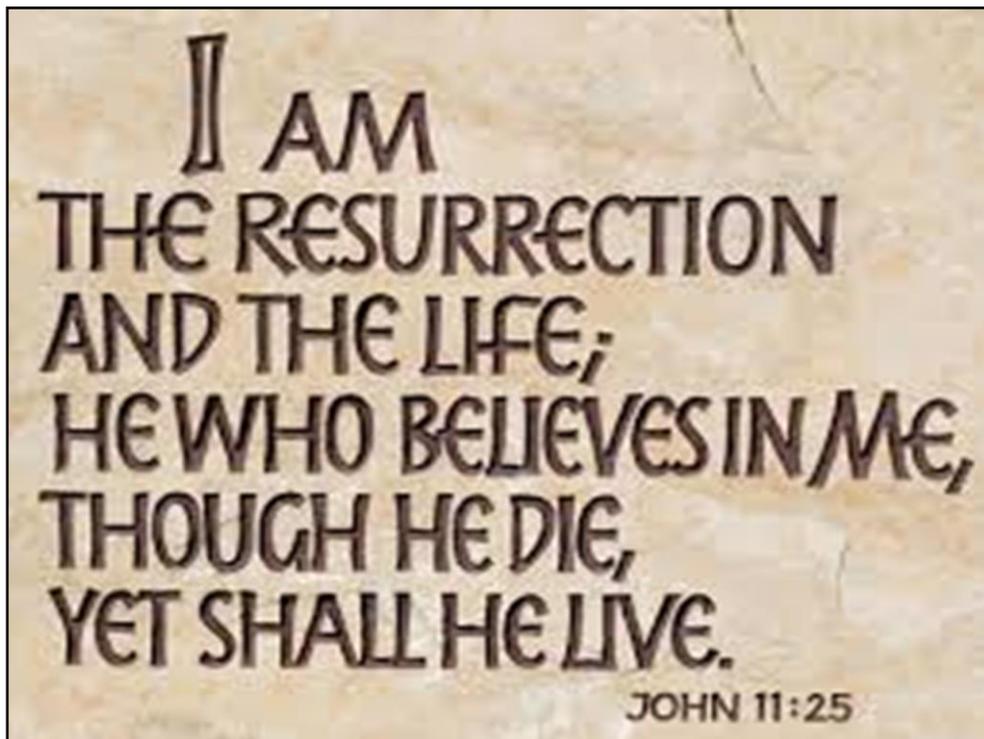
The new life on earth Jesus brought to Lazarus sealed the death sentence for Jesus – Jesus's death that showed us the difference between raising to life and resurrection.



The family would have been ecstatic – the brother who died was restored to them. Lazarus was a living breathing testimony to the power of God at work in Jesus & more so Jesus being God.. The 'I Am' was proven by Lazarus's resurrection.



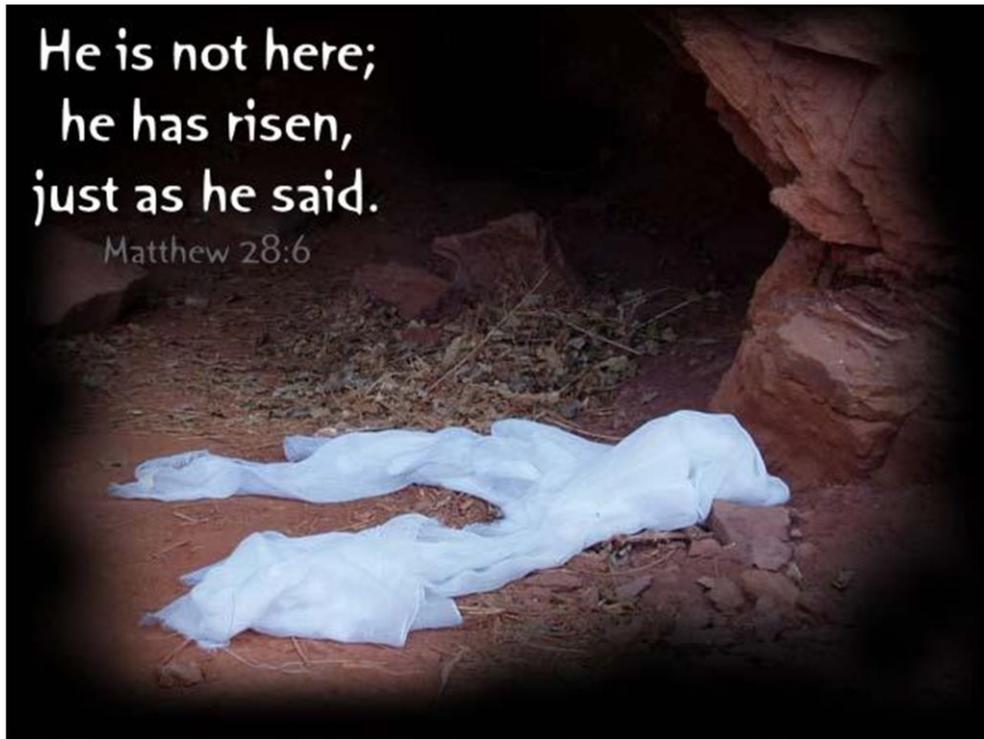
Jesus had declared His Divinity in referring to Himself as 'I am..' the name by which God spoke of Himself to Moses in Exodus 3.



The sisters believed – but how many others didn't believe?

For how many was it or is it too hard to believe that God is God and that through faith in Jesus there is life eternal?

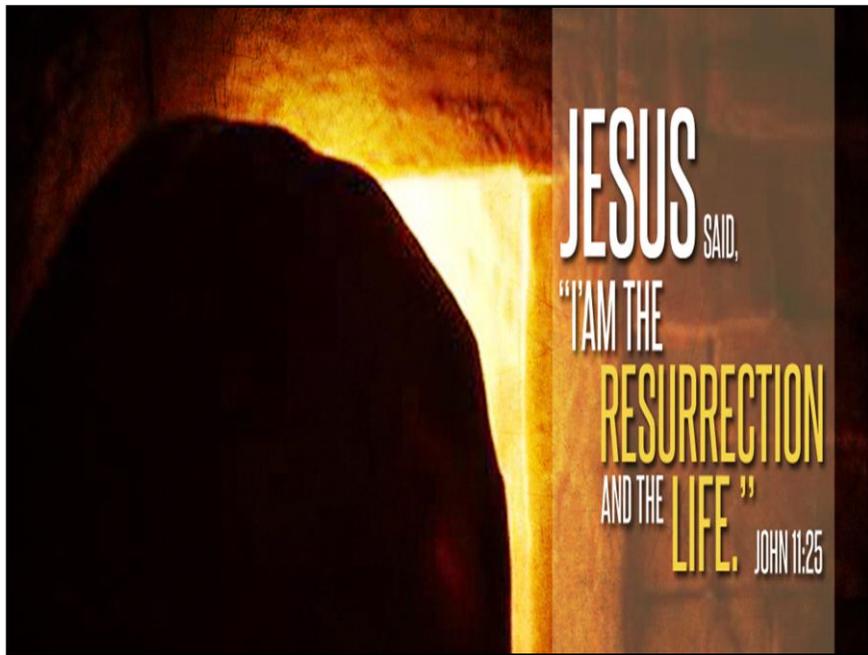
The obvious and painful events of the loss of a loved one can swamp out the hope and truth of Eternity with Jesus



Jesus in raising Lazarus was acting out of compassion and love PLUS it was a prophetic act foretelling was going to happen after Good Friday, except for one major difference.

Jesus, was not only alive but resurrected, he was ***changed***. His body was transformed into what Paul calls a glorified body. Jesus never died again as Lazarus would have done.

However, Jesus in His resurrection was raised to **immortal** life...that is the same Eternal Life the saints who have gone before us are enjoying and will be ours too with our personal acknowledgement of Jesus as our Saviour.



How much do we, do you *really* let that this life Eternal, our life Eternal changing shape our lives?

If we restrict the impact of Christ's new life in our lives and our sure Hope of Eternity with Him, how much does this diminish its effect in those we meet?

We have to follow Jesus's command for those we meet and **"Take off the grave clothes and let him go."** – to bring release to all that would bind others in their darkness; to be the means of the power of liberty to the captives.

This is our mission, our vocation, our call from the One who is the Resurrection & the Life and in doing so we walk in the footsteps of the countless saints of ages past.