

“It’s true! The Lord has risen...”

All four Gospels give an account of what happened to the disciples when they first realized Jesus had risen from the dead. According to each account there was a time of unbelief and then amazement. I have always loved the account of the two who met Jesus on the road that led from Jerusalem to Emmaus in Luke 24. Like so many of us these two disciples were going the wrong direction. (Translated, Emmaus means place of hot water.) They were discouraged after Jesus’ death on the cross because their hope that He had been the Messiah was dashed. Now they were returning to their old life, not fully understanding all that had happened. When they finally realized the one walking with them was Jesus, and that He had in fact fulfilled all Messianic prophecy by being raised from the dead, they immediately turned around and headed back to Jerusalem. There they found the other eleven Apostles and shouted, “It is true! The Lord has risen...” These men had come into the reality of the risen Christ and everything in their lives changed. In that moment of epiphany the direction of their lives, motives, aspirations and even their purpose for living would forever be changed. John recorded in his Gospel that Jesus told His disciples, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” John went on to say that after His resurrection, “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.” [John 20:30] When we come to the reality that “It is true!” everything changes for us as well. When we truly realize Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God – a new world is opened and a new life in His name begins.

Monday – An empty tomb

Read John 20:1-9 and Matt. 28:11-15

Questions for reflection

- John 20:8 & 9 is thought provoking. It said that after John saw the empty tomb he believed, and went on to say in parentheses, (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) What did they believe? Why were they so shocked later when they actually saw Him face to face?
- If the Pharisees and Roman guards were aware of Old Testament prophesy, would they fear an empty tomb? Why?

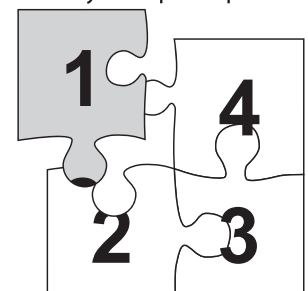
Tuesday – Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene

Read John 20:10-18 and Matt. 28:1-10

Questions for reflection

- Do you find it interesting that Jesus first appeared to a woman who had been a former prostitute and who had been delivered from seven demons instead of coming first to the Apostles? What does this say to you about the character and nature of God?
- Have you ever felt that you would be the last person on earth God would want to have relationship with? That may have been just how Mary Magdalene felt. What was characteristic about Mary that caused her to be at the tomb in the first place?

Weekly Discipleship Track



Wednesday – Jesus appears to His disciples

Read John 20:19-23, Luke 24:33-43 and Mark 16:9-14

1. Life reflection – need for change, hunger for God
2. Presentation of truth – teaching and studying
3. Processing the truth – reflection and debrief in community
4. Life change – response to truth, new habits and actions

Questions for reflection

- Mark's Gospel records that after appearing to Mary Magdalene and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, "Jesus appeared to the Eleven and rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after He had risen". It is interesting to note that the Apostles were not easily convinced, especially when you consider that the Church was going to be established in part on their testimony. What is significant about this?
- Did you receive Christ on the testimony of others alone or did you need to experience Him for yourself? How and when did that happen?

Thursday – Jesus appears to Thomas the doubter

Read John 20:24-28 and Luke 24:36-43

Questions for reflection

- Many of us can relate to Thomas. We have all had our doubts at one time or another concerning the resurrection. If being raised from the dead was an every day occurrence then there would be no proof that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah. Considering this, why is the passage in Luke 24:44 so significant where it reads, "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures"? What is so significant about Old Testament scripture?
- Jesus said to Thomas, "Stop doubting and believe." There comes a point in each of our lives when the Lord might say these words to us. Like Thomas, there must also come a point in which we must say to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" What was the proof or evidence that caused you to come to this point?

Friday – Jesus is revealed to all

Read John 20:29-30, (also vs. 21-23 again) and Luke 24:44-48

Questions for reflection

- Note in John 20:22 that after the Apostles came into the reality of the risen Christ it said, "And with that He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." Like the original Apostles, when we come into the reality and faith that Christ rose from the dead and is the Son of God, we too receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This is the point of our salvation. What do you think it is that brings people to this point of faith? What brought you to it?
- Jesus said to the disciples who personally witnessed Him after the resurrection, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Since we do not have the advantage of Thomas or the other disciples who witnessed these events firsthand, what do we have as proof that Jesus is Messiah? What is it that has allowed Christianity to flourish for 2000 years?