

Week 7 Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?

April 4



Creek Family –

We heard in last week's sermon about how Jesus's death paid for our sins. To have confidence in that truth, we have to resolve a very basic question: "Did Jesus really rise from the dead?" Our entire faith rests on the answer to this question. As Paul writes to the church in Corinth, **"If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (1 Corinthians 15:14).**

What I find challenging about believing in Jesus' resurrection is that I don't personally know any dead people who have come back to life. But, if I believe that the Bible is true, I have to deal with the dead coming back to life because Jesus isn't the only one who does so. Resurrection is actually all over the place (e.g., **1 Kings 17:17-24; Luke 7:11-17; John 11:1-44; Matthew 27:50-54; Acts 9:36-42**, etc.)!

It has not always been easy for me to believe this, but I have come to the belief that Jesus did rise from the dead, and I am basing my life and hope for eternity on it. Here are a few reasons that have helped me to be more confident in the truth of the Resurrection:

First, women were the ones who first met Jesus after the Resurrection. This may seem like a minor detail, but women during this time were not seen as credible. **They were not even allowed to testify in court.** If the Resurrection story had been made up, the writer would not have chosen women to be the first to see Jesus after the Resurrection. In that culture, it would have hurt the credibility of the story.

Secondly, the most important reason I believe in the Resurrection is the way this event changed those who saw Jesus afterward. If these people knew the Resurrection was fake, then why would they claim it was true under the threat of jail, torture, and death? For example, we know Peter had multiple interactions with Jesus after the Resurrection, and history shows that Peter was executed on a cross because of his belief and preaching about Jesus. **Why would Peter and so many others continue to say Jesus rose from the dead?** For me, it has to be because they knew it was true! I know I wouldn't die for something I knew to be a lie.

When deciding to believe in and follow Jesus, there is no greater question than, “Did Jesus really rise from the dead?” Whether you do not know what you believe about this or you have believed for years, thinking about the Resurrection is worthwhile because it focuses our attention on Jesus. It makes us think about what His life, death, and Resurrection mean for our own lives.

As you think through what you believe about the Resurrection, here are some daily questions and Scriptures for you to read, reflect, and pray about. I encourage you to write down your thoughts and share with your life group.

Monday - What do you believe about the resurrection? Have you ever struggled to believe it? Why or why not? Read these three accounts of the Resurrection: **Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-6; Luke 24:1-12.**

Tuesday - If you were writing the story of the Resurrection, who would you want to find Jesus to make your story more believable? What does it mean that it was women in this 1st Century culture? John’s Gospel gives more detail on the discovery of Jesus’ Resurrection. What does it say about Jesus and the Resurrection that He appeared to Mary Magdalene before the Apostles, especially when Peter and John ran to the tomb? **Read John 20:1-18.**

Wednesday - Today let’s look at the famous story of “Doubting Thomas.” As you read it, put yourself in the story. Ask yourself if there was ever a time you felt like Thomas towards Jesus. What was that time? How did you handle that moment? How did God meet you in your doubt? What does Jesus’ reaction towards Thomas mean for us, especially when we are doubting or struggling with faith? **Read John 20:19-29**

Thursday - Let’s look at some of what the followers of Jesus did after the Resurrection. Do you think the followers of Jesus would have behaved the way they did if they knew the Resurrection was a lie? What can we learn from their attitude in praying for boldness and praising God for being worthy to suffer for Christ? **Read Acts 4:18-31; 5:12-42**

Friday - Jesus’ family was not all convinced He was who He said he was until after the Resurrection. What caused this radical change? Has the Resurrection changed your life and the way you live? If so, how? What would it take for you to believe like Jesus’ family came to believe in him? **Read John 7:1-8, then read Acts 1:12-14.**

As you continue thinking about Jesus’s resurrection, here are a few resources I’ve found helpful:

1. If you're interested in an in-depth investigation on the evidence for the Resurrection, The Case for Christ by Lee Strobel is a great book that has been adapted into a movie. See his website for more resources and information.(<https://leestrobel.com/>)
2. Here is an from Dr. S. Joshua Swamidass on a scientist's perspective on the evidence for the Resurrection. (<http://www.veritas.org/evidence-easter-scientists-list/>)
3. This is a clip of a presentation from Professor Willian Lane Craig on evidence for the resurrection(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Od8U-Z_NVFA) (for the full presentation→ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAxPHWF8aec>).

I really hope you get a chance to talk about this topic with others, especially if you are in a life group. If you have doubts, that is ok. It is better to share your doubts with others so that you can talk through them and hopefully be encouraged.

Sincerely,

Jake