

# The Resurrection

Last week we talked about Good Friday, the day that marks the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. We looked at the mourning and stark reminder of the cost of sin. As Jesus hung on the cross, his followers were left with a feeling of hopelessness and despair, wondering if their Savior had abandoned them. However, the resurrection brings new hope. The resurrection of Jesus Christ signals the defeat of death, sin, and hopelessness, and ushered in new hope and eternal life. Good Friday and Easter Sunday are two sides of the same coin, representing the depth of despair and the height of hope that are fundamental to the Christian faith. The resurrection is a reminder that even in the darkest of moments, there is always a reason to hope and a powerful testament to the power of faith to overcome sin and adversity.

## The Tomb is Empty

John 20:1-10 pg. 528

*1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." 3 So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. 4 Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. 10 Then the disciples went back to their homes.*

- Mary went to the tomb to finish burial preparations, she expected Jesus body to still be there
- Upon finding the tomb empty she assumes His body was taken, which is what she told the disciples
- They found the burial garments neatly arranged where Jesus' body was laid
  - This implies that when He came back to life He took the time to "make his bed" showing His control over the situation and the intent to not return.
- They believed, but did not understand. This shows they did not fabricate this story to fit their preconceived notions of what the messiah would do
  - They believed the fact He had rose from the dead, but they had not yet related the facts to the scriptures.

## Jesus Appears to the disciples

Luke 24:36-49 pg.516

*36 As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. 38 And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate before them.*

44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

- When Jesus first appears to His disciples they couldn't believe their eyes and reasoned they were seeing a ghost.
  - Jesus address their thoughts, not their words, with his response
  - He has them touch Him, proving he was physically present with them
  - He eats with them, proving He was fully alive and could feel hunger. He hadn't ate since the previous Thursday.
- After proving His resurrection the them physically, He proves His resurrection Biblically

## **Doubting Thomas**

John 20:24-29 pg. 529

24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

- Thomas, not being present when Jesus appeared, doubts the testimony of the other disciples.
  - This is understandable, it defies logic. Jesus was dead, He saw Him die, people don't normally come back from the dead.
  - However, it is not unheard of, Thomas was present when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead a week earlier.
- Later Jesus reappears with the intent to show Thomas his resurrection was real.
  - Jesus does not rebuke Thomas' doubts, He graciously shows Himself to Thomas.
- Through these two appearances He is proving He had physically raised from the dead. He was not a spirit.

## Jesus Appeared to Others After the Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:3-7; 12-28 pg. 559

*3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.*

- Jesus raised from the dead and then appeared to the disciples.
- After that Paul records that Jesus appeared to over 500 people, James, and himself, who at that time, doubters could talk to and verify his testimony.
- This proves Jesus' resurrection was not a hallucination.
  - It is highly unlikely but possible for a small group of people to hallucinate or misunderstand something they saw.
  - It is impossible for over 500 people to have the same hallucination or same misunderstanding of what they saw.

## Jesus' Resurrection is Central

*12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 15 We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.*

- Jesus' resurrection is central to belief in God, the church, and all forms of preaching.
- If Jesus is not raised from the dead then all of it is meaningless.
- If Jesus is not raised we have no forgiveness of sin and no hope of salvation
- If Jesus is not raised he provides hope in this life only, and our self sacrifice and worship is meaningless. We deserve to be pitied.

## The Resurrection Gives us Hope

*20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*

*21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in*

*Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the*

*firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he delivers*

*the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25 For he*

*must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.*

- However since Jesus has been raised from the dead we have hope, even when it seems hopeless
- The resurrection guarantees...
  - A lived with meaning and purpose
  - Forgiveness of sin and salvation
  - Hope in this life and the next
- Since Christ has overcome the cross, sin, and death, then we too also overcome these things through faith in Him.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most pivotal event in Christian history. The empty tomb and appearances of Jesus to the disciples prove that He truly rose from the dead, demonstrating His divine power over death. This event fulfilled prophecy and opened the way for repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations. The story of Doubting Thomas also shows that belief in the resurrection requires faith, but the evidence provided by Jesus can help strengthen that faith. As Christians, we can take comfort, even in dire circumstances, in the fact that Jesus conquered death and provides us with the hope of eternal life.

# Small Group Questions

- In what ways do we see that those that followed Jesus did not understand what He said about coming back after His death?
- Why do you think the disciples struggled to believe in the resurrection, even when Jesus had told them it would happen?
- Is it possible to believe in Jesus but still have questions and doubts? What does that look like for you?
- How does the story of Thomas inform us about Jesus' response to our questions and doubts?
- What information do we have from the story that make it more likely to believe that Jesus rose from the dead?
- Why is Jesus' resurrection the most important part of belief in God?
- How does the resurrection provide hope in the face of suffering or difficult circumstances?
- How does the message of the resurrection empower us to live differently than the rest of the world?
- What is the relationship between hope and perseverance in the Christian life?
- How does the resurrection provide a foundation for our belief in eternal life?
- How can we share the hope of the resurrection with those around us?