
Who is JESUS?

Where is Jesus Now?

May 7, 2006

Mark 16:1-7

What does the Easter Story teach us about Jesus? Why does Jesus' resurrection give us hope for life eternal and what are the compelling reasons to believe? Easter morning changed Christ's early followers with results that are still felt today.

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." Mark 16:1-7

For Personal Study

What kind of traveler are you? Do you see traveling as a challenge, of beating the other person to the front of the line, the better parking spot? Do you travel and get so busy with talking on the cell phone, listening to music, reading a book or talking with other passengers that you sometimes forget where you are going? Maybe you are a traveler who really focuses on the journey, recognizing key moments for what they are and staying the course no matter what. What kind of traveler sees Jesus?

Saul was on a mission: traveling to Damascus to persecute early Christians. He was a devout Jew, one who believed only in the Law. How are some of the people you know from your neighborhood, your work or in the news like Saul: denying the truth, fighting against freedom? Yet on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19) Jesus was there. Saul became Paul the great leader of the early church. In what ways have you seen Jesus' love convert those who hate? What must the power of Jesus love be like to make such a change?

We are all guilty at various times of getting caught up in the activities we

are involved in and losing site of the real purpose of the activities. Martin Luther found the church to be busy being the church and not of Christ. Consider Luke 24:12-32. The disciples, so distracted by the events of the crucifixion as they traveled to Emmaus, failed to see the truth: Jesus was walking with them. Jesus was there for them. Have you ever been so involved in making a 'perfect' Easter that you can't see Jesus being with you? How can we find that faith? In what ways can your faith be made the center of your life every day?

Please read Matthew 28:1-10. The women who came to attend to Jesus did so out of love for Him. They knew he was their Savior. When he appeared before them their faith instantly recognized the risen Christ and they worshiped Him. How can you use the women's faith as a model for you to grow in your own faith?

Since the beginning, Jesus is with us, all of us. In your travels, in your trials, in your triumphs, Jesus is there for you. His love lasts, his love strengthens, and his love breaks through and holds us. The Easter message is one of joy: Jesus is there for us now and always.

For Group Discussion

- What are some of the key worries in your life, in your family? How do they control you or limit you?
- Read Mark 16:1-7 again. The women were worrying about moving the stone. They wanted to 'get it right' and anoint Jesus' body and they were worrying about the details. The stone was moved, Jesus had risen, he had left to meet the disciples in Galilee. Worrying about getting it right turned out to be a distraction from what was important: for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son... What are the examples in your life where getting it right became a distraction from the Way, the Truth, the Light?
- Read Luke 12:22-31. We worry, we obsess about things, about status, about rewards. Jesus teaches us that God will take care of us, He will give us what we truly need. How can your Christian community help you overcome the natural need to store up things on earth and focus on your eternal life through Jesus Christ?

Daily Reflections

This week's Study Guide will give us the opportunity to study the various accounts of the resurrection of Christ as we continue our celebration of Easter. Enjoy!

Monday, May 8

Read Mark 16. Your Bible will likely note that the earliest known manuscripts of Mark's gospel do not include verses 9 - 20. These were likely added later. At the same time verse 8 is an abrupt ending for the gospel, leaving many scholars to believe that the original ending of the gospel has been lost. The extended or later ending brings together elements of the Easter story told in the other gospels - indicating that these were commonly known stories about the resurrection as well. The things that Jesus describes in verses 15-18 were a part of the experience of the early church [an example of which is the story in Acts where Paul was bitten by a snake and lived]. What does verse 15 mean for you? What about verse 16 - how do you understand the second part of that verse? What might Jesus have meant? Could this have been the understanding of the author of this latter addition to Mark and not the exact words of Jesus? If they are the exact words of Jesus how do you make sense of them?

Tuesday, May 9

Read Luke 24. There are three distinct stories here - read each one

separately and note on a piece of paper the details or the new insights that you see as you read it. Why did the disciples not believe the report of the women? When did the two disciples on the road to Emmaus finally see Jesus for who he was? How does this story relate to the Christian understanding of Holy Communion? What does Jesus offer the disciples when he appears to them in verse 36? Look over page one and reflect on the meaning of Easter for your life today.

Wednesday, May 10

Read Matthew 28. How did the women feel on Easter morning? Verses 11 - 15 point to the "official report" of the "incident" as it was given by the Jewish leaders and Romans as the disciples began preaching about the resurrection. Do you think the disciples would have been willing to be beaten, abused, imprisoned and killed for their faith had they stolen Jesus' body and concocted a lie about his resurrection? Paul was a persecutor of Christians, not believing their story, until Christ appeared to him. How can you fulfill the great commission of verses 18-20? What is the promise in these verses?

Thursday, May 11

Read John 20 and 21. These are among the most beautiful and powerful stories about the resurrection. Write down on a piece of paper the

details and the significance of these stories for your life? What do they mean? Why is the story of Thomas told in the scriptures? Verse 29 of chapter 20 was written for you. What do we receive when we believe in Christ (vs. 31 - which is the reason John wrote the gospel)? The story in 21:15 and following ties back to Peter's three-fold denial of Christ. How did Peter feel during this exchange? What does Jesus' intentional reinstatement of Peter mean for our lives today?

Friday, May 12

Read I Corinthians 15. This chapter is focused on the resurrection of the dead, beginning with Christ's own resurrection. Verses 1-8 are a powerful recounting of Christ's resurrection appearances. Keep in mind that I Corinthians was written before any of the gospels were written down - the gospels were written as the disciples began to die, in an attempt to preserve their stories. I Corinthians was written in the 50's - just twenty years after Christ's resurrection and while many who had seen him were still alive. Choose two or three verses that you find to be particularly meaningful for you and focus on them. What is Paul's major premise in this chapter?