

EASTER

THE LORD IS RISEN

Small Group Guide: The Power of the Resurrection

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: What is your earliest or most meaningful Easter memory? What made it significant to you?

Sermon Summary

This Easter sermon unpacks the full work of Christ from Thursday night in Gethsemane through the resurrection on Sunday morning. Pastor emphasized that Jesus defeated three aspects of sin: its power (in Gethsemane), its guilt (on the cross), and its stain (through His blood). The resurrection then defeated death, making us spiritually alive NOW through the Holy Spirit—not just promising heaven later, but giving us communion with God today.

Key Takeaways

- 1. The Garden of Gethsemane was the turning point - Jesus reversed Adam's choice by saying "not my will, but yours," destroying the power of sin over humanity.**
- 2. The cross dealt with sin's punishment - Jesus bore God's wrath and separation so we wouldn't have to experience hell.**

- 3. Jesus' blood purified us - His shed blood cleanses us to become temples of God, preparing us to receive the Holy Spirit.**
 - 4. The resurrection defeats death - Jesus proved that true life is spiritual life, not merely physical existence.**
 - 5. Eternal life begins NOW - We don't wait until we die to experience communion with God; it starts the moment we're made alive in Christ.**
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Sermon

- 1. The Garden of Gethsemane: The pastor described Jesus' prayer in the garden as "the climax of human history." Why is Jesus' choice to submit to the Father's will so significant? How does it reverse what Adam did?**
- 2. Three Aspects of Sin: Jesus dealt with sin's power, guilt, and stain. Can you explain each of these in your own words? Why was it necessary for Jesus to address all three?**
- 3. The Torn Curtain: What was the significance of the temple curtain tearing when Jesus died? How does this relate to us becoming "temples of God"?**

Personal Reflection

- 4. Dead to Alive: The sermon emphasized that before Christ, we were "walking dead people"—physically alive but spiritually dead. Can you describe what being "spiritually alive" means in practical terms? What has changed in your life since coming alive in Christ?**

5. **The Breath of Life:** Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit," echoing God breathing life into Adam. How does understanding the Holy Spirit as the "breath of life" change your perspective on the Spirit's role in your life?
6. **Living Resurrection:** The pastor challenged us not to treat Easter as just "insurance for when I die." How have you been guilty of thinking about salvation primarily as "going to heaven when I die" rather than "communion with God starting now"?

Application & Action

7. **Daily Communion:** What does it look like practically to live "moment by moment" in communion with God? What are some obstacles that prevent you from experiencing this fellowship throughout your day?
 8. **Celebrating Every Day:** The sermon ended by calling us to "be a resurrection people made alive every day." What would need to change in your daily routine for you to truly celebrate the resurrection every day, not just on Easter Sunday?
 9. **Loving God's Image Bearers:** The pastor mentioned that our lives should be marked by love of Yahweh and His image bearers. Who are the "image bearers" in your life that you find most difficult to love? How does understanding the full work of Christ help you love them better?
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Morning Resurrection Reminder

- **Each morning this week, before checking your phone or starting your day, pause and pray: "Father, thank you that I am alive in Christ today. Help me live in communion with you moment by moment."**

Option 2: Image Bearer Love

- **Identify one person who bears God's image (everyone!) that you find difficult to love or interact with. Pray for them daily and look for one practical way to show them Christ's love this week.**

Option 3: Communion Checkpoints

- **Set 3-4 alarms on your phone throughout the day labeled "Am I alive?" Use these as moments to pause, recognize God's presence, and have a brief conversation with Him about what you're doing.**

Option 4: Study the Passion Week

- **Read through the Gospel accounts of Thursday-Sunday (Matthew 26-28, Mark 14-16, Luke 22-24, or John 18-21). Journal about what stands out to you in light of this sermon.**

Deeper Dive: Scripture Study

Read together as a group:

- **Luke 22:39-46 (Garden of Gethsemane)**
- **Matthew 27:45-51 (The crucifixion and torn curtain)**
- **John 20:1-23 (The resurrection and Jesus breathing on disciples)**

Discussion: As you read these passages together, what details stand out that you hadn't noticed before? How do these passages connect to form one complete work of redemption?

Prayer Time

Guided Prayer Focus:

- 1. Thanksgiving - Thank Jesus for His work in the garden, on the cross, and through the resurrection**
 - 2. Confession - Confess areas where you've lived as though you're still spiritually dead rather than alive**
 - 3. Petition - Ask God to help you live in daily communion with Him**
 - 4. Intercession - Pray for one another's specific challenges in living as "resurrection people"**
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For Next Week

Reflection Assignment: Journal about this question: "If I truly believed I am alive in Christ RIGHT NOW and can have constant communion with God, how would my daily life look different?" Bring your thoughts to share next week.

Memory Verse: *"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?'" - John 11:25-26*

Leader Notes

- **Be sensitive that some group members may be realizing for the first time that they've been treating Christianity as "fire insurance" rather than a living relationship**
- **The concept of being "spiritually alive NOW" may be new to some; allow time for questions and clarification**
- **Encourage vulnerability about struggles with daily communion with God—most believers wrestle with this**
- **Celebrate that Easter isn't just one day but the foundation of every day we live in Christ**