



**Daily** Bible readings, a memory verse and a prayer for individual contemplation  
**Weekly** worship song, reflection and small group questions

**ENCOUNTER GOD TODAY!**

*Living a life of purpose in these unprecedented times*

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 1 Thessalonians 5:22 (Conscience) **Sunday 22 August**
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Sunday 8 August

**Week 2**

Faith, believing all will be fine when common sense tells me otherwise

**BIBLE READING:**

**Sunday 8 August**

**John 11:1-48 esp. v 17-26** (Faith)

*17 On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. 18 Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, 19 and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. 21 "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*



Let's worship our God with the following You Tube song:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jll\\_wBYJmbA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jll_wBYJmbA) Juanita du Plessis - Four days late

## *Reflection* by Rev Gavin Landers

John 11 contains the 7<sup>th</sup> “I am” statement found in John – the 7<sup>th</sup> time when Jesus uses the name of God – “*eyeh*” in reference to himself; a 7<sup>th</sup> declaration that Jesus is the Creator God; the sovereign and transcendent God who made his presence known to Abraham; the One who is the Deliverer, Guide, Judge, Grace and Mercy Giver. It is found in John 11 in the story of the raising of Lazarus. The sisters of Lazarus cry out to Jesus to help their brother who is critically ill. However, Jesus delays responding to this cry and by the time he does respond, Lazarus has been dead for four days. Jesus then uses this incident to open many up to new and breath-taking perspectives on God and on life; offering the world a message that God is also beyond the earthly realities of reason, logic and science. These perspectives call for unwavering faith in God in the times when life doesn't make sense.



Firstly, in Jesus' delay, note how care and concern and love are expressed amongst family and friends. Chapter 11:3 tells us that the sisters sent word to Jesus that Lazarus was sick. Verse 20 tells us that Martha went out to meet Jesus. Verse 28 tells us that Jesus was asking for Mary. In verse 31 we are told that those comforting Mary in the house followed her. In this time of trauma, suffering and death, instead of it causing people to shut themselves up with their suffering and pushing people away, people turned to each other and gathered in the presence of care, concern and love. In Jesus' absence or delay, opportunity is given and taken for others to step into the gap and be Jesus for those who need Jesus most. In this there is the breath-taking opportunity to offer or seek concern, care and love from friends and family when Jesus seems most absent.

Note secondly that in delaying his presence to the moment of crisis, time is opened up for people to feel their anxiety, helplessness, loss and grief. Jesus' delayed response causes us to take time to experience anxiety, helplessness, loss and grief, because healing can't come to us in any other way. Jesus doesn't rush to “fix” our pain, because healing is often a longer process than we would want it to be and rushing anxiety, helplessness, loss and grief doesn't make our pain and loss any easier to bear.

True comfort for our suffering comes when we take time to grieve. Another new and breath-taking perspective on life offered while Jesus has not yet responded.

Thirdly, note that although from Mary and Martha's perspective Jesus was four days late, we discover that He is in fact right on time. Being “four days late” gave others new insight into Jesus' compassion and his promise that after death, you can expect Jesus' work to continue in a way that brings life. Imagine what this compassion did for those who were witness to it? Imagine what this resurrection did for Lazarus in this life as well as when he was once again confronted by the reality of death? New and breath-taking experiences of life and of God.

Jesus heard Mary and Martha's cry. Jesus was four days late but right on time. In being late, Jesus opened up new and breath-taking perspectives on God and on life. Let our faith in God not waver in those moments when life doesn't make sense.



Let's worship our God with the following You Tube song:  
<https://youtu.be/8gfGPUahgXk> Brandi Carlile - Right on Time (Lyrics)

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever been in deep need of Jesus' rescue that has come through the presence of another who has expressed care, concern and love?
2. Have you ever been given the opportunity to be God's presence to those who need him most?
3. Have you ever taken the opportunity to be God's presence for those who need him most?
4. Can you attest to either the danger of rushing the healing and restoration process or the value of the slowness of anxiety, helplessness, loss or grief being relieved?
5. Jesus was four days late but right on time... can you attest to this?



## DAILY BIBLE READING:

### Monday

#### Memory Verse:

"Stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

*Prayer: Dear Father, let me not be moved from your presence and work. Amen*

### Tuesday

#### Memory Verse:

"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you" (Isaiah 26:3).

*Prayer: Father, thank you for the offer of peace found in a life of trust. Amen*

### Wednesday

#### Memory Verse:

"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Timothy 4:16)

*Prayer: Father may my perseverance save me and be a witness to the world. Amen*

### Thursday

#### Memory Verse:

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

*Prayer: Father, continue the work You have already begun; the work of making a steadfast spirit within me. Amen*

### Friday

#### Memory Verse:

"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him" James 1:12

*Prayer: Father, I long for the crown of life to be received after I have stood the tests of time. Amen*

### Saturday

#### Memory Verse:

"Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways" (Proverbs 4:26).

*Prayer: Father, help me to be steadfast in my path through life. Amen*



It is important for parents to take time to lead the conversations of family time and to be honest with their children in these conversations.

**BY JENNY BLAKE – CHILDREN'S PASTOR**

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### Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> August

**Pray daily:** Set up family time for prayer and devotions and stick to this arrangement. All devotions should always begin by with a prayer. Ask a family member to pray or one of the children.

**Scripture Reading:** John 11:25

Allow children/teens to read out loud for the family.

## Activity/Family Moment:

### Activity: Roll it

- toilet paper x 1 roll

Tip: To prevent injury, make sure kids do not cover the volunteer's eyes, nose, mouth, or throat as they wrap (if there are equal parents to children, have each parent be 'Lazarus' and the child wrap them up with toilet paper).

Give each group a roll of bathroom tissue. Each team either wraps a parent or a volunteer. The others must wrap the volunteer from shoulders to toes with toilet paper. The first group to do so is the winner. Then invite the groups to race to unwrap the volunteer.

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He showed that He has power over death. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." Jesus died on the cross for our sin and rose from the dead. He gives eternal life to those who trust in Him. If Jesus can raise people from the dead, the are 4 recorded in the bible, then why couldn't Jesus help us with our troubles now?

What kind of troubles are you facing now?

Give them over to God and ask God to take care of them.



## THURSDAYS IN BLACK

During Women's Month, we would like to stand and support the women in this country and in our congregation by wearing the "Thursdays in Black" button and wearing black on Thursdays for the month of August.

**PLEDGE:** By supporting 'Thursdays in Black' I stand:

- In protest against systems and societies that encourage violence in any form,
- In solidarity with 1 in 4 women worldwide who face violence in their lives.
- In mourning for men, women and children who are harmed and killed in sexual violence.
- For awareness and information about the challenges of gender-based violence.
- In the hope that a different reality is possible.

By making this pledge I undertake to stand up and make a difference in the world where I live, work and play.

<https://www.thursdaysinblack.co.za/about-0>

**CHALLENGE:** Join us by wearing black along with your small group, family, or colleagues every Thursday and send us a photo of yourselves to [kerryw@bmc.org.za](mailto:kerryw@bmc.org.za) so we can stand together during the month of August.

