

Truth and Culture

What Is Easter Really All About?

(John 20:1-18; Luke 24:13-35; John 20:24-29)

MAIN IDEAS

- Mary Magdalene witnesses the empty tomb and tells Peter and John
- Peter and John enter the tomb and believe Mary's report
- Mary Magdalene encounters two angels and the risen Christ
- Later the same day, the risen Jesus joins Cleopas and another disciple on the road to Emmaus, revealing Himself in the breaking of bread
- Eight days later Jesus invites a doubting Thomas to feel his wounds and Thomas believes

Why is the stone rolled away from the tomb? What are the possible answers and why does it matter?

What exactly did John "believe" (John 20:8,9)?

Why did Mary Magdalene come to the tomb? (read Luke 23:54-56) What is the question that the angels and Jesus ask of Mary and what was it intended to reveal to her?

When were the eyes of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus opened? What is the significance of the "breaking of bread" and what other examples of this do you recall in the ministry of Jesus?

How does Jesus' appearance and encounter with Thomas demonstrate His love? Why does Jesus say that those who believe without seeing are blessed? (see 2 Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 11:1-3)

PERSONAL RESPONSE

Take some time to reflect on your own relationship with Jesus. At what point in your life

did you come to understand that Jesus is alive, more than just a figure of history or a person in other peoples' stories?

In what ways do you share Thomas's mindset of, "I'll believe it if I see it?" Why does this mindset keep us from exercising true faith in our relationships, careers, ministry?

Think about Jesus' question, "Why are you weeping?" and ponder it for yourself: Why are you sad, discouraged, fearful, worried? How should the resurrection of Jesus help you in these moments? Meditate on Philippians 4:4-9.

Who are the people in your life who have a hard time believing in Jesus? Pray that they would encounter the risen Christ as Mary Magdalene and the others did in the gospels.

GROUP RESPONSE

Interview members of your small group or selected friends. Ask, "What are the obstacles to belief in your life?" Discuss how they might be overcome.

Practice resurrection prayer for the people in your life. Pray that Jesus' power might help them live a life pleasing to God and that they become more like Jesus. Include yourself!

REPRODUCE

Identify a "Mary Magdalene" in your life who has not yet fully grasped the fact that Jesus is alive. Pray God would show you how to live out the life of Jesus before him/her.

Identify a "Thomas" in your life who has trouble believing in Jesus. Pray that God would show you how to be the love of Jesus to him/her.

KEY VERSES

From the sermon:

- John 20:1-18
- John 20:24-29
- Luke 24:13-35

Additional verses from the study

- 2 Corinthians 5:7
- Philippians 4:4-9
- Hebrews 11:1-3

