Jesus can give us life that death can’t erase. He has the power to do that no matter what the obstacles are that bind us. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead to help us understand the power of God, to help us see that God has control over every kind of death. When Jesus stepped up to the tomb and cried out, “Lazarus, come forth!” Lazarus obeyed.

The voice of Jesus echoes down through the centuries. He cries out again and again, to you and to me: “Come forth from the tombs that imprison you. Come forth to a new life, real life!” Jesus’ voice of authority demands that we come forth from the bondage that shackles us with its death hold.

The emphasis is on life, not just the resurrection. Who wants to be resurrected to the same old meaningless existence? It’s life that people want! This miracle is a sign that Jesus can renew our dead lives.

Sometimes we are bound by gender restrictions. For many years I was dead to the call to do certain types of ministry because I had grown up believing that women were not supposed to do those things. But one day I heard Jesus’ authoritative voice command me to come forth, to throw off the bindings that kept me as silent as the dead Lazarus.

Jesus continues to call us out of our tombs—tombs of sin and doubt, tombs of materialism, sexism, and racism. Without regard to gender, he calls us to use our gifts as God and the Holy Spirit direct.

Prayer: Loving Creator, give us the ability to come forth from the tombs that imprison us, and help us to be all that you intend us to be. Amen.