

Unit 27

Jesus the Risen King

Gospels

Memory Verses

“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, I also send you.’ After saying this, he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”

—JOHN 20:21-22

Jesus Is Resurrected

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: Jesus' disciples did not anticipate or believe the resurrection had happened at first, but when they saw the evidence, God opened their eyes to give them confident faith.

BACKGROUND PASSAGE: John 20:1-18

We live in a culture that makes it difficult to decipher truth from lies at times. As a kid, you may have been told coffee would stunt your growth or swallowing a lemon seed would cause a tree to grow in your belly. You may have been told an elf was watching to see if you were naughty or nice or that a rule existed that governed all of humanity stating you couldn't swim until thirty minutes after eating. Doubt and belief always influence behavior. So you either snuck a sip of coffee in doubt or you modified your behavior toward the end of the year in belief.



What did you falsely believe as a child, and what behaviors resulted from it?

Group Time

Point 1: Disbelieving the Resurrection (John 20:1-2)

¹ On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark. She saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.

² So she went running to Simon Peter and to the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said to them, “They’ve taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they’ve put him!”

The culture of Jesus’ day considered the testimony of women to be illegitimate when it came to establishing truth, a notable detail for this account.¹ Not only was Mary Magdalene female, she also was known for a sordid past involving demonic possession. If one were to fabricate a fantastic story with the intent to deceive the world, you wouldn’t choose this witness for your record. You would choose a more reliable witness in the eyes of the community. But John delivered His gospel message like a physician delivering a diagnosis: he honestly presented the facts.



In what ways have you seen God use unexpected or unconventional people for the sake of the gospel?

Mary saw the stone rolled away from the tomb, but she didn’t immediately praise God because she didn’t yet believe Jesus was risen. She wasn’t looking for a miracle; she was expecting to find the dead body of her Lord with the goal of anointing and honoring Him in death (see Mark 16:1-4; Luke 24:1-3). Instead of immediate faith in Jesus’ resurrection, she believed there must have been some human explanation for Jesus’ missing body. She had questions and despaired about her assumed answers. Again, not the kind of witness most people would lead with.



How should we approach questions about Jesus’ resurrection, whether those questions are ours or those of others?

Point 2: Seeing Evidence of the Resurrection (John 20:3-7)

³ At that, Peter and the other disciple went out, heading for the tomb. ⁴ The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and got to the tomb first. ⁵ Stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then, following him, Simon Peter also came. He entered the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there. ⁷ The wrapping that had been on his head was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a separate place by itself.

It had been a difficult three days for the disciples, full of uncertainty, grief, and fear. Having been with Jesus around the countryside, in the city of Jerusalem, in the temple, and in the garden of Gethsemane meant they could be guilty by association for the same crime as Jesus, deserving His same fate. Yet the news from Mary Magdalene brought two disciples racing out of their hiding place to the tomb. For both the women running to the disciples and the disciples running to the tomb, news concerning their beloved Jesus required immediate, zealous action. Love motivates, and although they didn't understand the happenings yet, they still loved Jesus.



What are some actions the empty tomb ought to motivate believers to take today?

The seemingly insignificant pieces of fabric Peter and John found in the opened and empty tomb were preaching the good news of the risen Christ. Jesus' body had not been stolen, as Mary had feared. When Lazarus had been raised from the dead, he walked out of his tomb still wearing his burial wrappings, and he needed help to get the wrappings off. But our Savior emerged from the tomb as the firstfruits of a new kind of resurrection. Death and its trappings could not hold Him.

How would you describe the way you are living in light of Jesus' resurrection?



Enslaved to Sin and Death

Free from Sin and Death

Point 3: Developing Belief in the Resurrection (John 20:8-10)

⁸ The other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, then also went in, saw, and believed. ⁹ For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples returned to the place where they were staying.

John's belief, as described in these verses, should bring us great comfort. He believed the resurrection of Jesus had occurred despite his inability to comprehend it all. There are many truths from Scripture Christians believe that still hold details far beyond our comprehension, and that is okay. This is the essence of faith—"seeing" without seeing. John believed, at first, not because of the weight of prophecy that he had studied or because He saw the risen Jesus but because he saw the empty tomb. Today, we have seen the risen Savior through God's Word, and our faith, if we believe, is a "seeing" faith.

Faith: Biblical faith is the _____, or trusting, in Christ alone for salvation. More than being simply a mental agreement of historical facts, genuine faith begins with a recognition and _____ of the truth of the gospel, followed by a _____ of Christ as Lord and Savior of one's life. Biblical faith is not blind faith, for it rests on the _____ life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Though the disciples had not yet seen Jesus, our salvation was already secure because Jesus is alive. Jesus' resurrection testifies to the validity of Jesus' teachings, the truth of all of Scripture, the sufficiency of His atoning death for sin, and our justification before the living God by faith alone in Christ and His work alone. In Jesus' resurrection, the proclamation goes forth that sin and death have been defeated, and one day, Jesus will return and raise up His followers to be with Him forever.



Voices from Church History

"A marvellous and mighty paradox has thus occurred, for the death which they thought to inflict on Him as dishonour and disgrace has become the glorious monument to death's defeat."²

—Athanasius (c. 293-373)



How should faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ impact our everyday lives?

Daily Study

Day 1: Read Matthew 28:1-8

The earth quaked with the power of the Lord and the sight of His angel struck paralyzing fear into all those who gazed upon him. The angel's proclamations to the women were compelling:

- “Do not fear. I know who you are looking for.”
- “Jesus has done just what He said He would do and has risen.”
- “Come and see the evidence.”
- “Go tell what you’ve seen.”

These words are for us today as well. Come lay your fear at Jesus' feet because He is the solution you've searched for to fill every void in your life. He perfectly keeps His promises. Come and see the evidence of this. See the empty tomb!

Through Jesus' death and resurrection you are made whole, united to Him and reconciled to God. This is the substance of our faith: Death could not hold our Savior in the grave; He has risen victorious. When you've seen what is dead come to life, keeping this life-giving truth to yourself is impossible. Great joy bubbles over, just as it did for the women as they departed the tomb on that glorious Easter morning.



Is your life presently marked by great joy because of the truth of the resurrection? Why or why not?

Day 2: Read John 20:1-2

Mary Magdalene, motivated by her love for Jesus, went to anoint His body with spices only to find that His body was no longer in the tomb. Her assumption that Jesus' body had been stolen was far from the truth.

She had been with Jesus as He taught, but her reaction wasn't to consider Scripture and wonder at His promise to return. Rather than assume the miraculous, she jumped to the most likely conclusion in light of typical human realities and laws of nature.

How often do we ignore that our God can raise the dead, that He reigns over all of creation and is not bound by any impossibility? Yet a moment of doubt or disbelief does not mean unbelief will be our story. Mary later saw the Lord with her own eyes, and she believed.



In what ways do we forget God's power to do the miraculous? How should the way we pray and trust Him change in light of this?

Day 3: Read John 20:3-7

Two men, considered viable witnesses to determine the truth of an occurrence under Jewish custom, came to see the evidence of Jesus' empty tomb for themselves. In a culture where running for fun or exercise was unheard of (and showing one's legs would be considered shameful), the two men ran to the tomb, with John's humorous anecdote that he won the foot race. News about Jesus, even uncertain news, moved them to action.

The physical evidences of Jesus' resurrection were the bandages that would have been secured with ointment, difficult to remove for even the most committed grave robber, and the empty tomb. Who would want to carry a messy, heavy body from a tomb, which by the law's standards would also make them unclean? And who would take the time to fold a piece of cloth lay it in the tomb? The evidence pointed to a far more miraculous conclusion. They wouldn't understand immediately, but the evidence was clear: Jesus had risen!



What evidence of the resurrection is visible in your life?

Day 4: Read John 20:8-10

Jesus predicted His resurrection multiple times while He was with His disciples, yet they did not understand (Matt. 16:4; Mark 8:31; John 2:19).

John saw the empty tomb, and although he didn't fully understand, he believed. God is infinite and mighty, more powerful and wonderful than our tiny minds can imagine. His plan is above ours, and He is holy and transcendent. Yet He has given us His Word to reveal His truth.

Jesus is the Word made flesh, and it is through His resurrection that we may experience reconciliation with God, receiving the Holy Spirit as a down payment of what is to come. It is the Holy Spirit who illuminates Scripture for us, helping us to understand its teaching. We won't understand perfectly until we see Jesus face to face, but we, like John, may believe despite what our minds cannot fully comprehend.



What truths about Christianity do you struggle to comprehend? How does John's faith encourage your own?

Day 5: Read John 20:11-18

Jesus approached the weeping Mary, and rather than announcing His resurrection with fanfare, He instead kindly asked her why she was crying and then revealed who He was by calling her name. She was the first to see the risen Lord, but many would follow. More than five hundred people in total would see our raised and glorified Savior, an undeniable proof of Jesus' resurrection (1 Cor. 15:5-8).

Christ's resurrection is the certification that He has done what He said He would do. There is no greater miracle than moving from death to life, and yet, this is what God offers to us: to put off the old self and be made new by Him (Eph. 4:22-24). Although we don't see Jesus in His resurrected body, we see Him through Scripture and the work of the Spirit to open our eyes in faith to His work. And when our eyes have been opened, we can proclaim with Mary, "I have seen the Lord!"



How have you observed the Holy Spirit renewing your spirit and the spirits of those around you?

UNIT 25

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2. Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989) [eBook].

SESSION 2

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2. D. L. Moody, "The Prodigal," in *The D. L. Moody Collection*, ed. and comp. James S. Bell Jr. (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1997), 346-47.
3. David Wenham, *The Parables of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1989), 101.

SESSION 3

1. Amanda Bible Williams, in *She Reads Truth*, by Raechel Myers and Amanda Bible Williams (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2016), 6-7.
2. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Gospel of Life: Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 107.
3. Quoted in "Only one life, 'twil soon be past..." by Thomas and Elizabeth West, *The West London Life*, December 31, 2018, www.thewestlondonlife.com/single-post/2018/12/31/Only-one-life-twil-soon-be-past.
4. John Bunyan, *Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ*, in *The Select Works of John Bunyan* (London: William Collins, Sons, and Company, 1866), 564.

SESSION 4

1. C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*, in *The Complete C. S. Lewis Signature Classics* (New York: HarperOne, 2002), 503.
2. Athanasius, "Homily on the Resurrection of Lazarus," quoted in *John 11-21*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVb in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007), 13.
3. Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament*, vol. 1 (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 2001), 334.

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2. Sinclair B. Ferguson, *A Heart for God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1985), 155.
3. Louie Giglio, *The Air I Breathe* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2003), 22.

SESSION 2

1. Andrew Wilson, *Unbreakable: What the Son of God Said About the Word of God* (IOPublishing, 2014) [eBook].
2. Kim Huat Tan, *Mark*, in *New Covenant Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015) [Wordsearch].
3. Augustine, *Tractate on John 40.9.13*, quoted in *Mark*, eds. Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall, vol. II in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].

SESSION 3

1. John Stott, quoted in "Between Two Worlds: An Interview with John R. W. Stott," by R. Albert Mohler Jr., August 8, 2011, albertmohler.com/2011/08/08/between-two-worlds-an-interview-with-john-r-w-stott.
2. Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1967, reprint 2008), 73.
3. Anne Askew, *The Latter Examination of Anne Askew (1547)*, ed. John Bale; quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].
4. Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Sword & the Trowel, Volume 6*, vol. 85 in *The Complete Works of C. H. Spurgeon* (Delmarva, 2013) [eBook].
5. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Touchstone, 1980), 181.

SESSION 4

1. See "Diamonds Unearthed," by Cate Lineberry, *Smithsonian Magazine* (December 2006), www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/diamonds-unearted-141629226.
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4. Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1999), 487.

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1. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Sermon on the Paralytic 12*, quoted in *Mark*, eds. Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall, vol. II in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
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UNIT 27

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2. St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, trans. and ed. A Religious of C.S.M.V. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993), 54.
3. N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 252-53.

SESSION 2

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2. Timothy Keller, *Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2013), 297.
3. Elisabeth Elliot, *Through Gates of Splendor* (Doubleday Direct, 1996), 165.

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1. Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew 4.28.18-20*, quoted in *Matthew 14-28*, ed. Manlio Simonetti, vol. Ib in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
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3. Robby Gallaty, *Rediscovering Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015) [eBook].