

# EASTER

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## WITH CALVARY

### HomeGroup **LEADER** Discussion Questions

Easter 2021, April 3rd-9th

**PICK 2-4 QUESTIONS THAT YOU THINK WILL BE HELPFUL FOR YOUR DISCUSSION. THESE QUESTIONS ARE RELATED TO THE ONLINE SERMON BUT ARE GENERAL ENOUGH THAT THEY COULD BE USED FOR THE ON-CAMPUS SERMONS.**

He is risen! For Christ-followers, Easter Sunday is the most glorious day this side of our Lord's return. It is our hope and we believe by faith that it is a preview of our future. Let's slow down this week, quiet our hearts and minds, and consider both the significance and the consequence of the Resurrection for our lives and the life of our church. **He is risen indeed!**

#### CONNECT

1. What personal significance does Easter or all of Holy Week (i.e., the events of Palm Sunday, the Last Supper and betrayal, Good Friday, Resurrection Sunday) have for you?
2. What stood out to you in this week's sermon? What questions or thoughts did it raise in your mind?

#### LEARN & APPLY

3. Consider this claim: "The foundation of Christianity is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." What do you think this means and do you agree? Why or why not?  
**It could be helpful to have someone read 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 where Paul addresses this very issue. Question 4 is similar to this, but could be used to reinforce how central or foundational the resurrection is to Christian faith.**

4. Retired Pastor Tim Keller wrote the following in *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*:

"If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all that he said; if he didn't rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what he said? The issue on which everything hangs is not whether or not you like his teaching but whether or not he rose from the dead."

How does (or should) the resurrection of Jesus challenge us to "accept all that he said"?

**It could be helpful to consider all the miracles Jesus performed and think about how the gospel message would be impacted if any one of those miracles had not occurred. For example, how would the gospel be different if Jesus had not really restored vision to a blind man, made a cripple walk, walked on water, fed the multitude, etc. If any of those**

miracles had not happened, we could still listen to what Jesus said. If the resurrection had not happened, though, the gospel could be only a myth and Jesus' authority would be diminished. Conversely, because of the resurrection, Jesus' authority is absolute.

5. Pastor Tom mentioned a number of signs, or witnesses, of God at work in the death of Jesus. The sky was darkened, the veil was torn, the earth shook, the tombs opened, and the dead were raised (see Matthew 27:45-53). What do you think it would have been like for the people who witnessed these things?

This question invites us to use our imagination while we take seriously the claims being made. How did people see these things without being overwhelmed by fear, confusion, disbelief that they were really happening, etc.? What comes in to our own imagination as we think about what it might have been like to have been there?

6. The apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 that the risen Jesus appeared to his disciples and then to "more than five hundred brothers at one time" (vv. 5-6). Why do you think it's important there were so many eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrected state?

There's no single right answer here, but a few options might include:

- Some claim that the "eyewitnesses" were merely hallucinating, thinking they were seeing Jesus. Psychologists, though, tell us it's essentially impossible for a large crowd to hallucinate together.
- Some claim that Jesus' disciples contrived the story of His resurrection while they secretly stole His body away to a different burial spot. The large number of eyewitnesses works against this theory since the risen Jesus appeared to so many.
- At the time of writing 1 Corinthians (mid-50s AD), Paul includes in v. 6, "most of whom are still alive," indicating there were still a lot of people around who could be asked about their experience of seeing Jesus resurrected. The resurrection claim wasn't something that came about decades later when no one from that generation was still alive to refute it!

7. Through faith in Jesus, God makes us alive as well (Ephesians 2:1-10). How does the resurrection of Jesus help you live by faith, even in these difficult days?

The resurrection should give us hope as we remember that this life does not get the last word. The outcomes of this life in terms of tragedy, failure, mistakes, and pain are temporary. These outcomes will be overcome.

Take time to pray for each other, asking God's Spirit to comfort, encourage, and strengthen us with the good news of what God has accomplished through His Son.