

Study Guide

“V for Victorious”

Each week we try to provide a study guide to help you do your own Bible study and reflection on the themes of the weekend's sermon. This takes about ten minutes per day to complete. It can also be used for a family devotion or as a guide for you to do Bible study with friends. Enjoy!

Monday - This week we'll read the various accounts of the resurrection of Christ in the Gospels. Each of these accounts differs in detail from the others. All agree that the tomb was empty, that there were angels, that Mary Magdalene was the first to find the tomb empty, and that Jesus was raised from the dead. Beyond this they differ in specifics. Luke and John share much in common. Mark has a short ending and then a longer ending was added later to his Gospel, incorporating elements from the other Gospels. Remember, of the Gospel writers only John and Matthew were apostles, and Matthew seems to have written an earlier version of the Gospel that bears his name - hence we might expect the specific details to differ while the overall message is the same. Look for the different details and how each Gospel tells the Easter story. Make a few notes throughout the week concerning Joseph of Arimathea - he's an interesting character found in all four Gospels.

Read Matthew 27:57-28:10. Can you picture this: The tomb is sealed and surrounded by Roman soldiers and Jesus still came forth! There is a wonderful irony in Matthew's telling of the story. How did the women feel when they discovered Jesus was raised? Why?

Tuesday - *Read Mark 15:42-16:8.* This is the short ending of Mark. It appears that something is missing here - as though the first copy of Mark had a part of the text rendered unreadable or was otherwise lost. The early church, probably in the early second century, added the rest of chapter 16, written in a style different from Mark's Gospel and drawing upon the other Gospel accounts. *Read Mark 16:9-20.* Look over your notes from Sunday's sermon - what is the significance of the Resurrection for Christians?

Wednesday - *Read Luke 23:50-24:1-53.* Some in the early church insisted that Jesus had just appeared to the disciples, but that he hadn't been bodily raised. How does Luke's account address this? Notice even the disciples standing there had doubts as they saw Jesus - resurrections were no more common in their day than ours! Look over your Sunday sermon notes again - how is the resurrection a vindication of Jesus' ministry?

Thursday - *Read John 19:38-20:23.* Notice the grief of Mary. She represents all of us as we face grief at the loss of those we love. John's account of the resurrection is rich in allusions to the Old Testament. Notice the two angels sitting on the head and foot of the ledge where Jesus' body had lain. This is meant to remind the reader of the Ark of the Covenant - the symbolic throne of God which had an angel on either end and was said to be both the throne and the judgment seat of God. Jesus, in his death and resurrection, has been declared King and judge. Notice only John tells us the tomb was in a garden. This is an allusion to the Garden of Eden - in Jesus' death and resurrection humanity is being restored to the Garden of Eden - to paradise - a garden that Adam and Eve were banished from after their sin. Three times Jesus says the same thing to the disciples - pointing to part of what he offers in his resurrection. What does he say? How does Easter provide this to us?

Friday - Read *John 20:24-21:17*. Thomas – “doubting” Thomas - represents all of us. We all struggle with doubt. This story is told for our benefit. Recall how many times Peter denied Jesus on the night Jesus was arrested. How does that story fit into *John 21:15-17*? How does this story bring hope to those of us who have denied Jesus by our words or actions? To know more about the meaning of the resurrection, read *I Corinthians 15*.