

LEAD SHEET

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

EASTER 2016

MARCH 27, 2016

THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL:

DIALOGUE WITH GOD

If you want to know God better, talk to Him!

GETTING STARTED

Take turns going around the group and having each student answer these two questions:

- What is the most significant event that ever happened in your life?
- How did that event change the way you live?

(If you have a large group, you may want to split into smaller groups and have the students share with others within their own group.)

- What do you think is the most significant event in the entire Bible?
- Why did you pick that one?
- How has that event changed your life?

In the verses we are about to read, we'll see what Paul considers "of first importance." The challenge for today is to determine the truth of that claim and to understand how this event has changed us.

DIGGING IN

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

There is a lot of evidence in favor of the Resurrection. Let's ask a series of questions as we seek out the Truth.

1. Why is there a Christian Church?

We are here doing something that hasn't always been done. The Christian Church did not always exist.

- If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then what are we doing?
- Why did a church begin?
- Why did the message spread?
- Can you think of an explanation besides that Jesus rose from the dead?

2. Why did the holy day switch from Saturday to Sunday?

The Jews worshipped on the Sabbath (Saturday). Now, Christians gather on the first day of the week to worship.

- Why did people abandon Saturday and start worshipping on the supposed Resurrection day of Sunday?
- Can you think of an explanation besides that something significant happened on a Sunday?

3. Why do we have Christian Scriptures, such as the New Testament, claiming it happened?

Three men (Matthew, Peter, and John) contribute to the Scriptures. Luke, a well-known and trustworthy historian, traveled with Paul, and he accounts for the Resurrection as well.

- If they were lying, what was their motivation?
- What motivation would they have had for lying?
- Why have these documents stood the test of time?

- Can you think of an explanation besides that it was the truth?

4. Where is the body?

There are many theories trying to explain what happened to the body of Christ.

The Disciples Stole the Body

- Why? Was it to go out and preach a gospel that was not true, and to die for it?
- How? How did they beat up the guards, move the stone, and transport the body?
- Why wasn't the body ever recovered?
- Would you say this is more or less likely than the Resurrection?

Jesus Was Never Buried

This is highly unlikely. All four Gospels state that He was buried and all by Joseph of Arimathea. Not only that, but Mark's burial account was likely taken from an even earlier source, making it highly reliable.

- If Jesus was never buried, what happened to His body?
- Do you think this is more or less likely than the Resurrection?

Jesus Survived and Escaped

This theory is ridiculous considering Jesus' physical state of being. Not only would He had had to survive His punishment, He also would have had to unwrap Himself out of about 75 pounds of burial garments and spices, which were typical for that time. He would have had to roll a stone out of the groove on which it sat, beat up or sneak around the guards, and hide out without leaving a blood trail, getting tired, or passing out. Remember, He would have been walking around with exposed bones, pierced hands and feet, a burst heart and lung, and dislocated shoulders. That is impossible for a human.

- What do you think of this theory?
- Do you think it is more or less likely than explaining the empty tomb with the Resurrection?

The Women Went to the Wrong Tomb

This theory is that the women were so upset that they mistakenly visited the wrong tomb—an unused tomb. Jesus had not risen—He was just forgotten. This is ridiculous because (1) even in emotional distress, people would've remembered where they buried Him and (2) once people began claiming that He rose from the dead, the officials would've found the right tomb and corrected them.

- Do you think the women could have been confused?
- Do you think this is a realistic argument?

5. How do you explain Jesus' appearances?

Paul records that Jesus appeared to the apostles, to 500 people, to himself, and to others. This passage in Corinthians is actually an ancient creed that Paul copies into his letter. That puts it much closer to the actual event of the Resurrection, making it more reliable. It has been proposed that in their distress, all the Christians saw Jesus as a hallucination. Psychologists discount that theory, citing mass hallucinations as extremely rare (so how did He “appear” to 500 people at once.)

- If they were hallucinating, why did someone not just go to the tomb, point at the body, and settle the issue?
- Is hallucination a more likely explanation than the Resurrection?
- Can you think of another option to explain these appearances other than that Jesus was alive?

6. Why the Martyrs?

Every apostle besides John died a martyr's death.

- If they weren't convinced of the Resurrection, why did they give their lives freely?
- Would you die for something you knew was a lie?

Summary of Additional Affirmative Evidence

- Reliable sources, such as early Church creeds in 1 Corinthians, claim the Resurrection happened.
- Mark, using an account of the Resurrection from as early as 37 B.C., writes about the Resurrection, meaning legend could not have spread without being contradicted with the truth.
- If the tomb were not empty, if it was a hoax, someone would've known where to find it and expose the lie.
- The Resurrection story is simple, unlike later embellished fictional accounts where Jesus exits the tomb with a talking cross on His back in full view of everyone.
- The account of women finding the tomb speaks to its truth, because in that culture such a prestigious position would never be given to women fictionally.
- The earliest Jewish position was that Jesus had risen. The question was "Where's the body?" They came up with the theory that it had been stolen. However, that proves the point that the tomb was empty. They had to invent a theory because they knew it was empty!

We can know, beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus really did rise from the dead. Furthermore, it should change the way we look at life. That's what we want to talk about next.

MAKING IT REAL

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

In Corinth, there seems to be some teachings that the Resurrection could not have happened. Paul's argument is simple. If there is no rising from the dead, Christ did not rise. Moreover, if Christ did not rise, we're wasting our time!

Discussion Questions:

1. According to this passage, what things are useless if Christ did not rise? (*Our faith and preaching.*)
2. Why is it that Paul says we should be pitied? (*Because there's more to this life.*)

The Resurrection of Jesus from death is foundational to our faith and hope. It is not just for this life, but also for after this life ends.

3. If Christ's Resurrection is the foundation of our hope, how should our lives change?
4. How should we live in light of the Resurrection?
5. How did the Resurrection change Jesus' first followers?
6. Do you follow Him with that same boldness and faith? Today, in light of the Truth of the Resurrection, let's allow God to change us.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray for your students to live with the boldness of faith founded in the hope of the Resurrection.

#CRAZYFORCHRIST