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A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Observation—*What do I see?*

- 1 You're a reporter for "The Jerusalem Journal" and you've been sent to investigate a "resurrection"! Read Mark 15:42—16:8, and answer these questions:

Who? _____

What? _____

When? _____

Where? _____

Why? _____

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- 2 Pastor Doug emphasized that the disciples were anything but gullible—they had to be convinced **against** their inclinations that a resurrection had occurred, and as a result they were slow to proclaim. What are some **praiseworthy** aspects of their skepticism? How about some **disgraceful** aspects?
- 3 Looking back at your "reporter's notebook", what details might have helped them believe more quickly?
- 4 What do you think: was their slowness to proclaim the resurrection due solely to their skepticism? What else do you think might help explain it? Why do you think that?

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- 5 Focus now on Jesus' inerrant diagnosis of their condition, which is found in Luke 24:25. "**O _____ ones and slow of _____ to _____ in all that the prophets have spoken!**" In Scripture, to be "foolish" is to be "**wicked; sinful; acting without regard to the divine law and glory, or to one's own eternal happiness.**" **How** does being "slow to believe what the prophets wrote" disregard God's law and glory? How does it disregard our eternal happiness?
- 6 The disciples were "slow of heart to believe". In Scripture, the "heart" is the "seat of the affections and passions, as of love, joy, grief, enmity, courage, pleasure etc.". What is the significance that your **heart** is involved in believing?
- 7 Are **your** "affections and passions" **quick** to believe the Bible? **How** do you know that's the case?

1 Who? Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Sanhedrin, who was a believer in Christ (15:43); Pontius Pilate (15:43); a Roman Centurion (leader of 100 men; 15:44); two Marys (15:47 & 16:1); Salome (16:1); an angel (a “young man wearing a white robe” 16:5)

What? gathered courage and asked for Jesus’ body (15:43); Pilate wanted to be certain that Jesus was truly dead (15:44); Jesus’ death was certified and his body was given to Joseph (15:45); Joseph prepared and entombed Jesus’ body (15:46); women observed Jesus’ burial and later intended to add spices to Jesus’ corpse (15:47 & 16:1); women wondered how they’d get past the stone which covered the entrance to Jesus’ tomb (16:3); the extremely large stone which covered the door to Jesus’ tomb had already been rolled away (16:4); the women were amazed by the presence of an angel (16:5); the angel spoke, telling them not to be amazed, confirms the resurrection, and gives them a message for the disciples, with Peter specifically named (16:6-7); the women, seeing the angel, fled in terror, saying nothing to anyone (16:8)

When? evening had already come (15:42); it was “preparation day” and Friday (ie, the day before Passover; the Sabbath is Saturday; 15:42); “very early” Sunday morning, when the sun had risen (16:2).

Where? Jerusalem: Pilate’s palace (15:43); a secure tomb (ie, access from only one point, and a large stone blocking that (15:46); inside the tomb, on the right hand side (16:5); a later rendezvous point in Galilee (16:7) .

Why? love was the motive for Joseph’s and the women’s actions (see 14:3-9 for the same motive as this current anointing).

2 Praiseworthy: gullibility is condemned in Scripture (Proverbs 8:5; 9:4-6; 14:15)

Disgraceful: Jesus and an angel both told them of the resurrection—they had sufficient basis for belief

- 3**
- the security of Jesus’ tomb guaranteed that robbers couldn’t have stolen the body
 - the angelic presence and message were clearly supernatural.

4 Maybe—the Scriptures don’t tell us, so it’s safer to not speculate. However... when two other disciples were in the dark, Jesus blamed it on foolish unbelief (Luke 24:25).

5 The prophets spoke with God’s authority, and should have been believed. Unbelief is sin. Unless we have a high view of Scripture and live under its functional authority, we’ll be adrift.

6 Faith involves a volitional choice to rely. We cannot blame intellectual limitations for our unbelief.

7 You likely will need to “prime the pump”, so be prepared with your own answer to this question. (But wait for others to think and answer. Check your watch—20 seconds feels like an eternity!)

Sermon Summary Mark 15:42–16:8

Today we conclude our extensive study of the life of Jesus of Nazareth as revealed in Mark's Gospel. The Christian faith is rooted in the facts of history, especially the resurrection. Of the four major world religions only **Christianity** claims that its founder is still alive, having been raised from the dead. **Judaism** makes no such claim. Its founder, Abraham, died around 1900 B.C. **Buddhism** says this about the death of its founder: "When Buddha died it was with that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains behind." No disciple of Buddha ever claimed to see him alive after his death. Mohammed, the founder of **Islam**, died in AD 632. His tomb in Medina, Saudi Arabia is visited annually by his followers. But the story is very different with Christianity. The central tenet of Christianity is belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Refute that claim, and Christianity crumbles. Over the years many have sought to disprove the resurrection. One such person was Wilbur Smith, a brilliant scholar at Stanford University. But as Smith poured over the historical evidence he came to a very unexpected conclusion. In his own words: "Late one night, I turned out the lights in my study, and I got down on my face beside my desk and said, 'Oh God, I believe it.'" Granted, it is not easy to believe that a man dead for three days could be restored to life. As we will see, Jesus' disciples were reluctant to accept what their own eyes beheld. After Jesus' crucifixion they were distraught. But something happened which transformed those frightened, disillusioned, cowardly men into bold witnesses who literally turned their world upside down.

When I read my Bible I try and put myself in the place of the Biblical characters. I imagine what it would have been like to arrive at the garden tomb in the misty morning hours, burdened with sorrow and loss, only to find the huge stone pushed aside and the tomb empty. Perhaps they were thinking, "We can't tell anyone what we have just seen...they'll think we are nuts!" Their initial response was just the opposite of what the angel had instructed them to do (16:7). And, Jesus' resurrection shouldn't have surprised them. On numerous occasions he'd predicted his death and resurrection (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34; 14:27-28). Upon seeing the empty tomb and hearing the angel's report they should have responded in faith, but they did not. The resurrection did not magically infuse faith and boldness in Jesus' followers. Even the sight of an angel at the empty tomb didn't compel faith. Faith comes through hearing the gospel and personally encountering the resurrected Jesus. Mark's gospel actually ends at 16:8 (v. 9-20 are not original, but were added by later scribes). It is interesting that Mark chose to close his gospel this way. Mark frequently reported Jesus commanding people not to tell anyone about him—but they talked anyway. Here they're commanded to spread the message that Jesus has risen—in an ironic reversal they are silent!

It is the disciples' fear that dominates the end of Mark's gospel. Why end his gospel this way? It forces us to face our own fear of sharing the gospel with others. "What if folks don't believe us? What if they think we've lost our marbles? What if it costs me a friendship or my job?" Whom do we fear more, God or man? Is concern for our reputation more important than the eternal destiny of friends and family? I am happy to report that eventually the women did share their experience at the tomb—but would the apostles receive their report? Despite Jesus' predictions of his resurrection, the disciples were slow to believe it. In fact, they flat out disbelieved it (Luke 24:10-12). Peter checked it out for himself; he saw with his own eyes that the tomb was empty. But an empty tomb doesn't prove a risen Jesus. Mary Magdalene reasoned that someone had stolen Jesus' body (John 20:11-18). Even an angelic report were insufficient evidence to believe in the resurrection. Not until Mary personally saw Jesus did she believe.

Contrary to what some would have you believe, these people weren't gullible. When it came to the report of a resurrection, they were every bit as skeptical as we would be today. But the evidence was so overwhelming. Mary was forced to accept conclusions she never would have under normal circumstances. Jesus put his finger on their problem (Luke 24:25): they failed to believe all that the prophets said. They selectively zeroed-in on predictions of Messiah's glorious reign while ignoring predictions of his suffering,

death and resurrection. We also pick and choose which portions of the Bible we want to believe and apply. But a return to the Scriptures is always a return to reality. The disciples' problem was that they failed to believe the Scriptures. This is not a problem of the intellect, but of the heart. It was spiritual in nature. They were "slow **of heart** to believe." The evidence for Jesus' resurrection was there. The prophets predicted it. Jesus predicted it. The tomb was empty. An angel announced Jesus' resurrection. Despite all this, they foolishly refused to believe. Had they believed the Scriptures, the empty tomb and the testimony of the women would have been all the proof they needed. Yet even after Jesus appeared to two disciples and gave them a tour through the Scriptures, they remained unconvinced (Luke 24:13-35). Jesus' followers were hard-core skeptics. That first Easter Sunday Jesus appeared to at least four people: Mary Magdalene, two travelers on the road to Emmaus, and Simon Peter. Over the next several days many others reported seeing Jesus alive (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). It was evidence that transformed Jesus' disciples from skeptical, disillusioned cowards, into men and women who literally turned their world upside down. As incredible as Jesus' resurrection may be, the facts of history stand firmly behind it.

We Christians have a firm foundation for our faith; Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. His death was no accident; it was providentially planned; it served a very specific purpose. He died for our sins. Our sin is an affront to God's holiness and justice. God established the penalty for sin: death. Being just, God cannot allow sin to go unpunished. Being loving, he purposed to provide a way whereby we could be forgiven and yet his justice would not be compromised. That is where Jesus comes in. Jesus, the great God-Man, died in our place. He was buried, he rose from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures, then he appeared to many. It is Jesus' resurrection that sets him apart from other religious leader the world had ever known. When Buddha and Mohammed died, they remained in the graves because they too were sinners. But Jesus proved his sinlessness and his deity by rising from the dead, in keeping with prophecy. And it is that uniqueness which allowed him to make a very narrow claim with which each of us must grapple: "I am the way and the truth and life; **no one comes to the Father, but through me**" (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

**Beginning
very soon!**

It's time for TCC's
"Winter Mini"!



apologetics • [uh-pol-uh-jet-iks] • **rational defense of Christianity**

Hasn't science disproved God? Isn't faith a leap in the dark?
How can we perceive truth? Can we be good without God?
A merciful God wouldn't allow suffering.
A loving God wouldn't send people to hell...

Who?

all TCC adults

What?

get equipped to defend your beliefs

Why?

because there **really are** convincing reasons for faith!

When?

Four weeks, **beginning January 8th**,
Wednesday nights (6³⁰-8⁰⁰pm) **or**
Thursday mornings (9³⁰-11⁰⁰am)
or anytime On-Demand!

Where?

TCC campus

How?

simply **scan here** for complete info



Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Some say that even if it isn't true, belief in the resurrection leads to a better life. Let's use the "Five Question Bible Study" method to find out what the Bible says about that!

Monday— Study 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

Tuesday— Study 1 Corinthians 15:13-19.

Wednesday— Study 1 Corinthians 15:20-28.

Thursday— Study 1 Corinthians 15:50-53.

Friday— Study 1 Corinthians 15:54-58.

Saturday— Study Romans 1:1-4 & 6:4-7.

Will you be resurrected to life?

For free, confidential help, write to:
BiblicalHopeAndHelp@gmail.com

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would *this text* answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]