***Vol 5***

*Session 6*

***The Resurrection of Jesus***

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Introducing the Study

Jesus had completed the work the Father had given Him. He had lived and then died, according to His mission. Just as the kingdom of God reverses the principles of this world—where the poor are rich and the mourners are comforted—the death of Jesus brings life to all who believe in Him.

**How has the death of Jesus been meaningful to you this past week?**

The death of Jesus was not the end; it was a beginning. Though Jesus had died at the hands of the Romans and the Jewish leaders, He had also died according to the plan and purpose of God. But a dead Savior is no Savior at all. Jesus promised to rise from the dead in victory. His followers had given up hope, but God was not finished. Jesus would rise from the dead, validating Jesus’ promise of salvation and the rest of God’s promises as well.

**How does the resurrection of Jesus validate His promise of salvation through His crucifixion?**

Setting the Context

Jesus was crucified on Good Friday, and so many of the events and details surrounding His crucifixion fulfilled prophecies, as “Hearing the Old Testament in Jesus’ Crucifixion” (p. 71) shows. But despite Jesus’ repeated warnings of these events, His followers had scattered, worried that they might be next. With evening coming, the Sabbath was about to begin. So Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy and influential man loyal to Jesus, asked Pilate for Jesus’ body and provided a tomb for His quick burial, which the faithful women around Jesus prepared.

**What are some specific ways the death of Jesus changes our priorities?**

Jesus was dead and in the grave, but the Jewish leaders were still nervous. They knew of the prediction that Jesus would rise from the dead, and they were worried that His followers might steal the body and claim He had risen, further perpetuating the notion that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God. So the leaders asked Pilate to secure the grave, and the ruler agreed. Pilate assigned a Roman guard to the tomb. These soldiers were sure not to let anyone steal Jesus’ body.

Jesus was dead. The tomb was secure. And the hearts and hopes of Jesus’ followers were crushed as Easter Sunday morning crept toward them.

**What do you think it was like for the followers of Jesus between Good Friday and Easter Sunday?**

CHRIST Connection

On Easter Sunday, God vindicated His Son’s perfect sacrifice by raising Him from the dead and beginning the long-promised new creation. Jesus’ first followers did not anticipate or believe in the resurrection at first, but the evidence of the resurrection helped grow their faith into full belief. Likewise, through faith, we are united to Christ and share in the promise of being resurrected in His likeness. Sin’s curse has been removed, death has been defeated, and we are assured of everlasting life with God.

Continuing the Discussion

**Jesus died for our sins, so why was it essential that He also rise from the dead?**

**What are some of the ways our perspective on life should change as Christians in light of Jesus’ resurrection?**

***As a group, read Luke 24:1-8.***

**What are some of the emotions the women might have felt?**

**How would remembering Jesus’ predictions of His death and resurrection have helped the women understand what was going on that first Easter?**

With the exception of John, the disciples scattered during Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion. They were still in hiding on the Sunday morning after the Sabbath. The women, however, had faithfully stood by during Jesus’ agonizing hours on the cross, had helped begin preparing the body for burial, and now were returning to the tomb to finish. They were astonished by what they found—the tomb was open, the guards out of sight, and the body of Jesus gone. Jesus had risen as He had promised, but it would take some time before they and the other followers of Jesus would grasp the implications of this.

***As a group, read Luke 24:9-12.***

**What are some of emotions the disciples might have felt?**

**Why do you think Peter ran to the tomb?**

**Why did news of Jesus’ resurrection come as a shock to so many people?**

Peter had to see it for himself. He had followed Jesus to the high priest’s house and denied Christ three times. If Christ were raised, then he could see Christ again and perhaps make up for his mistakes. When he got there, Peter marveled at what he saw. The tomb was indeed empty. He may not have understood it in the early morning light, but surely afterward Peter was able to appreciate what God had allowed him to experience: proof that Christ had risen.

***As a group, read Luke 24:13-27.***

**Can you relate to these disciples? Have you ever been through an experience only to realize later how God was working in the midst of it?**

**What does Jesus’ response to the disciples reveal about the nature and message of the Bible?**

The two disciples on the road that day knew the facts of what had happened to Jesus, but they failed to make sense of them. They were missing what tied them together. So Jesus

used Scripture to show them what they were missing—that all of the Old Testament had pointed to what they witnessed that week. It was all part of God’s plan to bring salvation to the world. It was all part of one gospel story. And that is the story the Bible tells, with Jesus as its main character. A thread runs through every book of the Bible pointing to Jesus and His work to redeem God’s people, drawing them back to Himself.

MISSIONAL Application

Record at least one way you will apply the truth of Scripture as a believer in the resurrected Christ.

Personal Study 1

**The disciples are to remember the promise of a resurrected Savior**.

***Read Luke 24:1-8.***

Imagine what must have been going through the minds of Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and the others after Jesus was crucified: What next? Is there any hope? How could this have happened? This was so unjust! We thought He was the Messiah.

Because work could not be done on the Sabbath, the ladies had to wait until Sunday to attend to Jesus’ body. They left their homes early in the morning and made their way to the tomb, stricken with grief. The One they loved was dead. Their hopes for God’s kingdom had been dashed. Their teacher was gone.

Everything changed when they arrived at the tomb. The body was gone and grief gave way to confusion. Then they saw two men in “dazzling clothes” and confusion gave way to terror. “Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” they were asked and terror gave way to joy. They realized the truth of Jesus’ promise and joy gave way to mission. So the ladies ran off to tell the disciples.

The women rejoiced at the news. Something extraordinary had happened—death had died and Christ was alive! That’s why the angels asked, “Why are you looking for the living among the dead?”

The angels helped the women understand by using the words of Jesus from before. Calling the women to remember, the angels said, in effect, “Don’t take our word for it, take His! He said to you, ‘The Son of Man must be handed over to sinful men, be crucified, and rise again on the third day.’ ”

The Bible presents a pattern of death following disobedience. Take, for example, Genesis 3 and the sin of Adam and Eve. The next four chapters are marked by death. In Genesis 4, Cain killed Abel. Then Cain feared for his own life (4:14). “Then he died” is the refrain of the genealogy in Genesis 5. Then in Genesis 6–7, death and destruction touched the whole earth as God judged through the flood. Death is an inescapable reality even though God’s creation was originally designed for life to flourish.

So what does the resurrection of Jesus mean? Remember the connection between death and disobedience. If death is defeated, our disobedience has been dealt with. Earthly judges condemned Jesus, the innocent One, to the cross. But the Judge of heaven, God Himself, vindicated Jesus by raising Him from the dead. When we trust the verdict of God over the verdict of men, we too are vindicated along with Jesus. His life is our life. His obedience is counted as our own.

**How can we understand the meaning of the resurrection—not just that it happened but why it happened and what it means?**

**What role do the emotions of awe, wonder, and joy play in our sharing the good news of Christ’s death and resurrection?**

Personal Study 2

**The disciples are to believe the evidence of a resurrected Savior**.

***Read Luke 24:9-12.***

“He is not here, but he has risen!” (24:6). That’s what the angel had told the women, and the news was almost too good to believe. The women had followed Jesus and supported His ministry. They had watched His torture on the cross. And they had come that morning to anoint Jesus’ body only to find a heavenly messenger instead.

How did the women respond to the news of the resurrection? First, they rejoiced. Then, they remembered. Finally, they reported. It would have been understandable for them to stop after the second response and linger at the tomb rejoicing and remembering to prolong the experience. But that’s not what they did. The resurrection was a call to action! News like this had to be shared.

Imagine this scenario: Everything happens just as Luke tells it through verse 8—and then nothing else follows. About two weeks later, Peter and John see Mary Magdalene in the market. Peter asks, “Mary, what happened to you after the death of the Lord? Did you ever get to anoint the body?” “Didn’t I tell you?” Mary replies. “Jesus rose from the dead that morning!” We can’t even fathom the story moving forward in that way. The news of the resurrection is too explosive!

Instead, the women went immediately to find the disciples and share the news with them. But what they found is what we might also find when we report the miracle of the resurrection—skepticism. The disciples knew these women well; they had traveled long miles and hours with them. They were far from strangers, and yet their ravings sounded like nonsense.

These were the disciples who, when they had a chance to stick by their leader and friend, abandoned Him to His death instead. They had scattered like rats when the lights are turned on. Perhaps their doubt came partly from a sense of shame and regret. But, honestly, a resurrection? It was ludicrous. Preposterous. Absolutely unthinkable. So they dismissed the women’s claims as delusions of grief.

Or at least most of them did. But these testimonies, far-fetched as they might be, stuck with at least one of the disciples. Something rose up inside Peter—something he hadn’t felt in several days. Peter, more than anyone else, knew the shame of betraying Jesus.

He had done it not once, not twice, but three times during Jesus’ trials. The hours since then had been absolutely miserable. But the claims of these women? Peter suddenly felt a sense of hope. It wasn’t much, but it was there—at least enough to get him moving.

Sometimes it’s easy for us to forget that when we share the gospel with others, we are asking them to believe something that is ridiculous. Hilariously impossible even. Surely those who hear today will have the same response as the disciples—just a shake of their heads at the foolishness in front of them. But then there will be those like Peter, who though the message sounded crazy, think that maybe, possibly, crazily, it could be true.

When those people take another step forward, what they will find is the same thing any of us find when we begin to seek the truth of Jesus’ resurrection: evidence. Not only the physical evidence of the empty tomb, but eyewitness testimony. Not only eyewitness testimony, but the evidence of lives changed through the risen Christ.

**How is your life evidence of the resurrection of Jesus?**

**How would you respond to someone who claimed the resurrection was ridiculous?**

Personal Study 3

**The disciples are to recognize the prophecies of a resurrected Savior.**

***Read Luke 24:13-27.***

Luke was a careful historian (see Luke 1:1-4). He was also a remarkable storyteller, as we will see throughout this passage. He begins by introducing two travelers on the seven-mile journey from Jerusalem to a village named Emmaus. The two were disciples of Jesus, but were not part of the Twelve. While they traveled, they discussed the events of the weekend—the arrest, trial, sentencing, and death of Jesus (see v. 20).

And then, a lonely traveler joined them and asked what they were talking about. In verses 15-16, Luke gives us “insider information” that the two travelers did not know—the Man who joined them was Jesus. The passive voice of the verb “were prevented” suggests that someone other than the disciples was responsible for their blindness. But who? Although some suggest Satan, it is much more likely that God was the One who prevented them from recognizing the risen Savior. Jesus looked similar after His resurrection as He did before (the women at the tomb recognized Him). So God supernaturally prevented the eyes of these disciples from recognizing Him. They likely assumed this Man was just another worshiper returning home from Jerusalem.

The two disciples could not believe what the Man had asked. What were they talking about? Was He serious? How could anyone not know what had happened in Jerusalem the prior week, especially the last few days? So stunned were the two travelers that they came to a stop. There, in the middle of the road, they stared at Jesus with sadness in their eyes. The two began to rehearse all that had happened concerning Jesus. As you read their account, you will notice that they have the details right. They knew the facts. But you will also notice that they took Jesus on an emotional roller coaster ride: joy, despair, hope, and confusion. Finally, you will notice that they completed their account with a cliffhanger—some had reported that Jesus’ body was gone and that an angel said he was alive. They were missing one critical final part of the story—that the report was true! Jesus has risen!

So how did Jesus respond? What did He share with them that they needed to hear? He pointed them back to Scripture—to the revealed plan of God concerning Jesus that had been set in motion from the beginning. The two already had what they were missing. They had the Scriptures that time and time again pointed to what would happen that past weekend. This is why Jesus said that they were “foolish” and “slow.”

They didn’t need more information; they needed to understand what they already knew—that all of Scripture was one story of the Messiah—the promised Deliverer who would rescue God’s people from bondage. Essentially, without drawing attention to Himself just yet, Jesus told Cleopas and the other disciple, “Everything you think you know is actually about Me. That’s the key. If you get that, you get the Scriptures. And if you get the Scriptures, you get what happened this past weekend. And if you get what happened this past weekend, you get the resurrection. And if you get the resurrection—and trust in Me—you get eternal life.”

For us, that means that everything we read in Scripture must be filtered through the lens Jesus used—Himself and the gospel. Furthermore, God has given us the mission not to present the Bible as a book of virtues or as a moral improvement program, but rather to present the gospel story of the Bible so that others might believe and have eternal life. Our mission is to introduce people to the risen King who has come to redeem, restore, and reconcile people to God.

Our effectiveness in carrying out this mission depends, to a large extent, on how we read the Bible. Do we read it like the Emmaus disciples—collecting information without knowing what to do with it? Or do we read the Bible—all of the Bible—as the testimony to Christ? Do we read and interpret all Scripture in light of Jesus’ death and resurrection?

**What would you say to someone who argues that the Old Testament Scriptures are no longer relevant for believers today?**

**How has God used His Word and His people to remind you of Jesus’ presence when you have faced distressing situations?**