



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lord of the Living and the Dead

John 8:12

1. This week, we began a sermon series focusing on the resurrection of Jesus.

Take a moment to read Mark's account of the resurrection.

Mark 16:1-7 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. 2 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb 3 and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" 4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. 5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. 6 "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. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

What are some of your thoughts and feelings as you read this Scripture?

2. When the Apostle Paul reflects on the resurrection of Jesus, he stresses the essential nature of the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:14, 17-20 And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still guilty of your sins. 18 In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! 19 And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. 20 But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.

Take a moment to discuss this Scripture.

The resurrection is THE central event of the Christian faith. Discuss with your group the moment you came to believe Jesus rose from the dead or when the power of the resurrection gripped you.

3. Many skeptics believe that Jesus was a good teacher, perhaps even a good model for life, but they deny the resurrection as a fact. As you begin to dig into the resurrection of Jesus, you will find lots of evidence to consider. In fact, many people have studied the resurrection, looking to disprove Jesus, and have come to have faith in Him because they find the evidence so compelling.

As we prepare to celebrate Easter, one of the goals of this sermon series is to talk about the evidence of the resurrection. This week, we focused on three central points that every legitimate scholar, historian, and philosopher, including skeptics and atheists, agree are true about the Resurrection:

1). The abundance of extra-biblical evidence that Jesus did exist. There is as much evidence that Jesus existed as we have for Julius Caesar.

2). Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem at exactly the timeframe the Bible suggests. There is so much evidence of this that no one questions it.

Take a moment to discuss these first two agreed-upon understandings about the resurrection with your group.

3). Unquestioned evidence about the resurrection is that Jesus' followers most certainly believed that He had risen. There is no other explanation for how they changed following the resurrection. Secular historian Paula Fredriksen says it like this; "I know in their own terms what they saw was the raised Jesus. That's what they say, and all the historical evidence we have afterward attests to their conviction. I'm not saying that they really did see the raised Jesus. But I do know that as a historian, they must have seen something."

Take a few moments and discuss with your group what changes the disciples underwent after Jesus' resurrection. How does this affect your faith?

4. Another goal of this sermon series is to examine the New Testament Scriptures that describe the effects of the resurrection. Let's take a moment to examine one fascinating passage that discusses why Jesus died and rose again.

Romans 14:9 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

Take a moment to discuss what you see in this Scripture. What does it mean that Jesus is Lord of the dead? What does it mean that Jesus is Lord of the living? In what areas are you currently struggling to make Him Lord in your own life?