

the road to the cross

Week 7 – Resurrection

mark 14-16

1. If a random stranger came and told you that someone who had been dead a few days had just come back to life, what would you think? What if a close friend told you this? What would it take for you to be convinced that it was true?

An opening question to get them to start to think through the incredible nature of Jesus' death and resurrection. This study will hopefully help them to see the truth of the resurrection and the importance that should play in their life.

As we conclude our series of looking at Jesus' final days on earth, we have seen that Jesus has had a very difficult week. People have criticised his actions and he has been betrayed and abandoned by some of his friends. On top of this, people have made false claims which led to his arrest, and then being sentenced to die by crucifixion. Last week we saw Jesus die a horrible death upon the cross...

Read Mark 15:42-16:8

2. What do you notice about the Christians of the early church as you read these verses?

They have still failed to understand Jesus' teaching that he would die and then rise again. They go to the tomb, clearly expecting to find his body there.

3. Throughout history, many people have attempted to 'explain' that Jesus did not really rise from the dead. Using the passage, how would you answer the following objections:

- a. Jesus never actually died

Verse 44 in particular confirms that Jesus was dead (centurions were trained to assess whether this was the case or not). Also in the other Gospel accounts we read of the spear being stuck into Jesus' side to check if he was really dead.

- b. The women simply went to the wrong tomb

Extremely unlikely. 15:47 explicitly records that the women were there where Jesus was buried and saw which tomb it was. In the morning they do not seem to be confused about the tomb, but simply that the stone has been moved, and Jesus' body is not there.

- c. Someone stole the body

Not from the passage as such, but worth discussing as it is a common objection. Both the guards and the disciples would have no reason to steal the body. Guards – could have produced it to show followers were wrong; disciples – would they be willing to die for this lie?

4. If Jesus really did rise from the dead, what do we learn about him from this event?

We see that he must have truly been God (as he had claimed to be) – there is no other way that he could have defeated death. It also shows that he has been true to his word in fulfilling the promises / prophecy about him (by himself and others).

5. Why do you think it is important that Jesus' resurrection was a bodily resurrection?

It is important, as a merely spiritual resurrection would not be able to effectively atone for our sins (think carefully about how to explain this to younger groups). It is also an indication of the bodily resurrection that is to come for us. [Hint – you may like to look at 1 Corinthians 15 in preparing for this question].

6. What significance does the resurrection play in the Christian faith?

It is of vital significance! It means that we do not follow a dead Saviour, but one who is alive, and whom we are able to have a personal relationship with. Many other implications as well.

7. What are the consequences of this for us as we live out our faith day-to day?

*It means that we need to recognise that Jesus is a **living** Lord and Saviour, and respond to him in a way that reflects this. It also means that we can be assured of the promise of our salvation.*

REFLECTIONS

8. Thinking back over the series as a whole, in what ways have you been challenged:

This is a chance to spend some time thinking through the whole series to conclude. As leaders it would be well worth having a clear idea in your head at this point of what was covered in each of the studies – you may like to provide a brief recap of this.

a. To understand the story of Jesus' death and resurrection at a deeper level?

b. To reconsider the way in which you relate to Jesus?

c. To evaluate how you live in response to what Jesus has done for us?

Pray as a group, spending some time thanking God for sending Jesus to die for our sake. Pray that we would be challenged by the impact that his death and resurrection should have on our relationship with him. Ask for his help in the areas which we still need to change in response to what he has done.