



THE KING OF THE JEWS
UNIT 27 • SESSION 3

THE RISEN KING

MAIN POINT

Jesus's resurrection is the center of the Christian faith and should be shared with the world.

MATTHEW 27:57-66 • RESISTING THE POSSIBILITY OF JESUS'S RESURRECTION

57 When it was evening, a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph came, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. **58** He approached Pilate and asked for Jesus's body. Then Pilate ordered that it be released. **59** So Joseph took the body, wrapped it in clean, fine linen, **60** and placed it in his new tomb, which he had cut into the rock. He left after rolling a great stone against the entrance of the tomb. **61** Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were seated there, facing the tomb. **62** The next day, which followed the preparation day, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate **63** and said, "Sir, we remember that while this deceiver was still alive he said, 'After three days I will rise again.' **64** So give orders that the tomb be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come, steal him, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first." **65** "Take guards," Pilate told them. "Go and make it as secure as you know how." **66** They went and secured the tomb by setting a seal on the stone and placing the guards.

MATTHEW 28:1-6 • ENCOUNTERING THE REALITY OF JESUS'S RESURRECTION

1 After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to view the tomb. **2** There was a violent earthquake, because an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and approached the tomb. He rolled back the stone and was sitting on it. **3** His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. **4** The guards were so shaken by fear of him that they became like dead men. **5** The angel told the women, "Don't be afraid, because I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. **6** He is not here. For he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay."

MATTHEW 28:7-10 • SHARING THE NEWS OF JESUS'S RESURRECTION

7 "Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has risen from the dead and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see him there.' Listen, I have told you." **8** So, departing quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, they ran to tell his disciples the news. **9** Just then Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" They came up, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. **10** Then Jesus told them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there."

INTRO OPTION 1**SCAVENGER HUNT****SUPPLIES LIST****CANDY OR SMALL PRIZE, CLUE CARDS**

Before your group meets, hide a prize somewhere in the room, in the building, or outside. Working backward from that location, write a series of clues to guide students from your classroom to the treasure.

When students arrive, give them hints about the location of the first clue, then instruct them to work together to find the rest. Give additional hints if it takes a while to find the treasure.

Explain that after Jesus was buried, some women went to the tomb but did not find Jesus. The angel told them He was risen, then pointed to several clues that Jesus had risen. The final “clue” was Jesus Himself, appearing to the women as they went to share the good news!

INTRO OPTION 2**GO & TELL SCRAMBLE****SUPPLIES LIST****PREPARED SCRIPTURE CARDS**

Write out each word from Matthew 28:6, including a card with the reference, on separate index cards. Do the same for Matthew 28:7. Mix up the cards and lay them face down in two piles on one side of the room. When students arrive, place them in two teams and line each team up single file across the room from one of the piles.

Choose a type of movement (skipping, hopping, walking sideways). When you say go, the first person in each line must make it to their team’s pile of cards by moving the way you described. Each student will flip over one card, then move to the back of the line. Once all cards have been flipped, each team will move to their cards and unscramble the verse.

Read both verses out loud. Explain that one verse was a message and one was instructions. God has also given us a message to share—the gospel—and instructions—to go and tell all people.



SCRIPTURE READING

MAIN POINT

Jesus's resurrection is the center of the Christian faith and should be shared with the world.

1. RESISTING THE POSSIBILITY OF JESUS'S RESURRECTION

READ MATTHEW 27:57-66

Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin—the Jewish religious council. When he asked Pilate for Jesus's body, Joseph publicly revealed his loyalty to Jesus. We then see a contrast in the Pharisees who approached Pilate to ask for the securing of Jesus's tomb. They recalled Jesus's statements about rising from the dead. The Pharisees resisted these claims, believing the disciples would steal Jesus's body and falsely claim a resurrection.

WHY IS IT SOMETIMES DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT THE REALITY OF JESUS'S RESURRECTION?

It's easier for some people to accept Jesus's teachings than His resurrection. To apply Jesus's words to our lives is one thing, but to accept that He defeated death requires great faith. Maybe you've struggled with this part of the gospel. Maybe the possibility of coming back from death seems impossible to you. But we have assurance: Jesus predicted His resurrection (see Matt. 16:21); He revealed Himself to many people after the resurrection; and the tomb was empty! Jesus rose and defeated death just as He said He would, paving the way for us to have eternal life.

HOW DOES PILATE'S DECISION TO SEAL AND GUARD THE TOMB HELP PROVE THE RESURRECTION?

Without realizing it, the Pharisees only added to the proof of the resurrection. By providing a Roman guard of up to sixteen soldiers and sealing the tomb, Pilate made it impossible for the disciples to steal Jesus's body. Only an act of God could open the tomb. These precautions only prove God achieved the impossible and raised His Son from dead.

2. ENCOUNTERING THE REALITY OF JESUS'S RESURRECTION

READ MATTHEW 28:1-6

When the women came to Jesus's tomb, they weren't expecting Jesus to be gone. They certainly didn't expect to encounter an angel telling them Jesus had risen. They likely came to the tomb to mourn. But this angel, sitting on top of the stone that had been rolled away, declared what Jesus had already predicted: He isn't here!

WHAT PROOF DID THE ANGEL INVITE THE WOMEN TO SEE (V. 6)? HOW DOES THIS ENCOURAGE YOUR BELIEF IN THE RESURRECTION?



MATTHEW 27:57-66

27:57. “Matthew omitted the fact that Joseph was a prominent member of the Sanhedrin. This detail, mentioned in Mark 15:43 and Luke 23:50–51, heightened even further the sense of danger to Joseph and the depth of his devotion to Jesus. Joseph had probably remained a secret disciple, at least up to this point.”¹³

27:65-66. “Pilate granted their request, giving them a Roman guard. A normal Roman guard was made up of sixteen soldiers. Roman soldiers were well-known for their discipline. The penalty for negligence while on duty (falling asleep or abandoning their post) was execution. These men were not going to let any band of disciples take the body of Jesus.”¹⁴

27:66. “The securing of the tomb would have involved the application to the stone of some kind of substance, perhaps a soft clay, impressed with the Roman imperial stamp. The seal would then be attached to the stone with a large rope or cord. The presence of the soldiers themselves would have been the greater deterrent to a posse trying to roll away the rock and steal the body, but the seal would have been more permanent and made grave robbing an illegal, punishable offense. The guard was presumably to be stationed only for three days (in light of v. 63).”¹⁵



BIG QUESTION

WHAT WOULD BE DIFFERENT IF JESUS HAD NOT RISEN FROM THE GRAVE?

Jesus claimed on multiple occasions that He would die a gruesome death and then rise from the grave on the third day (see Matt. 12:40; 17:22-23; Mark 10:32-34). Jesus also claimed He was the truth (see John 14:6). If Jesus only died on the cross and wasn't resurrected, then we would have no hope. Why? Because Jesus's words would not be truth. And if He lied about the resurrection, then we wouldn't be able to trust His words concerning anything else. But all truth is found in Christ. He did rise from the grave, fulfilling everything He predicted. And because of this, we can trust everything Jesus says.



SCRIPTURE READING

MAIN POINT

Jesus's resurrection is the center of the Christian faith and should be shared with the world.

The angel offered proof for the women. They didn't just have his word, but they had the gift of witnessing the empty tomb. A woman's testimony didn't mean much in this culture; they couldn't even testify in a court of law. So if someone was making this story up, they certainly wouldn't have chosen women as the primary witnesses! But the women did see the empty tomb, and God used their testimony to spread the good news of the resurrection.

WHY WOULD THERE BE NO "GOOD NEWS" WITHOUT THE RESURRECTION?

Without the resurrection, many of Jesus's words would be lies. Not only did He claim He would rise from death, but His sacrifice made eternal life possible for us who believe. Without Jesus defeating death, we would also not defeat death. The resurrection is the heart of the gospel; it's the only way the gospel is "good news."

3. SHARING THE NEWS OF JESUS'S RESURRECTION

READ MATTHEW 28:7-10

Imagine the joy these women felt as they ran away from the tomb. Their friend and teacher had risen! But also imagine their fear and doubt. Did they really just see an angel? Would anyone believe them? What if they had misunderstood? But then they met Jesus in His resurrected body, which confirmed what the angel said.

WHY DO YOU THINK JESUS APPEARED TO THE WOMEN ON THEIR WAY TO THE DISCIPLES?

We know the women were afraid (see v. 8). They were told to carry a shocking message back to people who might not believe them. When they met Jesus on the road, they didn't just get to see Him; they got to physically touch His feet, and they fell down in worship. They had no doubt of Jesus's resurrection and would faithfully carry this message to Jesus's disciples. Jesus met them and supplied them with courage they needed. He offers us this same courage and assurance.

WHEN HAVE YOU NEEDED COURAGE TO TELL SOMEONE THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS?

The message of the cross sounds crazy to those who don't believe (see 1 Cor. 1:18). When we speak of Jesus's resurrection, some people may think we're crazy. We can't allow what others think to keep us from sharing this truth—without sharing about Jesus's resurrection, we aren't sharing the whole gospel. The resurrection is our hope, and it's their hope as well.



MATTHEW 28:1-6

28:2-3. “As before, the quake attests to the cosmic significance of the events. It probably preceded the women’s arrival, since Matthew seems to link it with the coming of the angel, who is already in place when they get to the tomb (see Mark 16:3–4). The angel’s sitting (v. 2) perhaps indicates a note of completion or triumph. The earthquake dislodges the rock but was not needed to enable Christ to be raised. Jesus’ resurrection had already occurred, notwithstanding the massive stone barrier (v. 6).”¹⁶

28:2-6. “Despite the stone, despite the guard, the tomb was empty on the first Easter Day. It had been emptied by divine agency, not by human activity. That is the claim. And that is the meaning of the angel and the earthquake. God is at work in the resurrection of his Son, and the angel and earthquake are the symbols that say so.”¹⁷

MATTHEW 28:7-10

28:9. “En route to the city, they see Jesus himself, who gives them a cheery greeting (like our hello). Their extra-ordinary response reflects a posture and attitude of utter worship and testifies to the bodily nature of Christ’s resurrection.”¹⁸

28:10. “The resurrection of Jesus is the springboard for mission. The disciples can go and proclaim the good news (18–20) only because of the resurrection. Without it there would be nothing to declare. But because of it, how can they keep silent? It is the most exciting news in the whole world. It should be impossible for believers to refrain from mission.”¹⁹



ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE

LIFE AFTER DEATH

The Bible teaches that when a Christian dies, he or she immediately is with the Lord (see 2 Cor. 5:8; Luke 23:43). This is what some people call an intermediate state, given that the final state for believers takes place at the future resurrection (see Rev. 6:10–11). For those who are not in Christ, life after death results in being separated from Christ in a state of suffering, even though future judgment remains (see Luke 16:19–31).



CHRIST CONNECTION

On Easter Sunday, God vindicated His Son's perfect sacrifice by raising Him from the dead. Through faith, we are united to Christ and share in the promise of being resurrected in His likeness. Sin's curse has been removed, death has been defeated, and we are assured of everlasting life with God.



HEAD



HEART



HANDS

WHAT DOUBTS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT THE GOSPEL? WHAT CAN YOU DO TO FIGHT THOSE DOUBTS?

We all experience doubt. But what we do with this doubt makes a difference. God wants us to be honest with Him about our doubts. We see several accounts of people bringing their doubts to Jesus. Even one of His own disciples doubted the resurrection (see John 20:20-24). Jesus met Thomas in His doubt, and He will meet us in ours if we truly long to know the truth. When you experience doubt, don't bottle it up. Take it to God and to trusted spiritual leaders, and dig into God's Word. Pray for God to speak truth to you, and know He'll be faithful to do so.

HOW HAS JESUS'S RESURRECTION AFFECTED THE WAY YOU LIVE? HOW CAN YOU KEEP YOUR SENSE OF WONDER AND AWE OVER THE RESURRECTION?

As believers, we can sometimes lose the awe and wonder of the resurrection. It becomes commonplace—something we get used to. But if we claim to follow Christ and believe in the resurrection, it should make a huge difference in the way we live. The resurrection should continue to amaze us, and it should cause us to want to live like Jesus. Jesus's victory over death is our victory as well, and this helps us to have hope even in the darkest situations. It enables us to live as a light in this dark world because we know eternal life with God awaits us!

WHO DO YOU KNOW WHO NEEDS TO HEAR ABOUT THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION? HOW CAN YOU SHARE IT WITH THEM?

There are people all around you who are suffering. They are facing situations that leave them hopeless. As a believer, you have the only real message of hope: Jesus was crucified and raised to life for us to have freedom from sin. We are called to share this message with the world, and you can start with those people closest to you. When you see someone walking through a difficult situation, share with them why you are able to endure your own struggles. Share with them the good news of the gospel: earth is temporary, and we have hope of eternity with God because Jesus rose from the dead.