

A Message From Heaven – Part 1

Matthew 28:1-15

I. Introduction

1. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the best attested fact in history. A bold statement for sure...one on which many have invested their lives to dispute while others have lost their lives knowing that God's promises are for them.
 - A. While we are studying the book of Matthew, I think it important to note that all of the Gospels share the story of the resurrection of Jesus. Yet, each one shares it from the author's unique perspective and objective and so, many differences can be noted. Some over the years have pointed to these differences as being evidence against the validity of resurrection claims.
 - B. Yet, it takes little more than a casual examination to see that the differences reinforce and extend the various views AND that there are no contradictions per se, only testimonies from different vantage points. This is true of multiple eye witness accounts of happenings today...the essential truth remains with notable differences across various witness accounts.
2. On a separate note, we so often focus on the victory of our new life found in Jesus' resurrection that we often lose sight of an important second emphasis. Scholar, theologian, and Bishop N. T. Wright said it this way:

"Jesus's resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven. That, after all, is what the Lord's Prayer is about." - N.T. Wright

With that said, let's move into our study today...

II. Matthew 28:1-4: Just a 2-Ton Stone Roll Away

1. After or as the KJV says “in the end of the Sabbath” some women (Matthew reports 2, Mark reports 3, Luke refers to 3 and other women, and John notes 1) made their way to the tomb in the dark so as to be there at first light. It’s clear from the text that they did not expect to see an empty tomb, much less angels and all that transpired.
2. Mary Magdalen and the other women had set out for the tomb in the dark, planning on being there at first light to, as we read in Mark, complete the anointing of Christ’s body. As dawn broke, an earthquake removed any of the Sleepy’s from the women’s eyes as Matthew reports an angel of the Lord rolled back the 2-ton stone from Jesus’ tomb entrance.
3. Under normal circumstances, it would be right to wonder where the guards were so Matthew goes ahead and answered the question before it was asked. The angel was truly of another world and exuded an unmistakable presence and power that shook and caused the guards to fall as though they were dead, unable to fulfill their duties of keeping the tomb secure.
4. Back to the stone being rolled away from the door. It is good for us to be reminded that the angel was not part of some heavenly deception leading to Jesus’ escape from the tomb.

A. Have you ever considered the open empty tomb was for us and not for Christ. Turn with me to John 20:3-8:

³ Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. ⁴ So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. ⁵ And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there*; yet he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there*, ⁷ and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed.

- John 20:3-8

That Christ died and rose again remains the single most talked about event in human history. When Peter and John discovered Jesus' linen cloths in the empty tomb, John tells us in John 20:9 "they did not yet know the Scripture".

But they were witnesses to the reality that OF all the gods of mankind only One offered a demonstrable answer to death...in Christ Jesus, a follower is assured of his/her victory over death. This is because that empty tomb is the greatest apologetic that Jesus is Lord, as the resurrection means death was vanquished.

Slide 8

III. Matthew 28:5-7: A Message from Heaven

1. After emphasizing the divine power under which the angel operated, Matthew moves on to the angel's message.
2. The message starts out with words we see sprinkled throughout the Bible...don't fear (*for Jesus is Messiah*). He reassures them that their reason for coming, to serve Christ, is known and welcomed. The angel was also confirming Jesus' crucifixion for if He did not die, He could not rise. Yes, the things they are seeing and hearing are enough to strike the fear of God into non-believers, but God isn't looking for fear, He is looking for followers.
3. We also can't help but note that the angel spoke to the women and NOT the guards. The angel gave them four (4) specific charges not so different from what Christ gives us, including "come, see, go, and tell".
 - A. The first, "come", is an invitation echoing Jesus' own words in Matthew 11:28: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is only by responding to His invitation that one may know, enjoy, and walk in the eternally abundant life He offers to any following.

- B. The second, “see”, beckon’s us to see Jesus for who He is...the King of kings and Lord of lords; **Jesus is the very essence of holiness, righteousness, mercy, grace, and love.** Yet, because of seeing Him for who He is, one also “sees” the destructive power and poverty of evil and sin. **Therein, we can see the choice of following Jesus unto life or to stay our course without Him unto death.**
- C. The third charge, or “go”, speaks of a living faith; **a faith that leads us to obey, not because we must, but because it is a duty, privilege, and responsibility birthed in one’s love for Jesus.** Because Jesus has risen, we are called to reject human pride and selfishness...**we are called to set aside our apathy and reservations...**we are called to live lives transformed by the One we have come to see and know.
- D. The final charge from the angel is to “tell” the disciples that He is risen and they too will soon see this truth. **As we know from this and other accounts, hundreds witnessed the risen Christ.**

Slide 10

IV. **Matthew 28:8-10: The Blessings of Faith and Obedience**

1. Matthew reports that despite their fears, the angel’s words brought them “great joy” and a sense of urgency leading them to run to tell the disciples of Christ having risen. **While these women had the wrong theology** – that is, they had NO idea that Jesus would rise to new life – **they were blessed because they had the right doctrine of believing and obeying Jesus in living out their lives.** In saying this, we must also acknowledge that the canon of Scripture was not yet complete AND they did NOT have the indwelling power and presence of the Holy Spirit as we do. **Despite what they did not have, their faith and obedience is on display as a powerful witness to all.**
2. Next, Matthew records that Jesus Himself appeared to the women as they made their hurried way to the disciples. **Here, they saw, heard, and touched Him.** Their testimony was no longer of an

empty tomb and an angel, but of the risen Lord Himself. Their testimony was no longer of an empty tomb and what an angel had said, it was of a literal personal encounter with a literally risen Lord.

A. What an encouragement for them and us! This encounter and the encounters yet to come testify that Jesus is indeed Lord and He did indeed defeat death. It is on this truth the entirety of our faith rests. Open your Bibles to 1 Co 15:12-19:

Slide 12

¹² Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁴ And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty and your faith *is* also empty. ¹⁵ Yes, and we are found false witnesses (*liars*) of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. ¹⁶ For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. ¹⁷ And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins! ¹⁸ Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ *If in this life only* we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. - 1 Corinthians 15:12–19

B. I pray Matthew's words of encouragement offers faith to those with none and gives more faith to those with some. Because they, and many hundreds saw the risen Christ, we too can know He is Lord. We can know that He defeated death. We can know that His sacrificial offering of Himself and invitation to us to have new, eternal life in Him is unequivocally real, just as is the entirety of the canon of Scripture. We can personally know Him. We can have all that we need to follow AND testify of Him.

3. There is one more thing I want to draw your attention to and its buried in the middle of v10. The ever gracious-beyond-measure Lord knows His disciples, you know the same ones that scattered and denied Him, are grieving, fearful, and uncertain. Yet, He calls them His "brethren" and invites them to again be in relationship with Himself. // So no matter your history, even if it is of great

offense to God, His arms are open wide...He IS willing to forgive. Are you willing to be forgiven? Are you willing to turn away from your and the world's ways and faithfully follow the only One that can heal and restore you?

Slide 14

V. Matthew 28:11-15: Deniers Will Go To Any Extreme

1. Let's consider the principals involved in these verses...
 - A. The guards had blown their assignment. The tomb had been compromised on their watch and their lives were at stake. As the story unfolds, we see that while witnesses to God's power, the guard had their own weaknesses and could be bought for a price. In this, we too are confronted with "do I have a price"?
 - B. The religious leaders saw their vilification and denial of Christ as Lord unraveling and were desperate to control the narrative that their lives may go on unhindered by the very God they claimed to worship. So, they were all too happy to rev up the gossip-mill of that day in spreading the lie that the disciples had stolen Jesus' body to fool the people.

Recognizing that the cooperation of the guards was necessary, they offered them the two things most wanted...money and protection. With the guards cooperation, the public lie was established as "fact" in Israel and set the table for the unfolding fulfilment of Scripture that we are witnesses to in our day (e.g., the 1948 regathering of Israel as a nation in the promised land).
2. Why would the law-and-order Romans and Jewish leaders never seek to find the disciples AND Jesus' body? Why do you suppose the disciples were never charged? His body and their conviction would have put a quick end to any notion that Christ might have risen. The reason is obvious...if they told a lie enough times, it would be believed AND their goal was NOT justice but maintaining their positions, power, and wealth.

3. Backing up for just a minute. How would the guards have answered the questions leading up to and immediately following Jesus' body being stolen? With a "I don't know, because I was sleeping". While grave robbing was common in that day, carrying off a body was virtually unheard of and thus further undermining their credibility and the truth of their claims. Finally, the disciples could have and would have easily accounted for their whereabouts and that would have also disproved the lie.
4. Matthew describes the great lengths people would go to deny the deity of Jesus Christ. Over the ensuing centuries many alternative objections, accusations, and theories against the resurrection have emerged. Apologist Don Stewart offers an extensive, yet incomplete, list of 18 reasons¹ to NOT believe that Jesus was raised from the dead. A few of those include:
 - A. **Resurrection from the dead is impossible.** To which we might say, "says who"? The Creator or His created. God is God and miracles are certainly within His sovereign being.
 - B. **The women went to the wrong tomb on Easter Sunday.** Since they traveled there in the dark and there are tombs throughout the countryside, this might be possible in theory. Of course that Peter and John went to the same tomb and the women returned to the same tomb quickly squashes that idea. Oh, yeah, what can we say about the angel that spoke to the women...did He to go to the wrong tomb? By the way, if the disciples actually stole the body, it means they were all willing to live lives on the run (with most suffering a martyr's death) from authorities by lying about their beliefs. Makes no sense.
 - C. **The Hallucination Theory.** In this one, the women, the disciples, and all the others witnessing Jesus' resurrection (more than 500 people in **1 Cor 15:6**) all shared in a hallucination and they shared it over a 40-day period.

¹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/stewart_don/faq/objections-to-the-resurrection-of-jesus-christ/01-what-objections-have-been-made-to-the-resurrection.cfm

Impossible. Further, this does NOT explain the empty tomb or where the body went.

D. **Jesus didn't really die, He just sort of fainted. This is often referred to as the swoon theory.** This denies the Roman's practice and perfection of crucifixion. This denies that He was beaten and scourged. This denies that the Roman's verified His death before releasing His body and that the Jews buried a living man in that tomb. This denies the sorrow, grief, and actions of the women and disciples leading up to, during, and after His trial and crucifixion – their responses reflected their belief that Jesus had died on the cross of Calvary.

E. Representative other denials include Jesus having a twin, the gardener removed the body, and the story of His death and resurrection being embellished as the years went by.

In the end, none of the theories offered against the resurrection explain the known and agreed upon facts. Jesus claimed to be God, He was scourged, He died on the Roman cross, He was buried, and He rose again.

5. Before we close up shop today, I want to point you to some work done by Gary Habermas and Michale Licona. They have spent decades exploring and developing the minimal facts that the majority of philosophers, academics, and scholars can agree upon regarding the truth of the resurrection. And I expressly note, the experts included both believers and non-believers.

They present a list of twelve minimal facts garnering majority of support with the top four having virtually unanimous support. A few of these include:

1. Jesus died by Roman crucifixion.
2. He was buried, most likely in a private tomb.
3. Soon afterward, the disciples were discouraged, bereaved, and despondent, having lost hope.
4. Jesus' tomb was found empty very soon after his interment.

Some of the others include:

5. The disciples had experiences that they believed were actual appearances of the risen Jesus.
6. Due to these experiences, the disciples' lives were thoroughly transformed, even being willing to die for this belief.
7. ~~The birth of Christianity. The proclamation of the resurrection took place very early, at the beginning of church history.~~
8. The disciples' public testimony and preaching of the resurrection took place in the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus had been crucified and buried shortly before.
9. The Gospel message centered on the death and resurrection of Jesus.
10. ~~Sunday was the primary day for gathering and worshipping.~~
11. ~~James, the brother of Jesus and former skeptic, was converted when, he believed, he saw the risen Jesus.~~
12. ~~Just a few years later, Saul of Tarsus (Paul) became a Christian believer due to an experience that he believed was an appearance of the risen Jesus."~~^[1]

Of course, whether learned men and women agree on something or not does not make it true. What makes it true is that Scripture is the very word of God and its teachings are truth!

Slide 18

VI. Closing: The Message From Heaven is "Jesus is Lord"

1. Jesus is Lord. As our Kinsman Redeemer and Passover Lamb, He became man, suffered, died, and rose again in defeating death and inviting us into an eternal relationship with Himself.
2. Unbeliever, what will it take for you to believe Jesus came and died for you to have new life? What needs to come into your hardened heart for the seeds of faith sown into your life to bloom? He is inviting you today to NOT FEAR, BUT BELIEVE and live a joyous, victorious, and eternal life with Him. [Prayer]
3. Believer, we too are confronted with some hard questions about how we live our lives. In faith, love, obedience, and awe of Jesus as Lord. Or, am I/are we cultural Christians wearing a façade of

Christianity while have hearts far away from the Lord. I pray that we are humbled by this message today. I pray that in utter awe we will rejoice in our King and the firm foundation Scripture offers in living an abundant eternal life.

Matthew 28:1-15

A Message From Heaven – Part 1

I. Introduction:

- Two emphasis of the resurrection of Jesus are _____.

II. Matthew 28:1-4: Just a 2-Ton Stone Roll Away

- Why was the stone rolled away and the burial cloths missing so important?
- Why is it important that women were the first witnesses of the risen Christ?

Additional Scripture References: Jn 20:3-8

III. Matthew 28:5-7: A Message from Heaven

- List the 4 charges given to the women.
- How are these charges similar to the duties Jesus gives His church?

Additional Scripture References: Mt 11:28

IV. Matthew 28:8-10: The Blessings of Faith and Obedience

- What can be said about the Christian faith if Jesus was not resurrected?

Additional Scripture References: 1 Co 15:12-19

V. Matthew 28:11-15: Deniers Will Go To Any Extreme

- Do you/I have a price?
- What are some of the theories denying the resurrection? Why do people go to such trouble to prove the resurrection is untrue?
- Despite the deniers, we can be confident in the resurrection of Christ!
- What is goal of the “minimal facts” of the resurrection approach?

Additional Scripture References: 1 Cor 15:6

VI. Closing: This Message From Heaven is “Jesus is Lord”

5-Day Devotional

Matthew 28:1-15

A Message From Heaven

Day 1: The Power of the Resurrection

Reading: Mt 28:1-10

Devotional: The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of our faith. As we read about the empty tomb and the angel's proclamation, we're reminded of God's immense power over death itself. Just as the women at the tomb were initially fearful but then filled with joy, we too may experience a range of emotions in our faith journey.

Reflect on areas in your life where you need God's resurrection power. Are there "dead" situations that seem hopeless? Remember that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is available to us today. Ask God to renew your hope and faith in His ability to bring life out of death, joy out of sorrow, and victory out of defeat.

Day 2: Overcoming Doubt

Reading: John 20:24-29

Devotional: Thomas's doubt and subsequent encounter with the risen Christ remind us that God meets us in our uncertainties. Like Thomas, we may sometimes struggle to believe without seeing. Yet Jesus gently invites us to touch His wounds and believe.

Consider areas in your life where doubt has crept in. Bring these honestly before God, asking Him to strengthen your faith. Remember that Jesus doesn't condemn our questions but uses them as opportunities to reveal Himself more fully. Today, choose to trust in God's faithfulness, even in the face of uncertainty.

Day 3: Transforming Power of an Encounter

Reading: Ac. 9:1-19

Devotional: Saul's dramatic encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus showcases the life-changing power of meeting the risen Christ. This event transformed a persecutor into one of the most influential apostles in Christian history.

Reflect on your own encounter with Jesus. How has it changed your life? If you feel your spiritual life has become stagnant, pray for a fresh encounter with Christ today. Ask God to open your eyes to His presence and work in your daily life, transforming you more into His likeness.

Day 4: Living as Witnesses**Reading: Ac. 1:6-11**

Devotional: Before His ascension, Jesus commissioned His disciples to be His witnesses. This call extends to us today. We are entrusted with the powerful message of Christ's death and resurrection.

Consider how you can be a witness for Christ in your sphere of influence. This doesn't always mean verbal proclamation; sometimes it's through acts of love, kindness, and service. Ask God to give you opportunities to share His love and the hope of the gospel with others today, whether through words or actions.

Day 5: The Promise of Eternal Life**Reading: 1 Cor. 15:50-58**

Devotional: Paul's words about the final victory over death remind us of the ultimate hope we have in Christ. The resurrection isn't just a historical event; it's a promise of our future transformation and eternal life with God.

Meditate on the hope of eternity today. How does this perspective change how you view your current challenges and struggles? Let the promise of resurrection empower you to live boldly for Christ, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. Thank God for the gift of eternal life and ask Him to help you live in light of this glorious future.

Small Group Study Guide

Matthew 28:1-15

A Message From Heaven

Opening Prayer: Pray that the Lord would soften your heart to hear what He wants you to hear, and to give you the opportunity to walk it out.

Key Takeaways: Query the group for takeaways first...you may stay with one or more of those.

1. The resurrection of Jesus is the best-attested fact in history.
2. The empty tomb is powerful evidence for Christ's deity and victory over death.
3. Faith and obedience, even with incomplete understanding, are pleasing to God.
4. People will go to great lengths to deny the truth of the resurrection.
5. There are strong historical and logical reasons to believe in the resurrection.

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. What stood out to you most from the sermon? Why?
2. The sermon mentions that the stone was rolled away so mankind could witness the resurrection, not for Jesus to escape. How does this perspective change your view of the empty tomb?
3. Discuss the four charges given by the angel: "come, see, go, and tell." Which of these do you find most challenging in your own faith journey? Why?
4. How does the women's faith and obedience, despite their incomplete understanding, inspire you?
5. What are some modern-day attempts to deny or discredit the resurrection? How would you respond to these?
6. Reflect on the "minimal facts" about the resurrection that even skeptical scholars agree upon. Which of these do you find most compelling?

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. Practice the four charges this week: Come to Jesus daily, see Him for who He truly is, go where He leads you, and tell others about Him.
2. Identify one area where you need to grow in faith or obedience, despite not fully understanding God's plan.
3. Prepare a simple explanation of why you believe in the resurrection, using some of the "minimal facts" discussed.
4. Reach out to someone who may be skeptical about the resurrection and engage in a respectful conversation about their doubts.
5. Reflect on how the reality of the resurrection impacts your daily life and decision-making.

Closing Prayer: Encourage group members to continue reflecting on the resurrection's significance throughout the week and to share any insights at the next meeting.

Discussion Questions

Matthew 28:1-15

A Message From Heaven

1. How does the reality of Christ's resurrection impact your daily life and decision-making? In what ways should it transform how we view death, suffering, and our purpose?
2. Why do you think God chose to have the stone rolled away for witnesses rather than for Jesus Himself? What does this reveal about God's desire for us to understand and share the gospel?
3. The women at the tomb demonstrated faith and obedience despite not fully understanding Jesus' resurrection. How can we cultivate this kind of trust in God when faced with uncertainty or confusion in our spiritual lives?
4. Jesus called His disciples 'brethren' even after they had abandoned Him. How does this display of forgiveness and grace challenge you in your relationships with others who have hurt or disappointed you?
5. What are some modern-day equivalents to the guards and religious leaders who tried to cover up the resurrection? How can we respond to skepticism or deliberate misinformation about Christ today?
6. Considering the 'minimal facts' about Jesus' death and resurrection that even skeptical scholars agree on, how might these be used in conversations with non-believers to point to the truth of Christianity?
7. The angel gave the women four charges: 'come, see, go, and tell.' How can we apply each of these actions to our own faith journey and witness for Christ?
8. Why do you think people throughout history have gone to such lengths to deny the resurrection of Jesus? What does this reveal about human nature and our relationship to truth?
9. How does the evidence for the resurrection strengthen your faith? In what ways can it serve as an 'apologetic' or defense of Christianity in our skeptical culture?
10. Jesus appeared to the women as they hurried to obey the angel's message. How might this encourage us to act on our faith, even when we don't have all the answers?

Dinner Conversation Starters

Matthew 28:1-15

A Message From Heaven

1. Different Perspectives

"The sermon emphasized the unique perspectives each Gospel author brings to the resurrection story. How do different perspectives in our own family help us understand situations better?"

2. Testifying about Jesus

"We heard about the open tomb being a testimony for humanity rather than for Christ. What are some ways we can be living testimonies of our faith in everyday life?"

3. Trusting God's Plan

"The preacher talked about faith and obedience being important, even when we don't fully understand God's plan. Can you think of a time when you had to trust and obey without knowing all the details?"

4. Cultural or Committed?

"The sermon challenged us to consider whether we are cultural Christians or truly committed to our faith. What do you think the difference is, and how can we ensure our faith is genuine?"

5. Forgiveness and Restoration

"The fact that Jesus calls His disciples 'brethren' even after their failures is highlighted in the sermon. How does this message of forgiveness and restoration encourage us when we make mistakes?"

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

Matthew 28:1-15

A Message From Heaven

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Kindness as a Testimony**: Encourage children to share toys and be kind to friends as a way of showing Jesus' love.

Discussion Question: "How can you show kindness like Jesus to your friends at school, church, or during playtime?"

2. **Understanding Jesus' Love**: Use stories or simple role-play to explain how Jesus forgives us, emphasizing forgiveness in their daily interactions.

Discussion Question: "Is there a time you needed to say sorry or forgive a friend? How did that make you feel?"

3. **Being Brave with Truth**: Teach them to be honest, even when it's hard, reflecting the truth of Jesus' resurrection.

Discussion Question: "Why is it important to tell the truth, even if it might be scary?"

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Standing Firm in Faith**: Discuss scenarios where they might need to stand up for what's right, encouraging courage.

Discussion Question: "Can you think of a time when you needed to stand up for something right at school or online?"

2. **Sharing Faith Simply**: Encourage sharing what they learned in Sunday School about Jesus with friends, in a simple, friendly way.

Discussion Question: "How can you share something positive about your faith with a friend who doesn't know about Jesus?"

3. **Digital Kindness and Honesty**: Talk about being kind and truthful in online games or interactions, even if anonymous.

Discussion Question: "What does being kind and truthful online look like? Why is it important?"

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Navigating Peer Pressure**: Discuss real-life situations where peer pressure might challenge their beliefs, and how to handle those moments with the truth of Jesus' teachings.

Discussion Question: "What are some ways you can handle peer pressure while staying true to your beliefs about Jesus?"

2. **Respectful Social Media Presence**: Talk about how posting and commenting online can reflect their faith and the message of Jesus respectfully and truthfully.

Discussion Question: "How can you use social media to reflect your values and share your faith respectfully?"

3. **Forgiveness in Friendships**: Explore the power of forgiveness in maintaining healthy relationships, drawing parallels with how Jesus forgave.

Discussion Question: "Have you had to forgive a friend recently? How does knowing Jesus forgave us help in forgiving others?"

Tips for Parents

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

Matthew 28:1-15

A Message From Heaven

1. Courage in Community

Bible Basis: Joshua 1:9 - "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Scenario: In a group project or discussion, there might be pressure to conform to the majority's opinion or action that goes against personal beliefs.

Actionable Insight: Embrace the courage to respectfully voice your views or make choices aligned with your faith, even if it means standing alone at times.

Discussion Question: How can Joshua 1:9 inspire you to remain courageous when your beliefs are challenged in a group setting?

2. Forgiveness and Grace

Bible Basis: Colossians 3:13 - "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Scenario: A friend might let you down or betray your trust, causing conflict or hurt in the relationship.

Actionable Insight: Practice forgiveness and extend grace, remembering the grace you receive from Jesus. Aim for reconciliation and peace.

Discussion Question: "How does forgiving someone, as described in Colossians 3:13, affect your relationship, and how does it relate to Christ's forgiveness of us?"

3. Integrity and Respect

Bible Basis: Ephesians 4:29 - "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Scenario: In digital spaces, such as social media or group chats, there's a temptation to join in negative comments or gossip.

Actionable Insight: Choose words that build up and reflect integrity, promoting peace and kindness in all your digital interactions.

Discussion Question: "Ephesians 4:29 encourages us to build others up. How can you apply this when you're posting or commenting online?"

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.