

THE RISEN KING



+ **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

Jesus's resurrection from the dead on the third day is the linchpin of the Christian faith and is news to be shared with the world.

+ **BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

Matthew 27–28

+ **SETTING:**

After a grueling trial and gruesome crucifixion, the beaten, lifeless body of Jesus hung on the cross. With Friday sundown and the approaching Sabbath, there was a rush to dispose of the deceased. Determined to honor their rabbi, some of Jesus's followers arranged to provide Jesus with a proper burial. But they didn't know that the borrowed tomb would only be needed for a very short time. Jesus would not be dead for long. God was about to make His most powerful move yet to fulfill His promise to rescue His people.

DAY 1

READ:

Matthew 27:57-66

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Matthew 27:62-66

NOTES

Social media posts can get heated. Anonymity and distance provide a safe zone for people to express their opinions—sometimes using words we'd never say to someone face to face. As a result, a new sort of boldness and a new breed of bullies can be found in social media conversations.

It all starts with an opinion stated. Occasionally, it is an innocent and naive comment, and the writer has no idea what he or she has unleashed. Other times, the author knows what the words ignite as the critics come out of the woodwork to respond to a polarizing opinion. Some critics attempt to educate and stomp out the offensive opinion or heretical thought. What they don't realize is that launching a war in the comments is a sure-fire way to propel that post to as many feeds as possible. Most of the social media algorithms are driven by activity, after all. If a post has a lot of engagement (likes, comments, and shares), then the bots will boost the update. The critical comments are the fuel to the fire for a post's potential reach.

In the heat of the moment, it is hard to think clearly and look to the future impact of our words and actions. In the case of Christ and His influence, the situation was dire for the Jewish leaders. They would not rest until this new Jesus movement was stopped. Even after Jesus was dead, they attempted to control the narrative. But the very means they used to protect their victory ended up providing further proof of Jesus's divine power. The seal on the tomb that was meant to avert any tampering became proof that the resurrection was not faked. The soldiers stationed to deter grave robbers became witnesses of the glorious display of Jesus's power over death.

Instead of focusing on the schemes of the evil one that seem to be prevailing, how can you rest in the power and sovereignty of God today?

DAY 2

READ:

Matthew 28:1-10

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Matthew 28:1

NOTES

Through repeated Scripture readings of the resurrection, helpful catechism, and even worship songs and hymns, most Christians have heard that on “the third day he rose again from the dead / He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.”¹ When the modern-day reader hears a reference to a day, he typically thinks in terms of a strict twenty-four-hour period. When we hear that Jesus was resurrected in three days, today’s hearer might naturally think that Christ’s body was in the tomb for upwards of seventy-two hours, which it was not.

A closer look at the text along with an understanding of how the ancient author perceived time will help with our disconnect. While we spend most days watching the clock tick by, the people in Jesus’s day enjoyed a slower pace of life. Days were measured by general positions of the sun, with sunrise and sunset being the most obvious markers. Any amount of time spent in a day was considered just that, a day.

So, though Jesus died and was buried in the last hours of daylight on a Friday, that was counted as one day in the tomb. Jesus’s body spent the entire next day—Saturday (Sabbath)—lifeless and still, entombed in the ground. By the early morning daylight hours on Sunday, Jesus had been resurrected, leaving the tomb empty of His bodily presence on the third day.

When we read Scripture, it is right and good to scratch our heads and ask questions of the text. But as we seek answers, it is important to consider the original author and audience and the cultural waters they were swimming in. The more we can understand how they lived and how they thought, the better interpreters of Scripture we can become.

How can you study the culture of biblical times to better understand the teachings of the Bible?

DAY 3

READ:

1 Corinthians 15:12-28

FOCAL PASSAGE:

1 Corinthians 15:17-19

NOTES



KEY DOCTRINE #95: LIFE AFTER DEATH

The Bible teaches that when a Christian dies, he or she immediately is with the Lord (2 Corinthians 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 (Revelation 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 (Luke 16:19-31).

For the Christian, everything we believe hinges on one magnificent act. It is the climax of the gospel story, the momentous event that changed everything. This pivotal place in history is the resurrection.

Before the resurrection, God performed many miraculous acts and made many promises. For thousands of generations, God's people looked ahead to the coming of the promised Messiah who would save them from their captivity to sin. From where we stand, the resurrection is a moment we look back to and cling to as it encapsulates the heart and provision of God. The resurrection, along with the crucifixion, is the anchor to our faith and the perfect expression of God's power and sovereignty, holiness and justice, mercy and grace, faithfulness and lovingkindness.

In his first letter to the church in Corinth, Paul addressed a heretical teaching by a Jewish sect called the Sadducees. They did not believe that the soul lived on past this life. Once a person died, both their body and soul perished. Additionally, the Sadducees did not accept that the body of Jesus was resurrected. But without the resurrection, there is no power over sin—there is no salvation.

Many in our day are not unlike the Sadducees. YOLO (short for “you only live once”) permeates the thoughts, actions, and attitudes of our culture, even if the phrase no longer does. But life after death is a reality. We don't only live once. There is an eternal life that continues ahead of us after this one. Some will spend that infinite life in the presence of Jesus. Others will endure suffering for eternity, separated from God.

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15, stresses the importance of the resurrection of Christ and of the dead, for Christ's resurrection guarantees our resurrection and our faith in His resurrection solidifies our understanding of His victory over everything.

How does the reality of Jesus's resurrection impact your life?

DAY 4

READ:

Matthew 28:1-10

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Matthew 28:7-10

NOTES

Does your family have any secret recipes? This time of year, those special recipes tend to surface for special occasions. It might be a Thanksgiving side dish or a Christmas Eve dessert. Others hold close to their chest the special ingredient that makes Aunt Sally's fudge the best on the block. Families who have those secret recipes tend to guard them with care because they are more than mere items on a card. The recipe represents loving traditions and precious memories made along the way that are unique to that family.

Though it can be a sweet thing to share significant moments with our families, some things ought not be kept secret. The gospel is one. The gospel is the recipe for abundant life now and eternal life later, and it is to be shared with all. But it can be easy to live a life that is sequestered with the saved instead of seeking lost souls.

It is good for us to enjoy the fellowship and support of other Christians, but not to the point where we have no time for our neighbors, coworkers, and family members who do not know Jesus. Sunday after Sunday, we get a needed dose of gospel truth from the pulpit, but that message was not meant to stop with us. We are to be conduits of the gospel message, not cul-de-sacs.

We must be careful not to turn the tenets of Christianity and all the benefits that come along with faith in Jesus into a secret society that hides the entrance to the club. Our doors should be open to all. Our efforts ought to be focused outward as we seek to take the message of the gospel to as many as will believe it.

With whom can you share the recipe of eternal life today?

VOICES from THE CHURCH

"When the gospel gets ahold of our hearts, we can't keep it to ourselves."²

—J. D. Greear

DAY 5

READ:

Ephesians 1:11-23

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Ephesians 1:11-14

NOTES

There is a lot of inheritance talk in the Bible. Nowadays, unless you come from an exceedingly wealthy family, receiving our inheritance is not routinely life-changing. Estates typically include assets, tangible items that could be passed down like jewelry, furniture, land, property, and other investments.

In the New Testament, we learn much about our spiritual estate. This is a different sort altogether, and it is all passed down to us by the firstborn Son of God: Jesus. This inheritance is something we possess in an “already, but not yet” sort of way. We have obtained it. It is something we own. But we have not yet acquired possession of it. Like a trust fund that is in our name and owned by us, we do not actually receive the funds until we reach a certain point. We have inherited the trust fund, but we have not yet received that inheritance.

Embedded in this beautiful prayer provided by Paul is our spiritual endowment—truths to cling to as we live in this already-but-not-yet life. In Paul’s petition, we see that our inheritance is obtained through Christ when we believed in Him. At that moment, we were sealed by the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of all that awaits us. Paul then prays that we would have a knowledge of our inheritance, the hope that we’ve been called to. Peter tells us that we have an imperishable, undefiled, and unfading inheritance “kept in heaven” for us (1 Peter 1:4). By the same power with which God raised Christ from the dead, God is guarding our inheritance, a life of eternal pleasures in the presence of Jesus.

How should you live your life knowing you have an inheritance because of Christ?

GROUP

NOTES

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

“Our Lord Himself deliberately staked His whole claim to the credit of men upon His resurrection. When asked for a sign He pointed to this sign as His single and sufficient credential.”³

—B. B. Warfield (1851–1921)

POINT 1: Resisting the Possibility of Jesus’s Resurrection (Matthew 27:57-66)

Because of his devotion, Joseph of Arimathea placed Jesus in a family tomb to honor Him.

? How can you put Jesus in a place of honor in your life?

The chief priests and Pharisees asked for tomb security to stop possible attempts by Jesus’s followers to furnish fake evidence of a resurrection.

? How can someone try to explain why he or she believes in Jesus’s resurrection?

POINT 2: Encountering the Reality of Jesus’s Resurrection (Matthew 28:1-6)

Just as angels announced the birth of Christ, a messenger from God appeared to proclaim the victorious resurrection of Jesus.

? What other times has God used heavenly messengers to give authoritative, divine news?

Much skepticism surrounds Jesus’s resurrection, but the soldiers and the women witnessed the angel and the empty tomb.

? From Day 3: How does the reality of Jesus’s resurrection impact your life?

POINT 3: Sharing the News of Jesus’s Resurrection (Matthew 28:7-10)

The angel commanded the women to go and tell the disciples, for the good news of Jesus’s resurrection needs to be told.



How can I keep myself accountable on prioritizing telling others the good news of Jesus?

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How might the reality that every person will live on for eternity—either with Christ or without—change our everyday moments?

MY RESPONSE

Because we worship a risen Savior who has raised us to new life, we tell others the good news of Christ's victory over sin and death that they may trust in Jesus and receive resurrection life.

- **HEAD:** What does eternal life with God and without God look like?
- **HEART:** What about Jesus's resurrection can you thank God for?
- **HANDS:** How can you better align your life to be a greater part of helping to fulfill the Great Commission?



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"We must declare the message of the Word of God regardless of its popularity. The Word of God is our message and we must preach it faithfully regardless of whether the world esteems it or not—and today the world does not esteem it."⁴

—John G. Butler (1826–1909)