



THE BEST DAY EVER!

The worst weekend in history became **the BEST DAY EVER**...when Jesus walked out of the tomb alive. Join us this Resurrection Sunday as we examine the historical evidence for the resurrection and discover why the risen Jesus changes everything about our daily decisions & our future.

beourguest

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teachingnotes

* All Scripture is from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) unless otherwise noted.

As the sun goes down and that Passover Sabbath begins, thousands of Jewish people are celebrating and resting, but *the first followers of Jesus were mourning and moping*. Their hopes were dashed to the ground. Scared for their own lives, most of these distraught disciples protected themselves inside locked doors ([Jn 20:19](#)).

But, early that next morning - SUNDAY morning - several of the female followers of Jesus refused to stay inside, and so, in their last act of service for their beloved rabbi, these women made their way to the tomb early on Sunday morning to anoint His body one, last, time. On the way, they wondered who might move the large stone for them that would allow them entrance ([Mk 16:3](#)). Likely unknown to them, the tomb had been sealed because of a major concern the enemies of Jesus had. So if the Roman guard was there, they would NOT have opened the tomb for the women.

Matthew 27:62-64

The next day, which followed the preparation day, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember that while this deceiver was still alive he said, '**After three days I will rise again.**' So give orders that the tomb be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come, steal him, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first."

That would be a difficult *deception* to overcome wouldn't it? According to His disciples, Jesus had many times foretold that He really WAS going to die & RISE from the dead.

Matthew 16:20-21

Then he gave the disciples orders to tell no one that he was the Messiah. From then on Jesus began to point out to his disciples that it was necessary for him to **go to Jerusalem and suffer** many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, **be killed**, and **be raised the third day**.

Mark 9:30-32

Then they left that place and made their way through Galilee, but he did not want anyone to know it. For he was teaching his disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will **kill him**, and after he is killed, **he will rise three days later.**" But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask him.

Matthew 20:18-19

See, we are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death. They will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked, flogged, and crucified, and on **the third day he will be raised.**"

To counter these crazy claims, Pilate told the enemies of Jesus...

Matthew 27:65-66

"You have **a guard of soldiers**," Pilate told them. "Go and make it as secure as you know how." They went and secured the tomb by setting a seal on the stone and placing the guards.

A **guard** is not a lone soldier, but a Greek term referring to a small group from 4 to 16 Roman soldiers (several soldiers are obvious later in same passage - [Mt 28:11](#)). *If anyone DOES attempt to steal Jesus' body, they will be met with deadly force by the Marines of the day.* That's NOT THE END OF THE STORY! We gather to celebrate **The Best Day Ever!**

1. **Are You Convinced?** You believe in Jesus written about in the Scriptures and you trust Him with your life. Do more than just trust what your, parents, pastor, and church says. Examine the evidence for yourself and become confident that Jesus actually resurrected. Before becoming a Christian, **Josh McDowell** wrote these words, "*My heart cannot rejoice in what my mind rejects.*" You and I will never become passionate about something we aren't convinced of. And when you become convinced, you will be passionate and prepared to help answer the questions that others ask.

2. Are You **Confused**? Some of your friends and family believe in and live for Jesus and others don't. *But how are you supposed to determine whether what historical claims from 2000+ years ago are credible or not?* Today will help you to seriously consider the claims of Jesus and His disciples.

3. Are You A **Critic**? You're here today because it's your yearly duty to your family, but you wonder why others believe all this religious stuff. Have you *really* put in the work to consider the historical claims of Jesus? If someone could give you credible reasons to believe that Jesus rose from the dead, would you still choose to reject Him?

☀ If so, **Josh McDowell** says, "Then your problem is not an issue of the MIND, but an issue of the WILL. Even if you were convinced that the claims of Jesus are true, you would STILL REJECT him, because you refuse to bow to His authority."

The risen Jesus is the Cornerstone of Christianity.

- Without the resurrection all we have is a miracle-working philosopher - A *DEAD* one.
- Further, if Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then He or His disciples were LIARS, as the New Testament writings are littered with the claim that Jesus *WOULD* and *DID* rise from the dead.

☀ **Gary Habermas** - preeminent scholar of the resurrection of Jesus - says, "The resurrection is mentioned in over 300 verses in the New Testament? It's the center of almost every major area of theology...and practice."

BIG TRUTH: If He rose from the dead, we can trust what He said.

We can trust what Jesus said about Himself, how we should live, what happens when people die, and why He is worthy of our lives. The Resurrection is the proof that Jesus is who He claimed to be. *IF JESUS DIDN'T RAISE* from the dead - then this is the greatest lie mankind has ever known.

4 Facts that Historical Scholars Agree On:

1. Jesus died on the cross and was buried.

This is a historical fact undisputed by credible scholarship. What IS disputed is to WHY Jesus was crucified. While this was the ultimate act of love, it was much more than that.

John 1:29 "Here is the Lamb of God, who **takes away the sin of the world!**"

If this is true, then: **1) Our sin is SERIOUS. 2) People are PRECIOUS. 3) Our God is GRACIOUS.**

2. The tomb was EMPTY & the body of Jesus was never found.

Of course, *no one would expect us to find His body 2000+ years removed from that event.* But just 3 Jewish days after Jesus had been buried, all the Jewish skeptics and Roman soldiers had to do was *PRODUCE THE BODY* and parade it around the streets. Of course, they couldn't because, as scholars recognize, **the tomb was EMPTY & the body of Jesus was never found.**

So, what happened to the Body?

- **Stolen Body?** Matthew notes that the enemies of Jesus offered this explanation as to why His body was missing. Fishermen and tax collectors somehow fight past Roman Marines, remove the body, and then do WHAT? Like bury it somewhere else? Then they announce that Jesus is alive and for the rest of their lives, all are persecuted and some are even murdered.

❓ *If you were about to die for a lie - you KNEW Jesus wasn't alive; you KNEW where his body was, wouldn't you give it up?*

☀ **Chuck Colson:** "I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world-and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. **You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible.**"

- **Swoon Theory.** Jesus never really died, he just looked dead. He was buried and revived and then showed himself to the disciples, who concluded he had risen. *The Romans knew how to kill people.* During the time of Jesus there were over 30,000 Jews who were crucified by the Romans. What about the spear shoved into Jesus' chest (Jn 19:34)? *What if Jesus survived all that?* How does Jesus move a 2000 lb stone without a lever - uphill - with ripped up wrists and feet, get past the Roman Marines, and con his disciples into believing he has resurrected? Have you ever SEEN someone a couple of days after being beaten badly? Do they look BETTER or WORSE?
- And then, there's **the resurrection**, that the Gospels point to.

3. The disciples claimed to interact with the resurrected Jesus.

This is an incredible claim. What would you think of multiple people around our community began to talk about how they saw, talked with, and even ate with a man who died a few days back? Whether or not they actually saw the risen Jesus, that the disciples of Jesus claimed to interact with resurrected Jesus is an undisputed fact of history.

And if they were making this story up, then they used some *super strange tactics*.

- *The gospels all claim that the first people to see the risen Jesus were WOMEN!* In that day, a woman's testimony was not considered reliable in a court of law. So, if we were making up a story to make it as credible as possible, **why would all 4 Gospel accounts mention women as the first to see the risen Jesus** (Mt 28:1-10; Mk 16:1-8; Lk 24:1-12; Jn 20:1-18)?
- The men who had been hiding behind closed doors, the apostles of Jesus, had trouble believing what the women said (Lk 24:11), but then, that Sunday evening, *it happened, as the disciples were still hiding out* - The worst weekend ever ushered in **THE BEST DAY EVER!**

John 20:19-20

When it was evening on that first day of the week, the disciples were gathered together with the doors locked because they feared the Jews. **Jesus came**, stood among them, and said to them, "Peace be with you." Having said this, he showed them his hands and his side. So **the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord**.

Those women and men weren't the only ones to claim seeing Jesus. The apostle Paul, a former CRITIC and persecutor of Christianity, wrote about these interactions with the risen Jesus:

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that **he was raised on the third day** according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one born at the wrong time, he also appeared to me.

- **all the apostles** is likely referring to the 120 disciples that would be "sent out" (the meaning of "apostle").
- **James**, the oldest brother after Jesus (Mk 6:3), and the rest of His family thought Jesus was crazy (Mk 3:20-21)...until, according to Paul, James saw Jesus raised from the dead! James becomes a leader in the church of Jerusalem - where Jesus had been tried, beaten, spit on, flogged, crucified, and RAISED from the dead! James opens his letter like this: "James, **a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ...**" (James 1:1)
② *What would YOUR brother have to do for you to call him your LORD?*
- **Paul** had been hunting down and imprisoning followers of Jesus, like a Texas marshal would hunt down criminals. Suddenly, Paul changes teams! While on the way to hunt down more Christians, Paul claims he was struck by a blinding light. When he asked who this powerful superhuman being was, the voice responded, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting" (Acts 9:5). Paul not only puts his trust in Jesus, the One he once thought was a deceiving blasphemer, but **Paul immediately began a lifelong journey to go tell everyone - Jew & Gentile - about Jesus**.

These interactions with the resurrected Jesus weren't just a flash in the pan, momentary events, but **life-changing events**. Jesus was seen over a period of 40 days (Acts 1:3).

4. The resurrection transformed the disciples.

After Jesus ascends to heaven, the once frightened followers of Jesus, the same ones who once hid behind locked doors in fear for their lives, stood with boldness before the very people who put Jesus to death! Peter & John went to the very temple where their enemies worked, and healed a lame man by the authority & glory of the risen Jesus. The people who heard about the healing gathered to hear Peter & John share how this could happen.

Acts 4:1-7

While they were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple police, and the Sadducees confronted them, because they were annoyed that they were teaching the people and **proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead**. So they seized them and took them into custody until the next day since it was already evening. But **many of those who heard the message believed**, and the number of the men came to about five thousand. The next day, their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and all the members of the high-priestly family. After they had Peter and John stand before them, they began to question them: "By what power or in what name have you done this?"

All this is happening in Jerusalem - the place where Jesus had been arrested, beaten, spit on, flogged, and marched out to be crucified - the same place where Jesus had been buried. *Would Peter & John back down?* After all, these were the same men (**Annas & Caiaphas**) who had their King killed. These were the same ones they had earlier been hiding from.

But **now things had changed. They had seen Jesus alive**, and they trusted Him to help them speak the truth regardless of the consequences. They knew what YOU and I need to know,

BIG TRUTH: If He rose from the dead, we can trust what He said.

Acts 4:8-10

Then Peter was **filled with the Holy Spirit** and said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders: If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a disabled man, by what means he was healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that **by the name of Jesus Christ** of Nazareth, whom you crucified and **whom God raised from the dead**—by Him this man is standing here before you healthy. This **Jesus** is *the stone rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone. There is salvation in no one else*, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved."

How do you STAND boldly before the people who want you dead, the same ones who killed your King...in the same city?

Peter & John were convinced that Jesus was **ALIVE!** The scholars are right: **The resurrection transformed the disciples.**

If you had seen what they said they saw, the **RISEN JESUS** standing right in front of you it would transform YOU TOO!

- You realize the One who rose from the dead can give you eternal life, and when the time comes, raise you from the dead.
- You know that the One who rose from the dead promised His Holy Spirit would never leave you, and empower you to share His message with others.
- You know that the One who rose from the dead would fulfill His promise to return.

BIG TRUTH: If He rose from the dead, we can trust what He said.

- If Jesus says He will never leave those who follow Him...then WE can trust that.
- If Jesus says there really is a heaven & hell, and judgment is coming...then WE can trust that.
- If Jesus commands us to walk in forgiveness and offer His forgiveness to others...then WE should do THAT!
- If Jesus expects us to serve our family, friends, and even enemies...then WE should do THAT!

BIG QUESTION: What difference does the Risen Jesus make in my Daily Decisions?

Do you turn from sin & obey because Jesus is alive? Do you serve & give because Jesus is alive?

Do you forgive others because Jesus is alive? Do you share with others because Jesus is alive?

NO LORD

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Derek & Emily Beaty** (813-763-4421), or **Chris & Caitlin Day** (850-673-7920), **Glen & Margie Peacock** (850-464-1484).

Discussion questions

These questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your family, friends, or small group.

1. What stood out most to you from today's message—an idea, a Scripture, a question, or a challenge?
2. **Read Matthew 27:62-66.** Why does the sealed tomb actually strengthen the resurrection claim instead of weaken it?
3. **Read John 20:19-20.** What changed in the disciples emotionally when they saw Jesus alive?
4. **Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.** Why is Paul's list of eyewitnesses so important for historical confidence?
5. **Read Acts 4:8-12.** How does Peter's boldness prove the resurrection changed him?
6. **Talk About the Evidence.** From the sermon, which piece of evidence for the resurrection felt strongest to you?
 - sealed tomb, empty tomb, eyewitnesses, James' transformation, Paul's conversion, Peter's boldness, changed disciples
 - Why does that matter to your confidence in Jesus?
7. **Make It Personal.** The Big Truth was: *If He rose from the dead, we can trust what He said.* What part of Jesus' teaching do YOU/I need to trust and obey more this week? *Examples:* forgiveness, sharing your faith, purity, serving others, trusting Him with fear, recognizing heaven & hell exist, living generously (and maybe another idea).
8. **What daily decision would look different this week if you truly lived like Jesus is alive?** *Try to name one practical action step:* forgive someone, invite someone to church, pray w/ others, obey something difficult, turn from hidden sin, trust Jesus when I fear.