

TAKEAWAY:

Jesus' resurrection transforms fear, despair, and failure into hope, purpose, and joy

INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS:

- What is one area of your life that feels dead or hopeless right now? How does the resurrection speak to that situation?
- When and where did you first hear about the resurrection of Jesus?
- Have you ever encountered anyone rejecting the resurrection of Jesus?

UNDERSTANDING:

Have a group member read Luke 24:1-12

- How did this sermon help you better understand this passage of scripture? Is there anything that was mentioned during the sermon that stuck out to you?
- What does the empty tomb signify about the nature and power of Jesus' resurrection?
Consider how the physical absence of Jesus' body challenges or affirms your understanding of His divine nature and the implications it has for your faith.
- How does the reaction of the women at the tomb reflect the transformative power of the resurrection?
- Reflect on the emotions and actions of the women as they encountered the angelic message. How do their experiences illustrate the shift from despair to hope?
- In what ways does the resurrection affirm the truth of Jesus' teachings and promises?
Examine how the resurrection fulfills Jesus' prior declarations about His death and rising again. (Matt. 16:21; 17:22; 20:17, Mark 8:31) What does this fulfillment say about the reliability of His words?
- Because Jesus conquered death, we have hope beyond this life. How should this truth change the way we face loss, failure, or disappointment?

APPLICATION:

- In Romans 8:11 Paul talks about the same power that raised Jesus, living in us. What would it look like to live in the power of the Spirit this week—practically speaking?
- Take time to celebrate and thank God for His faithfulness in your life. Share testimonies of how God has brought resurrection to "dead areas."

GO DEEPER:

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material.

You can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting and to deepen your study of our text from this week. Here are two "Going Deeper" discussion prompts that build upon the above provided questions without repeating them:

That's Nonsense! The disciples dismissed the women's testimony as "nonsense," (Greek:

lēros: “delirious nonsense”, “an idle tale,” or “garbage”). *Leros* is a *hapax legomenon* in the NT (i.e., it appears only 1x in the entire Bible); it expresses something graver than “doubt” (from the Greek words *distazo* or *apisteo*). It may indicate that the disciple’s disbelief on that day was a unique, specific reaction, that is, at that time for them Jesus’ resurrection wasn’t just unlikely or doubtful it was in a category of being totally absurd, “delirious nonsense/garbage.” Yet, they “ran to the tomb”

- In what specific areas of your life has the belief of “that” person getting saved, a marriage working out, a person forgiving another, a damaged child becoming whole, finances working out, a difficult, embedded sin being overcome, etc. been borderline “delirious nonsense” only to have God do the miraculous? What caused you to “run to the tomb” in those instances? Hearing these testimonies can build our faith in our Living God (Acts 14:15; Heb 12:12) in whom we are called to trust.
- For the natural person, who is driven strictly by logic and reason, skepticism is a default human response when faced with the impossibilities of life that only God’s grace can bring. Where have you unconsciously decided and settled upon the idea that God’s promises of restoration are “nonsense” or “idle tales,” for they contradict the longstanding, hard facts of that situation? In what area(s) of your life can we pray and believe God with you to do the impossible work that only God’s grace and mercy can accomplish? How can Jesus’ resurrection and the idea that God brings life from death (Rom 4:17) dismantle our cynicism in “dead end” situations?
- Why do you believe in the resurrection? Consider (a) why women were the first proclaimers of it; (b) Why the disciples, who were the first to scoff at the idea of Jesus’ resurrection, became mighty apostles who each suffered some form of martyrdom for their unwavering faith in the supreme importance of Christ’s death and resurrection.
- What practical tips can you share with your LG on how faith replaced doubt in your life. How does faith differ from positive thinking?

The Necessity of the Cross The angels remind the women in Luke 24:7 that the crucifixion was not a tragic accident but a divine necessity (Greek: *dei*, 'it is necessary'). In this week’s message we heard that “*Death does not have the final word,*” but the text of Luke implies death was the *necessary* word before the final word of resurrection could be spoken.

- Read Luke 24:6-7; Acts 2:22-24; and Luke 24:25-27
- How do you synthesize the language of the suffering of the Messiah being “necessary” with Peter’s sermon that this suffering on the cross was a part of the “definite plan” of God? What conclusions can you make?
- If the worst event in history (the scandalous death of the Son of God) was necessary to produce the best event (Redemption), how can we trust that our current “dead ends” are not signs of God’s absence, but necessary preludes to a resurrection we cannot yet see?”
- Read John 12:23-24. The biblical testimony suggests that suffering is not outside God’s plan but integral to the narrative of redemption. If the resurrection transforms “despair into hope,” it does so by revealing that God redeems suffering rather than merely removing it. The “death” is a prerequisite for “resurrection.” How do these thoughts relate to the agricultural example that Jesus uses in John 12? How could you connect these ideas to the significance of Christian baptism?
- How does understanding the *necessity* of the cross change how you interpret your own seasons of suffering, failure, or “death”?

Quotes:

- “The Resurrection is true. It is no idle tale. And it changes the rules forever.... In the newly-revised rules of Easter, resurrection takes the place of death; faith takes the place of doubt; courage takes the place of fear; hope takes the place of despair; and a love stronger than death conquers all. There is no need to doubt or despair, ever again.... This is the power and gift of Easter.” Martin Luther
- On Luke 24:11, Tim Keller states, “[The disciples] were not in a state of hallucination, but of skepticism. They were not waiting for a ghost; they were hiding from the police... This text destroys the theory that the disciples were so eager for the resurrection that they projected it into reality.”
- "Why would Luke have recorded the testimony of women when women weren't considered reliable witnesses? He must have been under tremendous pressure to change the story. Why didn't he, unless it really happened that way? The fact that the women are the first witnesses is a very strong argument for the historical veracity of the resurrection accounts." N. T. Wright
- “If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all that he said; if he didn't rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what he said?... The doctrine of the bodily resurrection of the dead is not an old-fashioned thing. It tells us that God loves the whole man and the whole man is important.” Francis Schaefer
- "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a **lunatic**—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him **Lord** and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

PRAYER:

Pray for fresh awareness of resurrection power in each person's life and for courage to live as people of hope and victory.