

Message-based Study

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Connection

What is a difficult question about the Christian faith that you have asked or have been asked?

Cheer and Challenge

- How did it go living out your "I will..." statement from last week? Share your experience.
- Tell about any experiences you had this week following through on the B.L.E.S.S. challenge.

Content

By nature, people are question-askers and answer-seekers. When questions go from a place of triviality to a place of "hope", we become serious answer-seekers. We must have an answer for these things.

I Peter 3:15 says this: "In your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..." This is difficult to do. What in this verse do you find challenging?

1. Historical Facts

Each of the Gospels provides an account of the resurrection of Jesus. What do the following accounts have in common (underline); what detail differences do you notice as you compare the accounts? (circle)

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; He has risen, just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay." (Matthew 28:1-6)

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought spices that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him." (Mark 16:1-6)

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright, the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; He has risen." (Luke 24:1-6)

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put Him!" (John 20:1-2)

How do these similarities and differences lend credibility to the accuracy of these accounts?

2. *Skeptical Explanations*

How would you respond to the following theories which have been developed in an attempt to dismantle the truth of the resurrection? (Use the Scripture provided to shed light on each theory.)

- Stolen Body Theory - Matthew 27:62-66, 28:11-15

- Wrong Tomb Theory - Matthew 27:57-60

- Jesus Didn't Actually Die Theory - John 19:1-2; 17-18; 31-37

3. *Additional Evidence*

Read John 20:3-9. How does this scene differ from what it would have looked like if Jesus' body had been stolen from the tomb?

After Jesus' resurrection, His disciples went on to proclaim Him throughout the world, write books of the Bible and many were eventually martyred. How does this confirm that the resurrection actually occurred?

4. *Essential Conclusions*

The resurrection of Jesus has implications for us today. Using a Bible app, listen to I Corinthians chapter 15. Listen for how the following things are provided to us, as believers, because of the resurrection of Jesus:

Promise
Forgiveness
Hope
Authority
Meaning
Victory
Purpose

Commitment



Begin with prayer. Listen with care. Eat / Engage with another. Serve. Share your story.

Are you ready to **share your story** by "giving an answer about the hope that you have?" If someone were to ask you, "You seem like you have hope. What's up with that?" What would you say? Take a moment to craft a sentence or two that sums up how knowing Jesus has brought hope into your life. Write it here:
