

# Life Group Lesson

40 Days with the Risen Christ • Week of April 24

## Introduction

Upon reading the Gospel accounts of the Lord's resurrection, the sincere student of God's Word begins to ask: Why didn't the disciples believe what the Lord had told them—that Jesus must rise from the dead? Why didn't people recognize Jesus upon His rising? Would I have been one to doubt or believe? What does Forty Days with the Risen Christ mean to me? How does Christ *being alive* affect me personally today? Is the story really true? Or is all this talk of faith, the Bible, creation, and resurrection a made-up lie? O Lord, I need to know.

God's Word is full of details given through eyewitness accounts. For example, each Gospel account tells us it was 'very early on Sunday morning' when the women went to the tomb (Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2, Luke 24:1, John 20:1). Each account tells us that it was angels who first announced the Lord's bodily resurrection and rolled aside the stone. Matthew tells us a great earthquake occurred at the moment an 'angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled aside the stone' that sealed the tomb, causing the guards to 'shake with fear' and fall into a 'dead faint' (Matthew 28:2). Luke tells us two angels appear to the women who 'stood there puzzled' asking, "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive?" (Luke 24:5)

Mark tells us the women went *inside* the tomb and saw an angel sitting on the 'right side' of the empty stone slab (Mark 16:5). As we read the Gospel of John we see Mary Magdalene lingering at the tomb, because 'as she wept' she stooped and looked in and saw 'two white-robe angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying' (John 20:11-12, see also 'plans for the Ark of the Covenant' Exodus 25:17-20). According to John, Mary did not recognize the Lord initially; she mistook Him for the gardener (John 20:14). Suffice it to say, angels were all around. Although Rome (Pilate) had guards posted, heaven also had security stationed—messengers from Heaven's Hosts!

## Background

The question remains: why didn't the disciples recognize Jesus? Why do we (even those of us who claim to be Christ-followers) so often fail to recognize His presence among us today? We read that "God kept them from recognizing Him" (Luke 24:16). Christ is Holy. Yet, He knows we live in a fallen, broken world. He knows we are sinners distracted by a self-saturated and fear-driven culture, as well as our own weakness (Psalm 103:14). Perhaps at times God keeps us from recognizing Jesus for reasons beyond our understanding. Like the disciples found it hard to believe the testimony of the women (Luke 24:11), perhaps our minds are veiled from full disclosure to the Risen Christ because we are still looking for a dead man. What is the turning point? Jesus does not scold us for honest doubt. But once He does appear and call our name, His presence demands a response. He becomes upset when we refuse to believe His Word.

*Then Jesus said to them,*

*"You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophet wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering His glory?" Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself (Luke 24:25-27).*

## Reading the Text

### Read Luke 24:1-7, 13-31

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. How can we help you?

## Close in a Time of Prayer asking:

How can I pray for my fellow Life Group participants this week?

## In Closing

Jesus places high value on the Scriptures. Do you? God's Word is bedrock for faith in Christ. The more you encounter Scripture, the more you will encounter the Risen Christ! Read God's Word daily, because His wisdom and living Word surrounds you every day. Each new day is an opportunity for you to hear His voice and see Him at work. Ask the Lord to bring you out of the shadows into His glorious presence. Christ wants to reveal Himself to you and *through* you. Because it was 'early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark' when Mary Magdalene went to the tomb, she initially mistook Jesus for the gardener. But the moment Jesus called her name, she recognized and believed (John 20:14-17). What will it take for you to recognize His voice and believe in the *reality* of resurrection life?

## One Year Bible Readings

Apr. 24: Judges 2:10-3:31, Luke 22:14-34, Psalm 92:1-93:5, Proverbs 14:1-2

Apr. 25: Judges 4:1-5:31, Luke 22:35-53, Psalm 94:1-23, Proverbs 14:3-4

Apr. 26: Judges 6:1-40, Luke 22:54-23:12, Psalm 95:1-96:13, Proverbs 14:5-6

Apr. 27: Judges 7:1-8:17, Luke 23:13-43, Psalm 97:1-98:9, Proverbs 14:7-8

Apr. 28: Judges 8:18-9:21, Luke 23:44-24:12, Psalm 99:1-9, Proverbs 14:9-10

Apr. 29: Judges 9:22-10:18, Luke 24:13-53, Psalm 100:1-5, Proverbs 14:11-

Apr. 30: Judges 11:1-12:15, John 1:1-28, Psalm 101:1-8, Proverbs 14:13-14

# 40 DAYS WITH THE RISEN CHRIST

Text: Luke 24: 1-7, 13-31

## PLAIN TRUTH:

The more you \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_  
the more you \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## Why Didn't they Recognize Him?

1. The obvious answer in the text is "God \_\_\_\_\_ them from \_\_\_\_\_ him".
2. Since the text says it was getting \_\_\_\_\_ in the day (v.29) perhaps they saw him through the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. They found it hard to \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of women and his disciples.
4. They didn't \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus because they were looking for a \_\_\_\_\_ man!

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