

Bible studies on the Resurrection of Jesus for w/b Monday 13th April

(Prepared by Paul this week so Charlie can enjoy his birthday!!)

Welcome!

Dear Friends

We have rejoiced to worship together at Easter, albeit remotely in ways that we have never done before! In this strange situation we find ourselves in, it is the message of the Cross of Christ and His resurrection that gives us great hope. Whatever the outcome for us or our families and friends, we know that God is in control and just asks us to trust Him and believe His purposes for us are good and that He is worthy of praise and glory.

In these next 5 days let us meditate on the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the reactions of the disciples and Jesus' appearances and challenges to his fearful followers.

Let us desire *'to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.'* Philippians 3 v 10,11

In this devotional, there will be a passage to read, a simple message for you to explain to children in your house and a section where you can go deeper, if you wish to further study this subject. The idea is that the study is supposed to take about 10 mins and can be done with all your household.

I pray this will be a blessing to you and all in your house during this time.

Prayer:

You may like to use this prayer (or your variation of it) at the start of this study:

Heavenly Father, Thank you that the Lord Jesus, the King of the universe, the Son of Man, suffered and died for me and rose from the dead, showing who He really is. Let the wonder of His love and Your complete Salvation overwhelm me, so that I run to You, rather than run away from You to sin. Please use me in Your Mission to honour Jesus as You bring repentance and forgiveness of sin to a lost world. Amen.

Kids questions/activities: Mary Magdalene was first to the tomb, probably some time between 3 and 6am, while it was still dark, at the very first opportunity to be there as the Jewish Sabbath was now over. Other accounts e.g. Luke 23v 49, 55, 56 suggest that she was last at the cross and followed the burial party to the tomb.

What does this tell you about her love for her Saviour? How much do YOU love Jesus? Are you prepared to do hard things for Jesus because He first loved you?

Why do you think Mary loved Jesus so much? Cf. Luke 8v2. (Luke 7v47 She had been forgiven so much that she was so grateful to Jesus so she loved Him greatly)

V2 To her shock the tomb is open – a further act of malignity from the authorities or grave robbers?

V3-5 '*The other disciple*' is most likely the author, John, a younger man so he reaches the tomb first, and observes the folded clothes.

V6, 7 Peter arrives and rushes straight in – we have a further description of the folded clothes – why is that so significant? Grave robbers would have just dragged the body out and left a mess – one description is that the clothes looked like a chrysalis left by a butterfly – the body just vanished from its earthly wrappings!

V8, 9 John saw and believed – what? That Jesus' body had risen from the dead – but v9 suggests that this faith by observation is inferior to understanding Jesus' resurrection prophesied from the Scripture. E.g. Psalm 16 v9-11.

Think this through: Why is it important for us that the evidence for the resurrection is found in the Scriptures and not in personal observation of Jesus' missing body?

It was impossible for us to be there but we have the sure word of Scripture as a solid ground for our faith.

Prayer ideas: Ask that you will have a love like Mary, because you recognize that you have been forgiven much by Jesus.

Going Deeper: Look at Peter's address to the crowd after Pentecost in Acts 2v22-41. Peter refers to the same passage in Psalm 16 to prove that Jesus' resurrection was foretold by God. Pray that God would have a similar impact on people's lives this Easter as they reflect on the power of the resurrection life of Jesus.

Kids questions/activities: The disciples have gone, but Mary remains at the tomb, weeping. Now she looks inside the tomb – and sees two angels! She turns away and sees Jesus but doesn't recognize Him so assumes He is the gardener. She asks the same question to Him as to the angels. Do you think Mary believes that Jesus has risen from the dead? Look at what questions she asks.

It was as Jesus spoke her name that Mary realised the 'gardener' was Jesus and fell to His feet to hold them. Why did Jesus so gently rebuke her for wanting to hold onto Jesus?

In her lack of faith, Mary wanted the *bodily* presence of Jesus with her. Jesus' work on earth in a physical body was done. Once He ascended to heaven, His Holy Spirit could come and dwell not just with one person but with everyone who had faith in Christ's death and resurrection for them.

Now the work for Mary to do was to bear testimony to Jesus' resurrection and assure the disciples, the brothers of Jesus, that His work on earth is done and now His place was to be in heaven, beside His Father.

There is no need for any further miracles or signs on earth *'now to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God'* John 1v12.

We can call Him, Father, as we trust in Him as God.

Think this through: We should not think there is more for Jesus to do here on earth in order for us to be part of His family. Jesus' death on the cross has done it all; there is nothing more that He or we need to do. Jesus cried from the cross *'It is finished!'* His resurrection from the dead proves that is true beyond a shadow of doubt!

Prayer ideas: Ask God to help you not have a too sentimental view of Jesus. Yes, He is our Saviour and Friend, One to whom we can cry, 'Abba, Father!' in our time of need. But He is also our Creator God, who should be high and lifted up, whom we worship with fear and respect.

Pray that however blessed it is to sit at Jesus' feet, our role now is to do what is harder, to take the good news of Jesus to those who have yet to believe.

Going Deeper? Reflect on John 14 v15-26 where Jesus promises to ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit once He returns to glory. How much are we blessed to have the Holy Spirit in and with us? How can we be assured of His presence with us?

Kids questions/activities: What did Jesus do that showed that His body was different from when He walked on the earth? Just appeared in the room even though the doors were locked!

But what did Jesus do to show them that He was the same person whom they last saw crucified on a cross? V20

We don't know why Thomas was not with them but we now remember him as 'doubting Thomas'. Do you think it was reasonable for Thomas to expect to see the same evidence as the other disciples before believing in Jesus' resurrection? Why? Why not?

V29 – 31 Jesus clearly expected Thomas to believe in His resurrection on the testimony of all his fellow disciples. Certainly, Thomas gives one of the deepest utterances of faith in his expression in v28.

But v31 is one of the sweetest verses of Scripture. Here is the key to YOUR believing – trust what is written, believe in Jesus and have life in His Name! PTL!!

Think this through: *Jesus returned amongst the disciples to commission them to take the gospel to others that they too might believe and so have life in His Name. He gave them the Holy Spirit to empower them to do that – but Thomas was missing.*

In His lack of faith, he had to wait a whole week before Jesus graciously gave him a second chance.

Don't be the 'doubting Thomas' who risks missing out on God's blessing or presumes upon God's grace!

Prayer ideas: Pray for people you know who think it is reasonable to doubt and express Thomas' lack of faith to believe 'unless they see'. Pray that the Holy Spirit would open their eyes to read and believe the testimony of the scriptures as in v31.

Kids activities: If you have a fishing game with little rods with a piece of string with a small magnet on the end and little paper fish with a paper clip on the end, get the children to try to 'fish' out the fish! It's often quite hard. That was what it was like for the disciples – a lot of work but with no reward!

Then explain that Jesus just told them where to fish and they hauled in loads!! You could illustrate this with a powerful magnet – something like one from a loudspeaker would work. Then you come along with this on the end of your rod and it hoovers up all the fish in one sweep!!

A tenuous link, perhaps, but quite fun!!

Remember that Jesus had just come to them all to 'send them out' with the gospel. 20v21.

Previously, when Jesus had called the early disciples from their fishing jobs (Matt. 4v19) He had said that they would be 'fishers of men'.

Was this a gentle reminder of their calling? V11 Was Jesus showing them that it would only be by His miraculous power that they would be successful in fishing for men? V6

Or was Jesus giving them more assurance of His resurrection as this was the third time Jesus appeared to His disciples? V1 and 14

This is the reason given for this account in v1 and emphasized in v14. We must be careful not to over spiritualize any of the details of this story. The resurrection appearances of Jesus were important to establish the faith of the disciples; & that over a Men's breakfast (Missing those Andy L!)

V7 John recognizes Jesus' hand in this. Peter does what Peter does – jumps in the water even though the boat was 100 yards out!!

Think through: Jesus gently refocuses the disciples on their mission. This whole account is similar to many earlier parables where Jesus uses very practical illustrations to make a point. The disciples immediately recognize the Lord and would be further assured by Jesus' appearance as He breakfasts with them.

Prayer ideas: Seek the Lord about how He would refocus your work and lives onto mission to others.

Trust in His power and wisdom to give direction and success in your 'going out' to reach others with the gospel.

Kids questions/activities: Ask the children if they have ever fed lambs or seen them fed in a farmer's barn! It's that time of year to see young lambs out in the fields. Sometimes lambs are born and for some reason they are rejected by their mothers.

What would happen to them if nothing was done? They would starve and die. So, the farmer has to hand feed them from a bottle – a bit like having a very large baby!

In yesterday's reading we found Jesus feeding the disciples, both physically and in reminding them of their future purpose in life – to fish for men; point others to Jesus.

Now Jesus turns His attention to Peter and commissions him to Feed his lambs. Yesterday we were thinking of a parable about catching fish; today Jesus is concerned about feeding lambs!

But it is to Peter that Jesus specifically asks a very personal question – *'Simon, son of John, do you truly love me more than these?'*

'These' could have been his work, fishing, but it is far more likely to be a comparison to the other disciples since Peter had boasted before, that *'although all others fail you, I will not.'* Mk 14v29, John 13v37.

Sadly, we know that Peter denied that he knew Jesus three times cf. John 18 v17, 25-27.

So, when Jesus pointedly asks Peter three times if he really did love Jesus, Peter was cut to the heart as he was reminded of his denial of Jesus.

Think this through: You might not have pointedly denied that you are a follower of Jesus (although that temptation may come to any of us in the presence of a cynical scoffer of all things religious!) but if Jesus were to ask you *'Do you love me?'* How would you answer?

Bishop J C Ryle in his commentary on John says *'Let us take heed that there is some feeling in our religion. Knowledge, orthodoxy, correct views, a respectable moral life – all these do not make up a true Christian. There must be some personal feeling towards Christ. Feeling alone may be here today and gone tomorrow, but the entire absence of feeling speaks ill for the state of a man's soul.'*

Prayer ideas: There are many reasons to love the Lord Jesus. Today express your love for Him because for your sake He lived His entire life, moment by moment, in loving obedience to His heavenly Father – not least when it was most difficult – to save you.

Going Deeper? Read 1 John 4v7-12. What is the evidence that we love God?