

## Passion Sunday Reflection – 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Passages for reading ; Ezekiel 37: 1-14 and John 11: 1-45

“We live in strange times”; how many times have you heard that, said it, or thought it in the last few weeks?

Throughout history there have been strange times; and often with people knowing less of what is going on than we do today.

When I began to read the John passage; - “Now a certain man was ill” the situation many people are living in was brought back to mind.

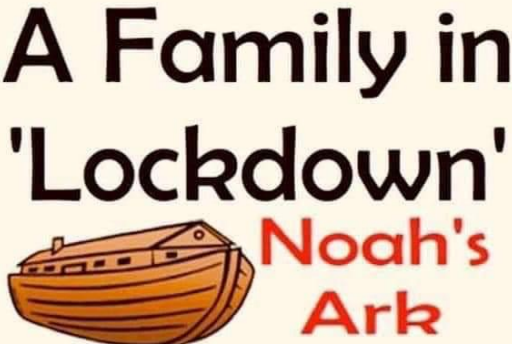
We do not know what illness Lazarus had; it is a disturbing story in terms of Jesus delaying his arrival. It can seem as though there is but one illness around at the moment and that is not true. Many of you reading this will be living with other illnesses; all of you will know people living with other illnesses. For each we pray.

There is one other person by the name of Lazarus mentioned in the Bible and he was in one of the parable’s Jesus told (Luke 16:19ff)

The name Lazarus means, “Whom God helps” or “God has helped”.

The two passages I have listed above are set for today. They are messages of hope for they are stories of God turning what looks a desperate situation into a situation of new life. Sadly, not all people who are ill, for whom we pray, will recover in this earthly life but may they know the peace of God in the closing moments/days of their life.

A few weeks ago the staff, when praying together, read the Ezekiel passage, as it was the passage of the day in the prayer handbook. We then reflected upon it together. Each of us contributed a different and relevant thought.



**A Family in  
'Lockdown'  
Noah's  
Ark**

40 days, 40 nights in the Ark, Noah's family was confined in a boat. There were no windows, no balconies, no terraces, no internet, no phone, no TV, no Youtube, Facebook or Netflix. They only heard the rain. They spend their time praying, loving each other and caring for the animals. God the father took care of them as Noah was a man of faith and obeyed His word. Remember even though there is out there an ocean of viruses and life seems like a stormy ride, Our God is watching over us! Do not be Afraid! Be faithful to Him and wait patiently. The rain will stop one day. A rainbow will shine and all be well again.

Society that has been becoming more separated is being brought closer together in support and care of others. Over 500,00 people have responded to the call to be NHS support volunteers. There would have been millions standing on doorsteps applauding and banging drums, saucepans on Thursday evening at 8.00pm in support of NHS workers. “We are in this together” is another phrase of the time.

This morning, Friday, I was sent the picture I have included. It has a real message for all today; it speaks of how we are called to live in isolation - for a time; that God is with us, and there is a reminder that where God is there is hope.

Each of us has been a Lazarus, helped by God and sometimes we did not even realise it. Think back on your time of being a Lazarus.

### Time to Reflect

Take time to read the gospel passage slowly and prayerfully again.

Is there a word or a passage that stands out to you?

Pause to spend time with that word/ passage.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

If Jesus were stood before you what would you like to ask him?