

7 Ways of Resistance for Lent
Week Five: Revolution
John 11:1-45

It wasn't the urgency of Lazarus' health that moved Jesus.

It wasn't the concern of the disciples for Jesus' life, being so close to Jerusalem, that moved Jesus.

It wasn't Thomas' bold commitment to dying with him that moved Jesus.

It wasn't Martha's confrontation, and even her statement of faith in the resurrection, that moved Jesus.

It was Mary, weeping at his feet.

"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

Martha said the same thing to his face. Martha declared that, "Even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him."

It wasn't Martha's strong faith that moved Jesus.

It was Mary's tears. It was Mary saying, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died," when she fell at his feet.

Jesus wept.

Jesus was disturbed in his spirit, moved by Mary's tears. He asked where Lazarus had been lain, and he had the stone rolled away, and he called out for Lazarus.

Resurrection is revolution. Rising from the dead is a revolution against death.

It is a revolution that starts not in the strong statements of "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and those who live and believe in me will never die."

It is a revolution that starts in the helpless tears, that all hope has been lost, that there are no words that will make this better and that what has already been done is not enough.

It is a revolution that starts because we are moved by another's pain, another's grief, another's hopelessness.

In revolution, there is risk. Jesus calling Lazarus to come out of the tomb unraveled everything the people knew about death. About life. About who really has authority.

Jesus had steered clear of Jerusalem, and nearby Bethany, because he knew when he finally went there, he wasn't coming back. Those with power don't like having their authority undermined, and raising Lazarus from the dead made it clear the religious leaders did not have the authority among the people. The Roman leaders would also be on alert that someone showed more power than Caesar.

Revolution, to circle around, to change our views and our vision, involves risk. There is always change, whether revolving around or revolting against.

Resurrection is both: causing us to change our views on life and death, and revolting against death having the final word.

Resurrection is revolution, because Resurrection is Living HOPE.

“Rebellions were built on hope.” –Jyn Erso, *Star Wars: Rogue One*

“The only thing stronger than fear is hope.” –President Snow, *The Hunger Games*

Worship Ideas for Revolution

- Set up globes and maps on the table, preferably if you have globes or maps that are older and show different country configurations, such as the USSR, or pre-1989 Germany, to show how the world has changed.
- Create a model of the solar system out of fruit, using toothpicks with paper flags to designate each planet revolving around a sun.
- Print off images from the Hubble Telescope in color and display on the table, to show how our understanding of the universe has changed.

Mission Ideas for Revolution

- Learn about the refugee crisis in Syria and Sudan, and how you can help contribute to refugee resettlement and relief
- Use resources from peace organizations to learn about nonviolent ways of resistance
- Invite a refugee or organization to speak to your congregation about their experience and how the church can help

Liturgy

Those who believe, even though they die, will live;

Christ is the Resurrection and the Life.

We believe that Christ is the Messiah, the Son of the living God;

Christ is the Resurrection and the Life.

Christ is the one coming into this world.

Christ is the Resurrection and the Life.

Come, worship Christ, who is coming again;

Christ has died; Christ has risen; Christ will come again.

Prayer of Brokenness/Confession

Living God, we confess that at times we give up. The world is too broken. The world is too unfair. We see injustice and feel helpless to bring about change. We find goodness for a while, but then it is taken away. We sink down into despair and helplessness. Bind us together, O Lord, and remind us that we need one another. When we are dejected, remind us to look to others for hope and help. When others are in despair, remind us to reach out and lift up one another. We are the body of Christ in this world. Remind us that we are not alone, and that You live in us. Give us hope, help us to encourage one another, and grant us peace. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

Blessing/Assurance

Come, give your burdens over to Christ, who has taken upon the yoke for us. Come, find hope and help and healing by loving one another. Come, know that while we may mourn now, joy comes in the morning. Come, know the love of Christ, and find strength in one another for the journey of faith. Amen.

Prayer

God of Hope, You are calling us into a revolution of justice. Where we see enemies, You have called us to love and pray. Where we see our own needs, You have called us to help our neighbors in need. Where we see strangers, You have called us to welcome. Draw us into this revolution of thinking, this revolution of compassion, this revolution that brings true healing and reconciliation into the world. Help us to be living hope for the world, for Your hope lives in each of us. Amen.