



# the Source

*Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...*

I was recently at the Williamson County Courthouse with my mother and daughter. We were admiring the restoration which returned the building to its 1911 grandeur when Mom commented on what looked like a very modern water spout. The docent was kind, but told us that we were marveling at an embarrassing artifact—it was the *old colored water fountain*. We were uncomfortable. The history remained the same, but in that moment, our understanding changed. We recognized that our heritage was both marble floors and separate facilities; that justice and injustice lived side by side.

That illustrates societal sins I've inherited. Beyond that, I admit that I am complicit in some and have benefitted from many more. And it stinks of death. Like Martha, I'm afraid and embarrassed to let Jesus into that part of my heart. I wish he would be content to let me roll a stone over the ugly truths and then comfort me with gentle words about moving on. Instead, he insists that I expose the dark places to the light and allow the Holy Spirit to breathe life into the dead places. This is God's continuing work of sanctification. It is freeing, not just from sin, but for our vocation—for doing Jesus' work here and now.

Jesus told Martha that if she believed she would see the glory of God. This statement had a double meaning. Yes, she would be reunited with her brother and her source of income and status, but she would also participate directly in the chain of events leading to Jesus' death, resurrection, and ultimate glorification. Without another word of dialogue, we see that Martha committed to live out her belief that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world (John 11:27). Will you commit with me to believe Jesus can work through the darkness that we would rather avoid to affect liberation and restoration?

— Jennifer Garen, First Church member

## Consider the Source John 11:38-44

### A Family Affair

As a family, discuss what humility means. Do you think it includes treating others as more important than yourself? Discuss who you may have thought about on Valentine's Day. Did you put a smile on someone's face? Did you wish someone a happy day without needing to hear a happy greeting in return?

What gets in the way of us being humble? Our human instinct is to demand fairness, only giving if we are getting the same in return. What if we lived to encourage, comfort, and love others because we have Christ's encouragement, comfort, and love?

Read Philippians 2:1-8 together. This passage guides us to have the same attitude of humility that Jesus did. Make a plan as a family this week to practice humility. Maybe you will let your brother or sister choose what to play, or you will give up time doing something for yourself to do an act of service for someone else.

*Dear God, Please help us to put others first, just as Christ sacrificed himself for us. Please help us live like Christ and humbly think of others. Amen.*

— Children's Ministry Staff

### Monday: John 11:38-44

A collect (CALL-ekt) is a form of prayer that may have originated to bring all the people's individual petitions together; it follows a five-part structure. Let's write one together to guide our week of study.

- *Address:* To whom are we speaking? A person of the trinity; God the Son.
- *Attribute:* Which characteristic most satisfies our petition? Read the passage again, looking for the attributes of Jesus that are most meaningful to you.
- *Petition:* What are we praying for? Liberation, freedom, reconciliation, restoration.
- *Purpose:* Why are we praying? So that we may live the vocation God is freeing us to live. What is your God-given vocation?
- *Closing:* As Christians, we pray all things through Jesus' name.

### Tuesday: John 11:38—44

Read the passage for the week and open with your prayer from yesterday. Recording your answers and being as concrete as possible:

- What part of your story is fighting the light today?
- What is the context?
- What questions or challenges are raised that you will confront this week?

### Wednesday: John 11:38-44

Reflect on Tuesday's work. Adjust the prayer you wrote on Monday as necessary. Now, reading the passage thoughtfully:

- How did God bring liberation for Martha and Lazarus? Was it at all surprising?
- How does God continue your liberation today? Have you left room to be surprised by God?

### Thursday: John 11:38-44

Continue by opening with your prayer. Are you seeing or hearing God answer? Read the passage again, thinking about your heritage.

- What is a story from your culture that speaks about freedom?
- How does it compare to your situation? How does it compare to our Scripture?
- Offer God thanks for working with people to free them to be children of God.

### Friday: John 11:38-44

As we have done each day, revisit the passage and the prayer from Monday. Prepare your heart to think about the way God has been moving this week.

- Has continued reflection on your Jesus story increased your freedom to do Jesus' work here and now?
- Are you more aware now of others' needs and are you willing to respond?
- What are you being called to do and be?