



RESOURCES

RESURRECTION REFLECTION



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This series is all about reflecting upon the recent events of the Easter Season.

We will be discussing for 3 weeks how those historical moments change our everyday living.



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WEEK 1

PEOPLE OF THE RESURRECTION

We are going to be exploring the concept of being people who are identified by the hope they carry. This icebreaker begins to introduce the idea of 'hope'.

ICE-BREAKER

When you were younger was there a thing that you were wishing for Christmas or a birthday for a long time? What did that wait feel like? Did you receive it? If so, how did that feel? If not, how did that feel?

REFLECT

The entirety of the Easter season, from Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day!) to Easter Sunday, is a season of waiting. The whole idea of Lent is to remind us daily, whether through hunger pains or chocolate cravings, that we are waiting for something to happen.

Are you good at waiting? What techniques do you have to help you waiting? Did you give up or take up anything for Lent? Was this helpful? Share your reflections on this time in 2s and 3s.

Mark 12:15-21 finds Jesus asking his disciples to refrain from telling others of who Jesus was and what power he manifested. The writer of the gospel says:

"This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

"Here is my servant whom I have chosen,
 the one I love, in whom I delight;
 I will put my Spirit on him,
 and he will proclaim justice to the nations.
 He will not quarrel or cry out;
 no one will hear his voice in the streets.
 A bruised reed he will not break,
 and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out,
 till he has brought justice through to victory.
 In his name the nations will put their hope."

How are Good Friday and Easter Sunday reflected in this prophecy of Isaiah?

WEEK 1

PEOPLE OF THE RESURRECTION

RESPOND

In the Gospel of John, at the moment of the resurrection, Mary sees the tomb is empty and when she is joined by two other disciples the bible says: “Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.” (John 20:8-10) It is so easy to simply ‘go back to where we are staying’ after a weekend like Easter. How can we be people that aren’t simply moved by a historical moment but shaped by an everyday reality?

The theologian NT Wright says, “The message of Easter is that God's new world has been unveiled in Jesus Christ and that you're now invited to belong to it.”

The resurrection is the moment in history that means no matter what you are going through, HOPE is available. Discuss how you have seen hope arise in difficult circumstances.

RECEIVE

We receive hope through prayer. Pray for one another that despite circumstances we may be people of hope. Allow time for the Holy Spirit to work in your group and give each other space to respond.

WEEK 2

RESURRECTION: COMMUNITY

This session will explore how the historical events of Easter impact the modern-day Church.

ICE-BREAKER 'Reconciliation' (noun):

'The process of making two people or groups of people friendly again after they have argued seriously or fought and kept apart from each other, or a situation in which this happens.'

Based on this definition, from when you were younger to today, how has your ability to seek reconciliation changed? Is it easier or more difficult now? What are some barriers to seeking reconciliation?

REFLECT 1 Corinthians 15: 1-10

"Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed."

Shortly after the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus, the people who had been following him for his earthly ministry, had to make some quick decisions. What kind of people would they be? Would they return to their previous religions (mainly Judaism) or were the events of recent history a chance for a new kind of community to be born.

What kind of attributes did the early church have that are clearly inspired by the events of Easter?

(People of varying wealth, races, classes, genders gathering to worship together/ break down of hierarchy/ a real concern for the poor/ praying for miracles/ mission minded, seeing Jesus' offer is for all people).

WEEK 2

RESURRECTION: COMMUNITY

RESPOND 1 Corinthians 15 continues... (v.56-58)

'The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.'

The church in Corinth was in the heart of multiculturalism, multi-theism and hedonistic lifestyles. A Roman city with temptation at every corner. Also as this letter is written, the oppression of Christians is beginning to amp up and pressure is being felt on many sides.

How can our connect group begin to be groups that reflect this kind of living that the letter to Corinthians encourages? What would it mean for us to stand firm? To give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord?

Is there anything we could commit to as a group that begins to explore this type of living?

We started this session by exploring the theme of reconciliation. Reconciliation was a major theme of the people of God. Whether it was from masters to their slaves, fathers to their sons, or cross cultural boundaries. Because of what was reconciled to us upon the Cross of Jesus, the early church were a group of people who recklessly sought reconciliation.

RECEIVE In small groups, discuss who or what do you need to be reconciled to. Allow space to pray for each person individually and be aware this may need time and space as it may bring up historical emotional hurt. Hold the space sensitively.

WEEK 3 RESURRECTION: MISSION

This session aims to explore how the events of the resurrection impact why we go as a 'sent' people. We will address the mission of God, the motivation of God and the method of God.

ICE-BREAKER

When was the last time you received Good News? What was it about? How do you like to receive news? Does it depend on whether it is good or bad news? How did hearing that Good News impact your day, your week, your life?

REFLECT

When Jesus is at the tomb of his friend, Lazarus, some doubted his ability to do anything about the situation. Jesus responds to those doubts, saying, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). He is not simply saying he can bring people back from the dead, like someone raising zombies, but he is saying that in the resurrection new life is to be found too. This had a very real cultural context and most Jews believed in the idea of a moment of resurrection for those who had died, however Jesus is saying that resurrection is possible even today for new life to occur. Jesus' words and actions have a very real application for us today. Baptism is a sign of this 'resurrection'. Where we are literally washed in water, symbolically we are being cleansed of our 'old self'.

How have you experienced a 'resurrection' in your own life? Where has Jesus given you a new sense of life? Have you seen an instance where believing in Jesus has led to a radical change of trajectory in someone situation?

Shortly after Jesus' own resurrection he says to Mary that she shouldn't hold on to him as he has other things to do but she should 'go find [his] brothers and tell them, '[He] is ascending to [his] father and your Father, [his] God and your God.' Mary's first command in response to the resurrection was to go and tell people about what Jesus is doing and how his relationship to his heavenly Father impacts our own relationship to God.

Do you struggle to tell people about Jesus? What are some of the boundaries? In the music charts recently we are seeing an unparalleled amount of songs discussing faith, God and religion. Is this a springboard to discussing faith with friends and family? What are other platforms you find helpful?

WEEK 3

RESURRECTION: MISSION

RESPOND John 14:27-29

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid. Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am. I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe."

Jesus did not simply resurrect and leave his followers unequipped. He resurrected and ascended so that his Holy Spirit may be available and accessible to all, regardless of spiritual authority or position. One of the markers of the Holy Spirit is peace. How can we see that the world is longing for peace of mind and of heart? How can the church be sent out to minister that peace of mind and heart to a city in need.

John 16:12-15

"There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. 14 He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.'"

Another marker of the Spirit of God is a greater sense of what Truth really is. The world in the West is identified currently as being post-Truth. How can we be people that declare and live out truth in our workplaces, families and friendship groups.

One of our mandates as followers of Christ is to take the characteristics of God to the world around us. Today, we want to focus on the peace of the Lord. His peace goes beyond our understanding and is transformative – of our lives and our circumstances.

RECEIVE Break into small groups and share areas where you want God's peace to transform your life. Individually, take a moment to seek God's perspective. From this place of faith pray that God's peace would transform your lives. As the week goes on check in with one another to see how God is at work.