

What the Resurrection Practically Changes - Spring 2026 D-Groups

For Wednesday, March 25

“The Resurrection Transforms Our Stories”



The Big Picture - Our Theme for This Six-Week D-Group Session

“This changes everything!” Those three words are somewhat common - a statement that points toward something that is fundamentally transformational. It could be a fresh perspective that practically re-shapes the way we view and live life. Maybe it’s a scientific discovery (*e.g.*, gravity or Einstein’s theory of relativity) or an invention (*e.g.*, the printing press) that opens up new realities for the human experience. It could even be a life-changing event - whether more specific to an individual or one impacting a group of people - that leads to an entirely different path ahead.

In a similar manner, this three-word phrase has also (appropriately!) been used in connection to Jesus’ resurrection. **It’s true on a broad level with humanity.** No individual has had as profound an impact on the world’s history as Jesus has; and, even more directly, because it’s a foundation of our faith, His resurrection (with His birth and His death) is a key event in creating massive ripple effects. Even more specifically, though, **it’s true in the lives of individual followers of Jesus directly. Our life stories - eternally, but even in this world - have been changed because God raised Jesus from the dead!** It’s the climax of the Gospel stories. Even more, it’s a theme that runs through the book of Acts (you might remember this from our journey through that book in the Fall). It’s also a theme that is prevalent in the rest of the New Testament - for example, 1 Corinthians 15, a whole chapter with 58 verses devoted to the truth of Jesus’ resurrection and what it means to us.

As we wrap-up this year, we’re focusing these six weeks of D-Groups on this theme - a worthy one, indeed! It’s also fitting for where we are on the calendar (Easter is April 5!). Even more, it’s a good theme for us to reflect on because of the way it fundamentally changes our perspective and how we practically live a life of faith. Indeed, the way the NT packages this central truth allows us to hit on some other big themes along the way as we’ll see over the course of this session. **This week, as we get in to this session, we focus more broadly on the way Jesus’ resurrection transforms our stories.**

Introductory Reflection

Reflect on an event from your life (not spiritually speaking - as with conversion, but more generally) that significantly transformed your story ... in other words, a time when there was a significant difference before-and-after.

What are some other similar “life events” that bring about significant change?

Reflect on an event in someone else’s life (i.e., something that happened to your parents or your spouse) that has tremendously impacted your own story. Such is the case with Jesus’ resurrection!

This Theme in God's Word

READ Acts 4:1-22 (read also 2:22-36 - Peter attributes the activity of the Risen/Exalted Jesus as being responsible for all that happened)

READ 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 (see also Acts 9:1-19 for Paul's story)

From the story of Acts, it's easy to see that the resurrection was central to the early church: it was at the very heart of their witness and part of the bedrock foundation of their faith. There is even great significance in "the first day of the week" (Sunday) becoming the day of its gatherings. These *Jewish* disciples who had a clear pre-disposition to the Sabbath recognized an even greater day. Why? Because it was the day of Jesus' resurrection - an event that transformed their perspective and how they practiced their faith. Even more directly, it's an experience with the risen Jesus in the 40 days before His ascension (see Acts 1:1-3) that transformed their lives! Even those who were already committed to being Jesus' disciples took that commitment to a whole new level.

Consider the way Peter's story is transformed by the resurrection - from what we see of him in the Gospels (especially at his denial of Jesus) to what we see of him in the book of Acts. *Along with the presence of the Holy Spirit, encountering the risen Jesus produced this change!*

The same is true with Jesus' other original disciples - all but John were martyred specifically for their faith according to tradition, once-skeptical Thomas included. *See page 3 for some supplemental material reflecting on the experience of Jesus' original disciples, transformed by the resurrection.*

James, the brother of Jesus, also encountered the risen Jesus (see 1 Corinthians 15:7). During Jesus' life, he was antagonistic toward faith in Him; yet, something produced a change to the point where he became an influential leader in the early church in Jerusalem. He saw the risen Jesus!

Consider Paul's story (Acts 9, repeated in Acts 22 and 26; see also his autobiographical words in 1 Corinthians 15:8-11). While different than the original eyewitnesses, it was his direct and personal encounter with the risen Jesus that brought about this massive transformation in his life - a story he regularly shared as his "testimony," obviously, quite a powerful one!

The reality of Jesus' resurrection experienced personally led to transformed lives. We are not able to "see" Jesus in the same way, nor should we expect to have an experience similar to Paul's. Yet, through our belief in their eyewitness testimony, we affirm Jesus' resurrection and that faith can allow us to experience His transformation in our lives as well!

Who are people you know whose lives have been fundamentally and practically changed by the reality of Jesus' resurrection?

What stands out to you about the transformed lives of these earliest of Jesus' disciples? How does that bolster your own faith and confidence?

When you think about your own faith in Jesus, in what way is His resurrection part of the foundation upon which you have built your life? How can it become more central to your story?

How does the resurrection transform your view of Jesus and what should that practically change?

See page 4 for an additional supplement from Timothy Keller - reflect on the questions there.

A Supplement - The Transformation of Jesus' Original Disciples

From Gary Habermas in *The Resurrection - Volume II: Heart of the Christian Life* (the first volume focuses on the resurrection as the centerpiece of Christian theology/what we believe while the second focuses on the difference it makes in our ongoing lives of faith we live out = our focus in this D-Group session) ... reflecting on the transformation and conviction of Jesus' original followers - especially contrasting that with a religious cult that appears based on people's beliefs:

There were plenty of reasons to believe that the resurrection occurred, too (in addition to so much else within the content of the Christian faith). In fact, Luke the medical doctor and historical researcher chooses Greek words that indicate the highest level of evidence for this event (Acts 1:3).

Therefore, when we ask why Jesus' disciples were transformed and how their beliefs were different from those of religious cultists, we have to look at the resurrection. This is because it was the foundation of their faith.

And this is the chief difference too. The apostles did not merely believe someone else's claims to be someone special. They made a much more common – and measurable – assertion. They had really seen somebody – the risen Jesus. (Habermas goes on to reflect on Jesus' claims and the evidence provided by His post-resurrection appearances.)

*So why were the disciples transformed? They had seen Him alive after His death! It made all the difference in the world. They knew that His teachings were true after all. **This** is what transformed them and what makes Christianity different from all the religious and cults of the world. They knew they had just seen the risen Jesus!*

(Further reflection on the uniqueness of Christianity because it's built on such an event in history as well as the strength of conviction displayed by believers in Jesus - faithful unto death - vs. those in other religious systems)

The Apostles and others went out to the world armed with the unique messages of Jesus' teaching and His resurrection from the dead. There is good evidence that many of them died for their faith, but there are no indications that a single one of them ever recanted. Led by the Holy Spirit, their newly redirected lives were instrumental in the founding of the Church. These were unique transformations, based on unique events. ... [The resurrection] is what changed them from disillusioned disciples who scattered just prior to Jesus' death into transformed individuals who were willing to die for this message.

Consider Andrew Peterson's song "I've Seen too Much" (you can find the song and the lyrics online) - it's a song that reflects on the experience of those who were eyewitnesses to Jesus' death and resurrection ... from that experience to their transformed lives as they shared His story. It's a song typical of his style, but with that comes a depth and richness to the lyrics.

A Supplement - An Illustration from Timothy Keller

Tim Keller once shared the following story about the power of Jesus' resurrection:

A minister was in Italy, and there he saw the grave of a man who had died centuries before who was an unbeliever and completely against Christianity, but a little afraid of it too.

So, the man had a huge stone slab put over his grave so he would not have to be raised from the dead in case there is a resurrection from the dead. He had inscriptions put all over the slab saying, "I do not want to be raised from the dead. I don't believe in it."

Evidently, when he was buried, an acorn must have fallen into the grave. So a hundred years later the acorn had grown up through the grave and split that slab. It was now a tall towering oak tree.

The minister looked at it and asked, "If an acorn, which has power of biological life in it, can split a slab of that magnitude, what can the acorn of God's resurrection power do in a person's life?"

The minute you decide to receive Jesus as Savior and Lord, the power of the Holy Spirit comes into your life. It's the power of the resurrection - the same thing that raised Jesus from the dead. ... Think of the things you see as immovable slabs in your life - your bitterness, your insecurity, your fears, your self-doubts. Those things can be split and rolled off. The more you know Him, the more you grow into the power of the resurrection.

What are some realities in your life that you need Jesus' RESURRECTION POWER to transform?

What are some ways you might be able to experience that practically amidst those realities?