

Day 1

April 13



Pray | For a fresh understanding of Jesus' resurrection

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS is essential to the Christian faith.

He is risen, indeed! This week, we will investigate the truth and impact of Jesus's resurrection on our daily life. The resurrection differentiates Christianity from other religions and sets Jesus apart from other 'religious' leaders. "The claim of resurrection is vital to Christianity. If Christ has been raised from the dead by God, then he has the credentials and certification that no other religious leader possesses. Buddha is dead. Mohammad is dead. Moses is dead. Confucius is dead. But according to Christianity, Jesus is alive." Jesus didn't just teach good things and then die like everyone else mentioned above. Jesus is God. He lived a perfect, sinless life marked by humility and service. He died for you and lives to ensure your salvation!

R.C. Sproul, Reason to Believe (Grand Rapids, MI: Lamplighter, 1982), 44.



Read | Matthew 28:1-10, 1 Corinthians 15:13-21, John 14:6



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

Imagine being among the women in today's Matthew passage. They knew Jesus' tomb was sealed and guarded. Still, they went. Are you seeking Jesus? What perceived obstacles get in the way of seeking him daily?

1 Corinthians 15 explains that faith without the resurrection is useless and futile, yet sometimes we take it lightly. How are you challenged or encouraged by these words? God is ready and willing to hear your questions, doubts and concerns. Ask him to give you a fresh understanding of Jesus' resurrection and the courage to believe the impossible!

Our culture tells us that there are many ways to God, but John 14:6 declares that Jesus is the *only* way. How does the truth that Jesus is alive impact your faith? Who in your life that needs to hear the truth about Jesus' resurrection?

Day 2

April 14



Pray | For Jesus' power and victory over sin to be displayed in you

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS is proof of God's victory and power over sin and death.

Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life. When he died on the cross, his perfect sacrifice paid the penalty of death for *all* sin. When God raised him from the dead on the third day, sin and death and their master, Satan, were defeated for eternity. While we are still waiting for Jesus to return and complete God's plan, believers share in Jesus' victory NOW. We don't have to wait for Jesus to return to experience victory over sin! From the moment we believe and receive the Holy Spirit, we are forgiven and given Jesus' power over sin. Because of the resurrection, no matter how habitual or ingrained the sin may seem, we don't have to accept *any* sin in our lives.



Read | Hebrews 2:14-15, Philippians 1:6



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

Hebrews 2:14-15 tells us that Jesus freed us from slavery to sin and broke the power of Satan over us. While all believers still sin and will wrestle with sin until Jesus returns, we can be confident that *no* sin is too great to fight with the power of the Holy Spirit. Where are you still living in slavery? Take a moment to reflect and pray. Ask God to show you a first step toward breaking Satan's strongholds in your life.

Everyone has sinful habits we just can't seem to shake. The process of sanctification takes time. Do you feel defeated when you do *that one thing* again? How does the promise in Philippians 1:6 encourage you to trust God's faithful work and perfect timing? Ask God to grow your faith as you walk with him, and to help you see the victories along the way.

Jesus died for you. He paid for your sins. Do you know him? If you have questions about what it means to receive forgiveness and know Jesus, consider taking the Story of God class at Five Oaks, or reach out to a pastor, small group leader or friend who can help you explore what this means.

Day 3

April 15



Pray | For joyful obedience to the call of personal discipleship

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS changes everything.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, the disciples slept instead of keeping watch. They scattered in fear after Jesus was arrested and hid in the crowds during the crucifixion. It's relatable, isn't it? Everything they *thought* they knew about the Messiah contradicted what was happening. Then, when the women told them that Jesus is alive, everything changed! They saw Jesus for themselves and finally understood he never intended to be an earthly king; Jesus was doing something better. Soon, the disciples would receive the Holy Spirit and be compelled to boldly share the gospel with the world. The resurrection changed them *forever*. From then on, they pursued the eternal purpose of following Jesus and making him known, even if it cost them *everything*.



Read | Matthew 28:5-8, 28:16-20



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

Before encountering Jesus, the women believed and obeyed the angel by going to tell the disciples that Jesus had risen. They acted on the information they had, and so can we. When God calls you to serve him or tell others about him, do you hesitate or immediately obey? Where are you holding back or requesting more proof or assurance? Ask God to help you trust his call and take the next step of obedience in faith.

Before sending the disciples to share the gospel, Jesus spent three years discipling them. They listened and watched, questioned and learned; we cannot share what we do now know! How seriously do you take the call to be a disciple of Jesus? Where do you need others to come alongside to strengthen, encourage, teach, correct and disciple you? Whom can you ask to fill this role? If you have this support already, today is a great day to say thank you!

Jesus calls each of us to *make* disciples. Even those new to faith in Jesus can share what they've learned and how knowing God changes everything. Who are *you* discipling? If you're not discipling anyone, prayerfully ask God to show you who he has in mind and then respond with joyful obedience.

Day 4
April 16



Pray | To worship Jesus wholeheartedly

THE RESURRECTED JESUS IS WORTHY of all glory, honor and praise.

When the women arrived at the tomb, saw the stone rolled away and heard the angel's message, they had a choice: to believe, or to not believe. These faithful followers of Jesus chose the former. Then they took the next logical step and acted on their belief by obeying the angel. They took off running to share the message that Jesus had risen with the disciples. As we noted yesterday, the women obeyed *before* they saw Jesus. Can you imagine what they felt when they saw him for themselves? Their response gives us an idea; they fell to the ground, grasped his feet, and *worshipped*. There were no reservations. No questions. Just pure joy, reverence and worship. The resurrected Jesus is worthy of *all* glory, honor and praise.



Read | Matthew 28:9-10, Revelation 5:11-13



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

Upon seeing the resurrected Jesus, the women fall at his feet in worship. What is your response to the resurrection?

The posture of the women demonstrates humility and reverence. How could changing your posture help you worship him today?

When you obey Jesus, do you expect to encounter him? Are you looking for him? Ask God to help you see him as you go about this day. It may be helpful to keep a journal to keep track of God's work in your life. As you see him, will you respond with wholehearted worship?

In Revelation, all of heaven and earth worship the resurrected Jesus. When we worship him, we join them! Take a moment to declare with all of creation, "*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!... To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever!*"

Day 5

April 17



Pray | To believe and cling to the promises of God

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS gives believers expectant hope.

“I pinky swear!” The pinky promise is a common ‘shaking of hands’ using pinky fingers to reinforce that a promise won’t be broken. Popular among school-aged children, most participants probably don’t understand that the breaking of a pinky promise implies the offended party may break or cut off your pinky! The mere existence of the pinky promise reveals that people aren’t great promise keepers. Unlike us, God keeps *all* of his promises. He doesn’t need a pinkie swear to reinforce his words; God is incapable of lying and fully capable of fulfilling his promises. Jesus’s resurrection is proof! Because of Jesus, believers in every circumstance have blessed assurance of salvation and can look to Jesus’s second coming with expectant hope.



Read | Matthew 17:22-23; 28:6, 2 Corinthians 1:20-22, 1 Peter 1:3



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

In Matthew 17, Jesus foretold of his own death and resurrection, although the women and disciples didn’t yet understand what he meant. It wasn’t until the angel told the women Jesus had raised, *just as he said*, that it finally made sense (Matthew 28). *Ah ha!* Can you think of a time when the Holy Spirit brought a truth you didn’t understand before to life? How has God been equipping you with his words for the trials you are facing now?

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus fulfilled much Old Testament prophecy. 2 Corinthians tells us that in Christ, all God’s promises are Yes and Amen. When we believe and receive the Holy Spirit, it is a guarantee of our eternal inheritance. How do these truths change the way you see today’s challenges?

Through the resurrection of Jesus, God has given us new life and a living hope (1 Peter). What attribute, promise or truth do you need to cling to today to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus in expectant hope, no matter what you face today?

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