



# REFLECTIONS

January 17, 2016

**Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. "Take away the stone," he said. 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."**

*John 11:38-39, 44*

## Invitation to Participate

One can't help but wonder how they felt that day. They gathered to comfort their friends at a time of loss. There were no expectations, only the expression of compassion and love. So, they must have been stunned by the events that unfolded. And they had taken part in it.

Jesus heard the appeal of Martha and Mary to come heal their brother who was seriously ill. Yet Jesus chose to stay away for two more days. He told his followers that Lazarus would not die, but through events surrounding his illness, God would glorify his son. Then after two days had passed Jesus and his followers set out for Bethany to be with his dear friends in their time of grief.

Most of us are familiar the scene. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. But most of us have not recognized that Jesus did not act alone. Oh, he was capable of acting alone. After all, *[through] him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.* (John 1:3) But he didn't. He invited the crowd to participate. "Take away the stone," he instructed them. And they did.

Then, wrapped in grave clothes, Lazarus came out. So the duties of the mourners were not yet complete. "Take off the grave clothes and let him go," Jesus said. And they did. *Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him.* (John 11:45)

So I pause to wonder. Are you and I standing before someone's spiritual tomb? Has Jesus issued an invitation for you and me to take away the stone for him to free the spiritually dead? And has he invited you and me to remove the grave clothes for Jesus to reveal a life restored? I wonder.

Jesus invited the mourning Jews to participate when he raised Lazarus from the dead. Might it be that Jesus is calling you and me to pitch in too, to roll away the stone so the spiritually dead may rise. And then to remove the grave clothes to reveal spiritual life restored. Wouldn't it be an honor to be invited to participate in raising the dead?

I think we have been.

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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