

2022-05-01 ... 6.30pm Evensong Sermon ... Revd Canon Judy Hunt

John 11: 27 – 44

'Questions and the raising of Lazarus'

Introduction ...

Tonight's reading from John 11 – the raising of Lazarus – has some questions within it ... and perhaps even more questions arise from it.

Questions within it:

From Jesus: 'Where have you laid him?'

'Did not I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?'

From Others: 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Questions ...

And only the first practical matter question was obviously, clearly answered – where had the body of Lazarus been laid?

So the other two questions perhaps still remain.

Questions from it ...

And many questions that we might want answered:

Why did Jesus delay for 2 days?

Was it to link to his resurrection?

If so – why not explain that?

Why did he not heal Lazarus at a distance?

He did it for others, why not for his friend?

Why did Jesus weep and why was he so deeply disturbed?

Was it for Mary and Martha?

For Lazarus?

For himself?

PTO

Did Lazarus want to re-enter life in this world? And how soon after this did he die? For his coming back to life was not the same as Jesus' resurrection to new life.

So many questions ... questions to which we won't/can't find answers.

We do know that – in John's Gospel – this is the moment in which Jesus' fate with the religious leaders was sealed ... a little later in the chapter **verse 53** we read:

'So from that day on they planned to put him to death'

There is here a very clear message of the opposition that 'good' faces in our world, which in itself could raise another question.

Application ...

What, then, might we take from this passage tonight?

I'll offer a few thoughts, with a pause between each for reflection:

It's ok to question ... but sometimes we may need either to sit with, or wrestle with the question for a long time before we get even a glimmer of insight into an answer ...

It can be really difficult to understand the timing of events. God is not remote from our struggles – but shares them.

Jesus ultimately offers us life – free from the hurts or restrictions that others or we ourselves impose upon ourselves. Think of the closing words of our reading:

'Unbind him and let him go'