

JESUS

JESUS, PART 13: EASTER MATTERS

If you think Jesus was a great leader and teacher, but find it hard to believe in his resurrection? You're in good company. Even his disciples were skeptical. But those same followers were the ones who would later become the spokesmen of a new movement: the church. They would maintain faith in the midst of incredible suffering. Many died still claiming that Jesus was their Savior. So what do we make of this defining event—the one that became the foundation of their faith . . . and of ours?

THE BIG IDEA: The resurrection of Jesus created Christianity & launched the church.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Talk about your memories of Easter as a child. What meaning was attached to Jesus' death for you then?
2. *With the Bible or Bible App, [read Luke 24:1-12](#).*

¹ But very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ² They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. ³ So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes. ⁵ The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? ⁶ He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man^a must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day." ⁸ Then they remembered that he had said this. ⁹ So they rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had happened. ¹¹ But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn't believe it. ¹² However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened.

[Luke 24:1-12 \(NLT\)](#)

3. What was Jesus' closest followers' initial response to the empty tomb? Do you identify with the disciples' doubts about the resurrection? How does their subsequent belief affect the credibility of their testimonies?
4. *With the Bible or Bible App, [read 1 Peter 1:3-9](#).*

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

[1 Peter 1:3-9 \(NIV\)](#)

5. Have you experienced pain or suffering that make it difficult for you to have faith?
6. Do you know someone who has experienced pain or suffering but still has enduring faith? If you were to ask them how or why, how do you think they would respond?
7. What's the difference in having a faith that hinges on behavior, tradition, or the Bible, and a faith that hinges on the event of the resurrection?

MOVING FORWARD

If you have lost faith in God because of the suffering in the world, your doubts about the Bible, or your behavior, maybe it's time to reconsider. We can't imagine the pain and suffering the disciples experienced, yet they believed. They saw the worst thing imaginable happen to the best person they had ever known and they believed anyway. Their faith was in the God introduced to them by Jesus—the God who invites us to call him Heavenly Father. The resurrection reframed their faith. It can reframe ours as well.

WEEKLY READING

This week, spend some time reading and reflecting on Mark 16:1–4 and 1 Peter 1:3-21.