

# Easter

## The Day No One Believed

One message connected Jesus entire ministry for his first century listeners– the Kingdom of God is here, *now*, and it represents a complete reversal of the values of the world. Yet, this new ethic of revolutionary love threatened the religious and political leaders, who ultimately sentenced Jesus to death. And when the chips were on the table, his disciples reacted in a relatable, unfortunate way– they walked away from their friend and rabbi in defeat. But even though there were no remaining believers when the sun rose on that first Easter, the Kingdom of God was only beginning to transform Earth– and the resurrection that Jesus revealed to his earliest followers that day not only persevered as a story worth telling for future generations– it empowers us to trade in our selfish desires and get involved in the redemptive work of Christ to this day.

### Start Talking

1. Do you think of yourself as an optimist, a pessimist, or something in between? Why? Would those closest to you agree with your classification?
2. Have you ever had an experience with sports, school, or work where you realized that a game, academic performance, or task was messed up beyond any hope of redemption? What happened?

### Looking Back

1. How did you remind yourself that you're forgiven when shame snuck up on you over the past few days?
2. Were you able to distinguish between unhealthy, paralyzing shame, and genuine guilt that enables positive change? How so?
3. Jesus modeled the law of love on the cross by sacrificing himself for people who don't deserve it. Where were you able to follow his example and embody that ethic of sacrificial love this past week?
4. When did you find yourself comforted by the fact that Jesus bore your sins?



### **What About You?**

1. How are you feeling right now? Hopeful? Hopeless? Somewhere in between?
2. When you typically think about Easter and the resurrection of Jesus, do you usually think of it as primarily having implications for the past, the present, or the future? Why?
3. The disciples faced many of their worst fears the week Jesus died. What fears are dragging you down right now?
4. What does the resurrection mean to you? How do you see it fitting into your faith? Your daily life?

### **Look It Up**

*Read the Following Passages: John 6:66-68. Mark 1:15, 15:43-47, 16: 1-7.*

1. What do you think was going on within the community of Jesus's earliest followers between the Friday he was crucified and the Sunday when he made them breakfast on the beach?
2. How are the disciples portrayed in these passages? How would you describe their responses to the emotional roller coaster of the weeks before and after Jesus's crucifixion?
3. It's easy to forget the fact that the same disciples who admit to abandoning Jesus to die in their own testimony of events, are recorded by Roman and Jewish historians as willingly braving death in order to spread the story of Jesus. How would you account for this change?
4. Based upon Peter's response when Jesus asks if the disciples want to leave him, what did this group of followers believe about their rabbi?
5. Now that we have traced the entire story from the beginning of Jesus's ministry through the culmination of his resurrection, what do you think he means by his declaration that, "the Kingdom of God has come?"

### **Putting It All Together**

1. If Jesus's ministry was about inaugurating a new value system— a kingdom of love unlike any the world has ever seen— then Andy argues that Jesus's resurrection serves as an invitation for each of us to leave our old lives of sin, and join him in a better life in the new kingdom. How can you get involved in that redemptive work this week?
2. Where do you see yourself still clinging to the patterns of this world? What would it look like to live in the reality of the resurrection, instead?



3. What does it mean for his followers that Jesus conquered death? How should it change the way we think about our problems? Our relationships?
4. Who in your circle of influence could use the hope of Jesus's resurrection right now? How can you remind yourself to pray for them in the weeks to come?
5. What can you do to be a real, tangible source of hope for them as you pray?

