Take Away The Stone

Have you ever been asked by the Lord to do something outrageous? 

Jesus had given a promise to Mary & Martha.

**John 11:4 (ESV)**

But when Jesus heard it he said, “This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”

They all believed that Jesus could do a miracle if Lazarus was still alive. “If you had been here”

No one had ever died in Jesus’ ministry, but now that Lazarus is dead so is the faith that He can raise the dead.

**John 11:37 (ESV)**

But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?”

**John 11:15 (ESV)**

and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.”

**John 11:38-44 (ESV)**

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39 Jesus said, “Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days.” 40 Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.”

Thought - Our confidence in prayer comes not from what we pray or how we pray but to whom we pray.

43 When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out.” 44 The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

Jesus was and is the giver of life. He brings a second birth to those who are dead in sin. But his gift of forgiveness and the indwelling Spirit do not create instant, perfect Christians. We enter Christ’s kingdom with many of the old wraps still around us. Old habits and sinful behaviors, painful memories—all these require gentle, loving removal. Like grave clothes, we no longer need them. We need fellow Christians and Christ’s power to unwrap us. It is Jesus’ command that our healing be complete. Who can you help "unwrap"?

This is exactly what Jesus has done for us in an eternal sense – raised us up and unbound us from slavery to sin and released us – set us free.

**Ephesians 2:1-10 (ESV)**

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at
work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.  But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.  For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.  For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

45 Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

Luke 16:31 (ESV)
He (Abraham) said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’ ”

John 5:24-25 (ESV)
Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. 25 “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.