

life groups discussion guides

non-fiction: the resurrection



LIFE GROUPS

doing life together

Going Beyond Attending Easter Services

As followers of Christ, believing in the resurrection of Jesus after His crucifixion is a bit of a given. So much so, that perhaps it's possible to believe in it intellectually, but not at a practical level. What do I mean by that? Well, I can believe in my car's ability to get me to the other side of town to visit my Mom. I can go into the garage, climb into the car, insert the key and crank the engine to life, buckle up, push on the gas pedal . . . and still go nowhere. I have all this power and capability to get me from where I am to where I want to be at my disposal, but if I never shift the car into drive, no amount of revving up the engine will get me to my destination.

Could it be that the resurrection is more than just a reason to come to church on Easter Sunday?

What if the resurrection of Jesus had significance that reached FAR beyond providing the early disciples and Christ followers with the courage they needed to move forward after what was first viewed as a crushing defeat at the cross? What if the power that raised Jesus from the dead could be brought to bear in my life and yours? What if that power is already sitting in our "garage", so to speak – but without living in it, or tapping into it, we go through life revving up our engines, and wonder why we seem to be stuck where we are?

As followers of Jesus, I don't think much needs to be discussed about whether or not the resurrection happened – I think we're all on the same page on that one. But I would like to devote most all of the rest of this guide to providing some questions to discuss which hopefully get you thinking about the resurrection and its impact for your life today in ways that maybe you hadn't before.

So here we go:

IMPORTANCE

Take a look at 1 Corinthians 15: 12-19

Q :: The apostle Paul here lays out a pretty serious argument for how important the resurrection is. What things does Paul list that would be consequences of the resurrection not being a reality?

Q :: Can you think of any other consequences that Paul may not have mentioned?

Q :: What if you knew for certain that Jesus was not really resurrected, how would this change your life? As a Christian, would you jettison your Christian faith or keep it? Why?

Q :: What is it about the resurrection that gives you hope? Or, maybe another way to think about it is, do you feel the necessity of the resurrection of Jesus in your daily life?

THE FUTURE

Read 1 Corinthians 15: 35-50

In this same portion of his letter to the Corinthian church, Paul gets into a little more of the meat of the topic of the resurrection. He begins to make it personal for us.

Q :: We are told that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The obvious reason for that would be our sin nature, but are there other reasons besides sin that we cannot be a part of heaven in the bodies we have now?

Q :: As you hear the apostle Paul talk about a new body that will be ours one day, what about your resurrection body do you most look forward to?

Q :: Paul later goes on to say (v. 55) that “death is swallowed up in victory.” Do you fear dying? Why or why not?

Q :: What would it look like to die NOT believing in the promise of a resurrection? How critical is the resurrection of Jesus to what we anticipate for eternity?

THE HERE AND NOW

Read Ephesians 1: 17-20

Read Romans 8: 9-11

This is where I think many Christians have a hot rod in their garage and never learn how to put it in drive! Because Christ rose and ascended to Heaven, the Holy Spirit was sent to dwell inside us. In both the Ephesians and the Romans passages, Paul makes reference to the Spirit that is within us as being the same one who exerted the power that raised Jesus from the dead. And THAT is some serious power!!

Q :: Look through the passages you just read and try to identify where Paul might be indicating that this resurrection power is something that might be available to us at some level.

Q :: For my money, this is the question that really counts: HOW do we tap into the power that raised Jesus from the dead, that dwells within us? Is it something that will likely happen by accident? Do the passages of Scripture themselves, give us any clues?

Q :: In what areas of our lives would access to this sort of power make a major difference?

Prayer

Dear God, we thank you that the power of resurrection – the very power over life, death and eternity – rests in your mighty hand. And we also thank you for the resurrection of our savior, your precious Son, Jesus. We know that Jesus said that when He returned to you in Heaven that He would send the Holy Spirit to dwell with us – better than that, He would dwell INSIDE of us. Father, we understand that the power available to us in this life through your Holy Spirit is something we scarcely understand – and struggle even more with knowing how we can tap into it. That said God, we believe that the power we need to live boldly for you in this life is already within us. We long to plug into it and live victoriously for you – growing daily in our walk with you, and being positioned to be your witnesses to a world that grows ever darker, and needs a relationship with you through Jesus. Let loose the power that is within us to live in these ways for you, and for YOUR glory.

In Jesus mighty name,

Amen!