



ALIVE

40 DAYS WITH JESUS
AFTER THE CROSS



He presented himself
alive to them
after his suffering
by many proofs,
appearing to them during
forty days
and speaking about
the kingdom of God.

Acts 1:3

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AFTER THE CROSS

Written by *Mark Edwards*

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Freely you have received therefore freely give. Matthew 10:8
All Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible: English Standard Version*.

CHRONOLOGY

Jesus' Last 40 Days of Ministry on Earth *Resurrection to Ascension*

Scene	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Tomb visited by the women	28:1	16:1		
Stone rolled away	28:2-4			
Tomb found empty by the women	28:5-8	16:2-8	24:1-8	20:1
Tomb found empty by Peter and John			24:9-12	20:2-10
Appearance to Mary Magdalene		[16:9-11]		20:11-18
Appearance to the other women				
Report of the soldiers to the Jewish authorities	28:9-10 28:11-15			
Appearance to 2 disciples traveling to Emmaus		[16:12-13]	24:13-32	
Report of the 2 disciples to the rest (I Cor. 15:5a)			24:33-35	
Appearance to 10 assembled disciples		[16:14]	24:36-43	20:19-25
Appearance to 11 assembled disciples (I Cor. 15:5b)				20:26-31
Appearance to the 7 disciples while fishing				21:1-25
Appearance to the 11 in Galilee (I Cor. 15:6)	28:16-20	[16:15-18]		
Appearance to James, Jesus' brother (I Cor. 15:7a)				
Appearance to disciples in Jerusalem (Acts 1:3-8)			24:44-49	
Christ's parting blessing/departure (Acts 1:9-12)		[16:19-20]	24:50-53	

ALIVE

This adventure guide is a deep dive into the first 40 days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

After exchanging His Crown of Thorns for a Crown of Glory, Jesus appears to His disciples over a period of 40 days. We will be looking closely at what He was doing on earth the 40 days between His resurrection and His ascension into heaven. During these 40 days, Jesus strengthened His disciples' FAITH.

*"He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during **forty days** and speaking about the kingdom of God." Acts 1:3*

The resurrected life of Jesus changes everything. The earth is full of movement leaders who changed the course of history and the world. All these leaders have one thing in common, they all died, they were buried and you can visit their tombs and see their remains. Most of them have already returned to the dust from which they came.

But JESUS rose from the dead and is alive forevermore!

Jesus lived, died, was buried, rose again and ascended into heaven. He conquered death and is alive today. Have you seen Him? He is everywhere! He is displaying His presence and majesty daily in all the earth. He is risen and He is alive!

The story is told of a man named Augustine, who lived long ago. A man came to him with an idol made of wood. He said to Augustine, *"Here is my god. Where is yours?"* Augustine replied,

"I cannot show you my God — not because there is no God to show you, but because you have no eyes to see Him."

If you want to see and experience the risen Jesus, you have to open your eyes. You can see Him if you know where to look! You can hear Him if you take the time to listen! You can feel His living presence if you reach out for Him! You can smell His aroma if you close your eyes and breathe in deeply! You can taste how sweet He is if you will simply eat the bread of life.

Come and See! Let's explore together Jesus' movements on earth for 40 days after His resurrection and see how significant and life-changing these days were for His first disciples. Get ready to be transformed by the power of the resurrected and living Jesus.

Before you begin each day, take a few moments in silence and ask:

Holy Spirit, open my ears to hear Jesus' living words.

"Faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ." Romans 10:17

Holy Spirit, open my mind to understand Jesus' living words.

"Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." Luke 24:45

Holy Spirit, open my eyes to see the risen, living Jesus.

"And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him." Luke 24:31

"For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer."

1 Peter 3:12

Jesus Leaves the Crown of Thorns | 1

Have you ever wondered what happened to the bloody crown of thorns that was twisted together and pressed into Jesus' skull by the Roman soldiers?

(Maybe Joseph and Nicodemus threw it away as they prepared Jesus' body for burial.)

One thing is for sure, it is gone. The Father replaced it with a crown of Glory.

Start your time thanking Jesus for wearing the crown of thorns for you and thanking God for giving His Son the crown of Glory. Many years after Jesus lived, died, was buried, rose again and ascended into heaven one of the eye witnesses to all of this writes:

*"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and **we have seen his glory**, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14*

John was an eyewitness to Jesus' glory. He saw it, tasted it, smelt it, heard it, felt it, and experienced it in a very real way.

Ask God to open your ears, mind, and eyes so you can hear Jesus, understand Jesus, see His Glory and believe in Him. *"Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law." Psalm 119:18 "Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures." Luke 24:45*

Copy Acts 1:3 down in your own handwriting:

What were Jesus' purposes in appearing to His disciples for forty days after His resurrection? Circle the three purposes in the verse you wrote above.

Write down one question and one observation you have from Acts 1:3.

After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples over the course of forty days in order to show Himself alive, giving them many convincing proofs it was really Him.

What would be a convincing proof for you that someone had risen from the dead?

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER

Acts 1:3 tells us that Jesus had three specific purposes during the forty days after His resurrection. First, Jesus wanted to *show Himself alive after His suffering*. Two, Jesus wanted to provide *many convincing and infallible proofs it was really Him*. And third, Jesus wanted to *speak and teach them about the Kingdom of God*.

Many people throughout history have asked this question, “*If Jesus has risen and is alive, where is He?*” This is a legitimate, fair and honest question. You may have asked it at one point in your own life, as I have. If Jesus rose from the dead, prove it to me. Take me to Him. I would love to meet a person who has risen from the dead. I can’t wait!

If someone asked you to prove Jesus rose from the dead and is alive today, what would you tell them? Where would you take them? What is your proof? What were the many convincing and infallible proofs Jesus gave us?

Jesus spent these forty days not only *showing Himself alive*, and *giving many convincing and infallible proofs that it was really Him*, but also *speaking and teaching about the Kingdom of God*. What did He share about the Kingdom of God? What did He reveal?

These are some of the questions we will seek to discover together as we walk chronologically through the first 40 days of the life of the Risen Jesus.

I WONDER

I wonder if Jesus spent these forty days traveling around Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and Galilee showing Himself alive to all His disciples before His ascension, where He then told them: *"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and Samaria and to the end of the earth."* Acts 1:8 I wonder if Jesus commissioned His disciples to continue the work He began, and to take the gospel to the end of the earth.

I wonder if Jesus spent some time in Jerusalem showing Himself alive, visiting Joseph and Nicodemus, the two secret disciples who asked for Jesus' body. John 19:38-42

They knew Jesus had died. They touched his cold dead body as they wrapped it in linen cloth with seventy-five pounds of myrrh and aloes and prepared it for burial. Then they placed His body in a new tomb and rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mark 15:46

I wonder if Jesus went to see Joseph and Nicodemus to prove He was risen and alive.

I wonder if he sought out Simon of Cyrene who carried His cross, as he followed behind Jesus. Luke 23:26 I wonder if He thanked Simon for this incredible visual image of a man carrying his cross and following after Jesus. An illustration Jesus often used. Matthew 10:38; Luke 14:27

I wonder if Jesus went and visited the Samaritan woman whom he had met at a well. I wonder if He showed up and asked her for another drink of water. I wonder if He showed Himself alive and real by drinking her water. I wonder if Jesus opened her mind to understand the things about the Kingdom of God He had shared with her earlier in John 4.

What do you wonder?

Jesus is Alive

He presented **Himself alive**, by many proofs. Acts 1:3

Personal Witness:
I have seen the
risen Lord

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!

- Tell someone today that **Jesus has risen**.
- Discuss with someone the reason Jesus had to spend another 40 days on the earth after His resurrection.

Jesus' Body Gone | 2

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, a group of women prepared spices to anoint Jesus' body. As the sun was rising, they set out to the tomb, walking to the garden tomb where Jesus had been laid two days prior.

What will these women find? How will Jesus show Himself alive? What proofs will He provide for them? What will He tell them about the Kingdom of God? I hope you are ready for God's Word to speak to you.

Take a moment and ask God to open your ears, mind and eyes to hear and see wondrous things from His Word. Ask Him to amaze you by showing you things you have never seen before.

Read the following passages and write down your questions and observations.
Matthew 28:1-6; Mark 16:1-6; Luke 24:1-10

Make a list of the women disciples who were the first to see the risen Jesus.

Matthew 28:1

Mark 16:1

Luke 24:10

What were the first proofs Jesus gave that He had indeed risen from the dead and was alive?

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

The first disciples to see evidence of the risen Jesus were a *cadre* of disciples whom Jesus loved. (A *cadre* is simply a small group of people specially trained for a task.) This *cadre* was made up of Mary Magdalene, Mary (Jesus' mother, also the mother of James), Joanna, Salome and other women. They had prepared some spices and went to anoint Jesus' dead body. As they were walking to the tomb, they were discussing who would roll away the stone for them. Maybe some of them were praying and asking God to roll away the stone.

Mary Magdalene and Mary (Jesus' mother, also the mother of James) knew where the tomb was because they had watched Joseph and Nicodemus place the body of Jesus in it two days earlier, and they rolled *a large stone* in front of it. *Mark 15:46-47* As the cadre of women were walking, there was a violent earthquake as an angel landed on earth, rolled the large stone away for them, and then sat on it.

The angel's appearance was like lightning and his clothes were white as snow. Feeling the earthquake and seeing the angel, the Roman soldiers (who had been posted after the women left on Friday) were terrified and in shock, so they took off running. The stone had been rolled away *not* to let Jesus OUT, but to let the *cadre* of women IN!

When the women arrived, there were no Roman soldiers and, to their surprise, the large stone had been rolled away. Had God had answered their prayers? The angel who was sitting on the stone said, *"Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for He has raised, just as he said. Come and see the place where he was lying."*

They entered the tomb and, to their amazement, the body of Jesus was gone. They only saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side and they were alarmed. He said, *"Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has been raised! He is not here."* The angel then said to the women, *"Look, there is the place where they laid him."*

While they were standing there in shock, trying to process what they were seeing with their own eyes, suddenly two men stood next to them in dazzling attire. The women became terrified and bowed their faces to the ground. But the men said, *"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has been raised! Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified and on the third day rise again."*

Then the women remembered the words Jesus had spoken to them while He was with them in Galilee months earlier. *Matthew 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32*

PROVE IT:

PROOF #1

THE EARTHQUAKE: As the cadre of women were walking there was a violent earthquake as an angel landed on earth, rolled the large stone away for them, and then sat on it.

PROOF #2

THE STONE ROLLED BACK: When the women arrived, there were no guards and to their surprise, the large stone had been rolled away. God had answered their prayers. The stone had been rolled back NOT to let Jesus out, but to let the *cadre* of women IN!

PROOF #3

THE ANGEL SITTING ON THE STONE: The angel who was sitting on the stone and his appearance was like lightning and his clothes white as snow. He said, *"Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised, just as he said. Come and see the place where he was lying."*

PROOF #4

THE BODY OF JESUS GONE: But they entered the tomb and to their amazement the body of Jesus was gone.

PROOF #5

THE YOUNG MAN DRESSED IN WHITE: When the women entered they only saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side and they were alarmed. He said, *“Don’t be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has been raised! He is not here. Look, there is the place where they laid him.”* Then the angel invited the women to *Come and See* the place where Jesus had been laid.

PROOF #6

TWO MEN DRESSED IN DAZZLING ATTIRE: While they were standing there in shock and trying to process what they were experiencing, suddenly two men stood next to them in dazzling attire. The women became terrified and bowed their faces to the ground. But the men said, *“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has been raised!”*

PROOF #7

JESUS’ OWN WORDS IN GALILEE: The men also said, *“Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified and on the third day rise again.”* Then the women remembered the words Jesus had spoken to them while He was with them in Galilee. *Matthew 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32*

These were the first seven proofs Jesus was indeed risen and alive!

I WONDER

I wonder which angel had the privilege of rolling away the stone. I wonder which angels were chosen to announce to the women the Good News that Jesus had risen from the dead and was alive, just as Jesus had told His disciples months before.

I wonder if there is something significant to the fact that Jesus' coming to earth was announced by angels and so was His resurrection. Both Jesus' entrance into the world and His resurrection were full of angels.

The angel Gabriel shared the Good News of Jesus coming with Zechariah in the temple. *Luke 1:13-17* Gabriel also shared the Good News of the coming of the Holy Son of God with Mary, in Nazareth. *Luke 1:30-35* An angel shared the Good News of great joy with some shepherds outside of Bethlehem on the night Jesus was born as well. *Luke 2:13-14*

I wonder why God chose an angel to announce the birth of His Son and the Resurrection of His Son? I wonder if Gabriel, the angel who stands in the presence of God, was the one to announce not only the birth of Jesus but also His resurrection? *Luke 1:19*

What do you wonder?

Jesus has Risen

"He is not here, for **He has risen.**" Matthew 28:6

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss these first seven proofs that Jesus gave.*

Jesus Predicted His Resurrection | 3

The earthquake, the stone being rolled away, the angel, and the absence of the body of Jesus, along with more angels, were some of the first convincing proofs that Jesus had risen and was alive.

The angel who was sent to announce the resurrection of Jesus said, *“He is not here, for he has risen, **just as He said**. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified and on the third day rise again.”*

When had Jesus told these women that He was going to rise from the dead?

Take a moment and ask God to open your ears, mind and eyes to hear and see the wondrous things Jesus said about His resurrection. Ask Him to show you things you have never seen before and amaze you today.

Read the following passages as they appear chronologically in the life of Jesus. Write down what Jesus said about His Resurrection. What did Jesus say would happen to Him in these passages?

John 2:18-22:

Matthew 16:21-27; Mark 8:31-38; Luke 9:21-22:

Matthew 17:22-23; Mark 9:30-32; Luke 9:43-45:

Matthew 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34:

John 16:16-22:

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

Jesus' first prediction of His resurrection was at the very beginning of His earthly ministry, just after He cleansed the temple for the first time. Jesus said, *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."* *John 2:19* Jesus was calling His earthly body a *temple*. He was talking about raising up His earthly body three days after being dead. At the moment, the disciples had no idea what He was talking about. Scripture says they remembered only after He had risen from the dead. *John 2:22* We will see how good their memory is in a few days.

Jesus, throughout His earthly ministry, made various references to His suffering, rejection, death, burial and resurrection. *Mark 8:31* says, *He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and **after three days rise from the dead.***

Jesus not only taught about His resurrection but He had actually raised people from the dead. He raised the widow's son from the dead in the town of Nain. *Luke 7:11-15* Jesus said, *"Young man, I say to you, arise!"* At Jesus' words, the young man sat up and began to speak. *Incredible!*

He raised Jairus' twelve year old daughter. *Mark 5:35-43* He also raised his beloved friend Lazarus after being dead four days. *John 11:38-44* Jesus said, *"Lazarus, come out!"* At Jesus' words Lazarus walked out of the tomb, his hands and feet bound with linen clothes and his face wrapped with a cloth. *Amazing!*

Jesus even took questions about the concept of the resurrection from religious leaders. He silenced the religious leaders by saying, *"You are wrong, because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God."* *Matthew 22:23-33* Jesus said the Old Testament clearly taught on the topic of resurrection of the dead. We will discover more on that tomorrow.

The truth about the resurrection of the dead was very controversial in Jesus' day and still is today. *Acts 23:8; Matthew 22:23* The Pharisees, one religious group, believed in the resurrection from the dead, but another group called the Sadducees did not. Jesus even told them, *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die."* *John 11:25-26* Then Jesus asked Martha, *"Do you believe this?"* Jesus said He would rise from the dead many times and in no uncertain terms.

Do *you* believe Jesus rose from the dead?

PROVE IT:

PROOF #8

JESUS' MANY PREDICTIONS OF HIS RESURRECTION: During His earthly ministry of three and a half years, Jesus predicted many times that He would rise from the dead on the third day. And so He did!

Jesus' own words may be our strongest evidence yet. When Jesus says He will do something, He always does it. Jesus always keeps His promises. *2 Corinthians 1:20* says, *"For all the promises of God find their Yes in Jesus. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory."*

I WONDER

I wonder why Jesus spent time teaching on His resurrection when the disciples seem to remember any of it. I wonder why it was so important for Jesus to predict His resurrection.

I wonder what it was like to see someone raised from the dead.

I wonder what the son of the widow said after Jesus raised Him from the dead. The Bible says, *“The dead man sat up and began to speak.” Luke 7:15* I wonder what his first words were.

I wonder what the disciples were thinking about when Jesus was teaching about His resurrection. I wonder if they were thinking He was talking about a resurrection at the end of time when all people will be judged. Martha thought this when Jesus said to her, *“Your brother will rise again”* and she replied, *“I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” John 11:23-24*

I wonder who told the chief priests and the Pharisees that Jesus was going to rise from the dead. It is obvious they knew what Jesus had been saying, because after Jesus' death on the cross they immediately went to Pilate saying, *“We remember how the impostor said while he was still alive, “After three days I will rise.” Matthew 27:63*

I wonder when the Jewish leaders heard Jesus say this so clearly and if some of them believed it could be true.

What do you wonder?

Jesus Raised Up

*“Destroy this temple, and in three days **I will raise it up.**” John 2:19*

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today that **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them Jesus' promise to rise again.*

4 | Jesus and the Sign of Jonah

Jesus predicted and taught that He would rise from the dead. *Mark 8:31* says, *He began to **teach them** that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and **after three days rise again**.*

How did Jesus teach about His resurrection? *Matthew 26:56* says, *But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.* Jesus taught about His resurrection from the Old Testament. What verses did Jesus use to prove the Messiah must rise again from the dead?

Before you begin ask God to open your ears, mind and eyes to hear and see wondrous things from the Old Testament about Jesus' resurrection. Ask God to show you things you have never seen before and to surprise you today.

Read the following passages and write down what they say about Jesus the Messiah.

Psalms 16:10:

Psalms 49:15:

Psalms 118:17-24:

Isaiah 25:7-9:

Hosea 6:1-2:

Jesus said His resurrection was the sign of the prophet Jonah. What did Jesus say the sign of the prophet Jonah was in *Matthew 12:38-40*?

The story of Abraham offering up his son Isaac is also a shadow of God the Father offering up Jesus. What did God provide for Abraham in *Genesis 22:1-14*?

According to *Hebrews 11:17-19*, what did God do figuratively speaking to Isaac?

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

Jesus says in *Luke 24:46*, “Thus **it is written**, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead.” And Paul says in *1 Corinthians 15:3-4*, “I delivered as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in **accordance with the Scriptures**, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in **accordance with the Scriptures**.” Paul says these events were prophesied in the Old Testament and that Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection were of *first importance*. Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection were top priority.

Throughout the Old Testament, God foretold the Messiah would suffer, be rejected, put to death, be buried and rise again. Peter, on the day of Pentecost quoted from *Psalms 16:8-11* saying, “David foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus, God raised up, and of that we are witnesses.” *Acts 2:31-32*

Peter also quoted from *Psalm 118* when he was before the Jewish religious leaders and said, “Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead... This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else.” *Acts 4:10-12*

Jonah is sent with the message of salvation to the people living in Nineveh. On the way he is swallowed by a large fish. *Jonah 1:17* says, “And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.” Jesus called this the sign of Jonah, the sign of salvation. Jesus said, “For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” *Matthew 12:40*

But no more beautiful picture could be given than that of Abraham and Isaac in *Genesis 22*. This event was a shadow of the reality that took place in Jesus’ death and resurrection. *Colossians 2:17* God the Father offered up His only begotten Son, Jesus, whom He loved as Abraham loved Isaac. *Genesis 22:2; John 3:16* Jesus carried the wood to the place of the offering, just like Isaac did. *Genesis 22:6; John 19:16-17* God provided a ram, a full grown male sheep for Abraham and a full grown man Jesus, the Lamb of God, for the sins of the world. *Genesis 22:7-13; John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7* Although God spared Abraham’s son, He didn’t spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. *Romans 8:32*

PROVE IT:

PROOF #9

THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES: Throughout the whole Old Testament we learn that the coming Messiah, Jesus, would rise from the dead. Jesus, Paul and Peter all use Old Testament Scriptures to prove Jesus, the Messiah, would rise from the dead.

PROOF #10

THE SIGN OF JONAH: The book of Jonah is a true story. Jonah’s three days and nights in the belly of the great fish were a sign that Jesus, the Messiah, would spend three days and three nights in the belly of the earth before He would burst forth in glorious light.

PROOF #11

THE SHADOW OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC: The story of Abraham and Isaac was a shadow of the story of sacrifice which took place as Jesus made His way to Calvary for us.

I WONDER

I wonder how the disciples and the religious Jews missed this announcement throughout the Old Testament. I wonder why they did not understand what the Old Testament taught about Jesus, the Messiah, or what Jesus Himself told them.

A clue to why the religious leaders did not see this is in *Matthew 13:14-15*, “Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: ‘You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive. For this people’s heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’”

A clue to why the disciples did not see is in *Luke 9:45*, “But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so they might not perceive it.” *Luke 18:34* says, “But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.” In God’s plan it was important that Jesus’ first disciples (before His death, burial and resurrection) did not fully understand what was going to happen to Jesus.

I wonder why God allowed the resurrection of His Son to be concealed and hidden from the disciples. I wonder if it was concealed from everyone in Jesus’ day so they wouldn’t try to stop it.

I wonder if God sometimes conceals things from us in order to accomplish His will in our lives. *Proverbs 25:2; Isaiah 45:15*

Jonah prayed while he was in the belly of the great fish. “Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish.” *Jonah 2:1* I wonder if Jesus prayed during His time in the belly of the earth.

I wonder what He was talking with God about. I wonder if He was discussing with the Father His glorious resurrection, who He would appear to first, and what He would be doing for the forty days after His resurrection.

What do you wonder?

Jesus has Risen

*“Jesus was raised on the third day in **accordance with the Scriptures.**” 1 Corinthians 15:4*

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today that **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them the Scriptures of Jesus rising again.*

Jesus' Direction through an Angel | 5

Let's return to the women at the tomb today. The angel had said, "*He is not here, for he has risen, **just as He said.***" Jesus told these women and the men on many occasions He was going to rise from the dead. Yesterday we learned this truth was hidden and concealed from their understanding, so that the purpose of God would be fulfilled and His Son would die for the sins of the world, be buried, and then rise in victory over death.

Take a moment and ask God to open your ears, mind and eyes to hear and see wondrous things from the tomb today. Ask Him to show you things you have never seen before and surprise you.

Read the following passages and write down your questions and observations. Focus in on the message from the angels.

Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8

Write down exactly what the angel told the women to do after showing them the place where Jesus lay.

Why were the women terrified, bewildered and afraid as they ran to tell the other disciples and Peter?

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

The first disciples who were able to see proof of the risen Jesus were the women whom Jesus loved and trained. Remember, this *cadre* was made up of Mary Magdalene, Mary (Jesus' mother, also the mother of James), Salome, Joanna, and other women.

After the young man dressed in a white robe said, *"He has been raised! He is not here. Look, there is the place where they laid him."* He showed them where the body of Jesus had been laid.

While the women were in shock and perplexed about all they were seeing, two men stood beside them. Frightened, they bowed their faces to the ground. The angel said, *"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has been raised! Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified and on the third day rise again."*

Then he said, *"But go quickly and tell his disciples, even Peter, 'He has been raised from the dead. He is going ahead of you into Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you.'"* So the women left the tomb quickly, and ran to tell Jesus' disciples and Peter with fear and bewilderment. And they said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Jesus chose this small *cadre of women* to be the first humans to announce His resurrection. What a bold move by Jesus! To have women (who the Jewish culture viewed as untrustworthy) be the first ones to announce the Good News of Jesus' resurrection was radical. In Jesus' day women were never chosen as *"Heralds of Good News"* or really of any news at all. This was a job reserved for men.

Yet Jesus chose this *cadre* of women disciples be the first to spread the news of His resurrection.

PROVE IT:

PROOF #12

THE TESTIMONY OF THE WOMEN: Throughout history, God has used godly women to announce His message of salvation. Women have always played a significant role in the plan and purposes of God.

If you are a student of world missions and the spreading of the gospel around the world, you may know of these women: Phoebe Palmer, Stella Sluder, Gertrude Dyck, Alberta Skinner Chapman, Elisabeth Elliot, Lottie Moon and Amy Carmichael. These are just a few of the tens of thousands of women who God has used over the centuries to be His witnesses and *Heralds of the Good News*. God still uses women, just as He used Mary Magdalene, Mary, Salome, Joanna and other women He invested in. They are women who, in the midst of their own personal fears, insecurities, bewilderment and terror, shared the gospel to men, women and children alike all over the world.

Take a moment and thank God for the women He has used to take the message of the gospel to the nations. Then, think about the women in your own life who shared and lived the gospel for you and thank God for them. Paul did this in *2 Timothy 1:3-5*, thanking God for Timothy's mother, Lois, and grandmother, Eunice, who had invested so deeply in Timothy.

I WONDER

I wonder why God chose to entrust the Good News of His Son's resurrection to a group of female disciples. Why the women? Why not the men first? I wonder if it was because these women were the first ones who came looking for Jesus. After all, God promises if we will seek Him with all our hearts we will find Him. *Jeremiah 29:13*

I wonder why God chose to announce His Son's birth to two women, Mary and Elizabeth. *Luke 1:35, 41-45*

On the night Jesus was born, He announced His birth to a group of shepherds, some of whom may have been women. Yes indeed! Women shepherds are seen throughout the Bible; my favorite is Rachel. *Genesis 29:9* says, "*While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for **she was a shepherdess.***"

Interesting enough, Rachel died and was buried just outside of Bethlehem where the angels appeared to the shepherds. *Genesis 35:19-20*

Many shepherds in Jesus' day were women. Watching sheep at night was one of the lowest jobs. God seems to love to show Himself to those whom others consider unworthy, unseen, or insignificant.

Many of these people are women. I love that Jesus reveals Himself to those the world considers weak, low and despised so there is no room for any of us to boast.

1 Corinthians 1:20-21 says, "*Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.*"

What do you wonder?

Jesus has Risen

*"He is not here, for **He has risen.**" Matthew 28:6*

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them the women who first saw the risen Jesus.*

6 | Jesus with His Female Disciples

The cadre of women fled the tomb both amazed and trembling at what they had seen. Their minds were opened and they remembered the words Jesus had spoken to them many times when He said, *“See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.”* Mark 10:33-34 So they hurried, afraid, yet full of joy, to tell everyone else the Good News.

Take a moment to ask God to reveal something new about Jesus from His Word today. Ask Him to open your ears, mind and eyes to see wondrous things about Jesus. Then take a close look at some women of faith.

Read the following passage and write down your questions and observations.
Matthew 28:9-10

How did Jesus show Himself risen and alive to these women? Make a list:

What did the women do when they saw Jesus alive?

What did Jesus tell the women to tell the rest of the disciples?

What can we learn about the Kingdom of God in this first bodily appearance of Jesus?

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

As the women hurried with the Good News told to them by the two men in dazzling attire, Jesus met them on the way back to the other disciples. Wow! The risen Jesus in bodily form. He was indeed risen and is alive. Jesus said to the women, “*Shalom or Peace or All is Well.*” Jesus then invited the women to *come closer and see for themselves* that He was truly alive.

The women came and kneeled down clinging to Jesus’ nail pierced feet. Their eyes must have been drawn to the marks on His feet as their tears of joy fell on His nail scarred feet.

These were the same feet a woman had washed with her tears, and dried them with her hair, kissing them without any thought about what others might think. *Luke 7:37-38* These were the same feet Mary had anointed, six days before the Passover, with ointment made from pure nard. *John 12:1-3* Both women showed extravagant expressions of love and worshiped at the feet of Jesus.

We do not know how long the cadre of women paused for a worship service at Jesus’ feet. They saw Jesus, they touched Him and they put their hands on His feet. Jesus’ presence in bodily form, the women seeing, touching, holding and worshiping are more convincing proof Jesus had risen and is alive.

Jesus’ response to the women to not be afraid, the instructions for the others to go to Galilee, and receiving worship from the women are more convincing proofs He was alive.

Jesus' body itself was a teaching about the Kingdom of God. In the Kingdom of God we will have a body just like Jesus.

*Philippians 3:20-21 says, "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will **transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body**, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." 1 John 3:2 says, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears **we shall be like him**, because we shall see him as he is."*

Wow! What a day that will be when I will see my Savior face to face and be changed, receiving a new resurrected body like His resurrected body.

PROVE IT:

PROOF #13

JESUS' RESURRECTED BODY: Jesus' presence in bodily form was an overwhelming proof that He was alive. The women saw, touched, and held Jesus' feet - undeniable, convincing, indisputable, infallible proof that Jesus was risen and alive.

PROOF #14

JESUS TALKING AND COMFORTING THE WOMEN: Jesus' response to the women was another proof that He was alive. He spoke the words, "*Do not be afraid!*" and imparted compassion, comfort, and peace on these fearful, terrified and bewildered women.

PROOF #15

JESUS RECEIVING WORSHIP: Jesus receiving worship from the women is more convincing proof.

PROOF #16

JESUS GIVING INSTRUCTIONS TO THE WOMEN: Jesus told the women to go tell the other disciples, saying, "*Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.*"

I WONDER

I wonder how long the women stayed at Jesus' feet worshiping? Did they stay on their knees for 10 minutes or for an hour? I wonder how long Jesus let these first witnesses to His resurrection touch Him, hold Him, cling to Him and worship Him. I wonder if Jesus was wearing sandals.

I wonder why God chose this small *cadre* of women disciples to be the first to touch Jesus after His resurrection. I wonder why God chose them to be the first ones to worship Him as the risen Savior. Perhaps it was because their hearts were pure. After all, Jesus had told them, *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."* Matthew 5:8

I wonder if these daughters of Eve noticed where Satan had bruised Jesus' heel. *Genesis 3:15* I wonder if Satan left a mark on Jesus' heel from the battle which took place on the cross. Satan bruised Jesus' heel on the cross, but Jesus crushed the head of the ancient serpent, Satan, when He rose in victory from the grave.

I can't wait to see His feet. I can't wait to kiss His feet. Oh, the Glory of Jesus' Feet.

I wonder if these daughters of faithful Sarah would never be frightened again. Peter later writes to the female disciples, *"... as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening."* 1 Peter 3:6 When we truly encounter the risen Jesus, all fear is gone.

As the old hymn goes, *"Because He lives, I can face tomorrow, Because He lives, all fear is gone; Because I know He holds the future, And life is worth the living, Just because He lives!"* (Because He Lives, by Bill and Gloria Gaither).

What do you wonder?

Jesus is Revealed

“Suddenly, **Jesus met them...**” Matthew 28:9

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them the women who saw Jesus rise again.*

Jesus and the Roman Soldiers | 7

Today we will look at the most *unexpected witnesses* to the resurrection, the Roman soldiers. The soldiers who were commanded to seal and secure the tomb, and then keep watch over and guard it. We saw them several days ago when the angel appeared as lightning and wearing clothes white as snow, sitting on the stone he had rolled away. For fear of the angel, the Roman soldiers trembled and became like dead men. *Matthew 28:4* Let's find out what happens with these terrified soldiers as they become the next witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus.

Take a moment and ask God to open your ears, mind and eyes to see wondrous things from His Word today. Ask Him to show you things you have never seen before and surprise you.

Read the following passages and write down your questions and observations.

Matthew 27:62-66

Matthew 28:11-15

What did the Roman soldiers actually see and witness of Jesus resurrection?

What was the lie the chief priests and elders make up to deceive the people?

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

A Roman guard was made up of four to sixteen battle hardened soldiers. In combat, they would form a square and were able to hold off a much larger force. *“These soldiers and the sealed stone constitute imperial authority over the tomb. The seal would be clay or wax pressed into the crack between the rolling stone and the tomb’s entrance. The imperial seal stamped on the clay or wax signified Rome’s authority.”* (Baker Exegetical Commentary, David Turner).

After they felt the earth shake, saw an angel land in front of them, and watched him roll back the large stone sealing the tomb of Jesus, these brave Roman soldiers were, *“shaken and became like dead men because they were so afraid of the angel.”* *Matthew 28:4* Maybe they even saw Jesus walk right out of the tomb like Lazarus did several months before.

After picking themselves up off the ground, *some of the soldiers* (not all the soldiers) ran to the temple in search of the chief priests to report what had happened. You remember these chief priests; the ones who paid Judas blood money to betray Jesus. *Luke 22:3-5* They were also the ones who brought in false witnesses to lie in a court of law about Jesus. *Mark 14:53-59* These same chief priests went to Pilate asking for a Roman guard to be posted at the tomb of Jesus because they knew Jesus had said, *“After three days I will rise.”* *Matthew 27:63* These same chief priests had taken soldiers, secured the tomb, sealed the stone, and set the guard to make sure nothing happened to the body of Jesus.

The soldiers reported everything they had seen and experienced to these same chief priests who had sealed the tomb and positioned them as guards to protect it. The chief priests went into panic mode. They called an emergency meeting with the Jewish leaders and elders and devised an evil plan, a masterful lie to deceive the people. This was something no one would have expected from these self-righteous religious leaders. They told the soldiers to start telling everyone a BIG FAT LIE! Just tell the people, *“Jesus’ disciples came by night and stole him away while we were sleeping.”* They also gave them a large sum of money to help soothe the seared consciences of these lying soldiers.

PROVE IT:

PROOF #17

THE SOLDIERS' TESTIMONY: The soldiers believed Jesus rose from the dead, and told the chief priests *everything*. The soldiers were *unexpected witnesses* to the resurrection. They possibly even proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus before the women got a chance to.

PROOF #18

THE CHIEF PRIESTS' AND ELDERS' BIG FAT LIE: The chief priests believed Jesus rose from the dead so they spun a lie to cover it up. What incredible proof that Jesus really did rise from the dead. When your enemies believe you have risen from the dead, make up a false story to cover up the truth and pay people off, it is some solid, convincing proof.

PROOF #19

THE MONEY PAID TO THE SOLDIERS: The chief priests so believed Jesus rose from the dead that they were willing to pay a large sum of money to bribe the soldiers to sell their lie. Who pays money to have someone tell the truth? No one! We pay people money to lie and cover up the truth.

I WONDER

I wonder how much the soldiers saw that morning at the tomb. I wonder if they saw Jesus walk out of the tomb after the angel rolled the stone aside.

I wonder how hard the earth shook when the angel landed. I wonder how big the angel was. I wonder if he was HUGE like 20 feet tall, after all he did sit on the rock after he moved it. That may be a clue to how BIG this angel was. These battle-ready Roman soldiers didn't even put up a fight? I wonder if the angel was BIGGER than any person they had ever seen. Did they stand there in shock for a few minutes and then just ran away?

I wonder what the soldiers said to the chief priests when, *"They told them **all** that had taken place."* What they said certainly caused panic in the Jewish leadership when they heard it.

I wonder what ever happened to the soldiers who were paid to lie. I wonder if the governor, Pilate, ever found out what really happened.

I wonder what the penalty was for abandoning your post, running away, and lying. I wonder if they could have been or were executed for leaving their post, running away and lying.

I wonder if this event was life-changing for some of these solders. (It sure made them some quick cash.) I wonder if any of these soldiers ever repented of the lie they told and came to faith in Jesus. That would be a cool story.

I wonder if any if these guards ever went looking for Jesus or ever found Him.

I wonder if any of the religious leaders came to their senses and looked for Jesus or eventually believed in Him.

What do you wonder?

Jesus will Rise

“After three days ***I will rise.***” Matthew 27:63

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- Tell someone today ***Jesus has risen.***
- Discuss with them the story and the ***BIG FAT LIE!***

8 | Jesus sends His Female Messengers

When we last left the women they were on their way to tell everyone the Good News. They had been given a message from the angel and from Jesus Himself. The angel's message was, *"Go and tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you to Galilee. There you will see Him just as He he told you."* Mark 16:7 Jesus' message was, *"Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."* Matthew 28:10 These were simple instructions, direct, and easy to understand.

Take a moment and ask God to open your ears, mind and eyes and show you things you have never seen before and surprise you. Take a moment to pray and then take a close look at how these spiritual giants of the faith respond when they received the Good News from the women that Jesus was alive.

Read the following passages and jot down your questions and observations.

Mark 16:8-11; Luke 24:9-11

What were the other disciples doing when the women arrived?

Why do you think the other disciples did not believe the women's testimony?

Why do you think the other disciples did not obey Jesus' commands to go to Galilee?

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

When the women arrived to make the announcement, the other disciples were still weeping and mourning the death of Jesus and their uncertain future. When the women bore witness of the resurrection, they simply did not believe and they thought the women were *speaking nonsense*. They gave no credibility to the testimony of the women.

Maybe this was because the view of women in the Jewish culture, in Jesus day, was very low. Men were taught from an early age to never trust a woman.

The Jewish Mishnah said:

"Sin began with a woman and thanks to her, we all have to die!" (Ecclesiasticus/Sirach 25:24)

"A woman is inferior to a man in all respects." (Josephus, Rev. 2.24 § 199)

"Women are an embarrassment and a reproach!" (Ecclesiasticus/Sirach 42:14)

"The one who talks too much with women brings bad to himself and leaves aside the study of the Torah." (Tractate Aboth 1.5)

"Don't put yourself in the hands of a woman or she might begin to dominate you completely!" (Ecclesiasticus/Sirach 9:2)

You can see the decision by Jesus to have this cadre of women be the first humans to announce His resurrection was counter-cultural. But this is Jesus - He loved and respected women.

Women were so important in the life of Jesus. Jesus, more than any person who has ever lived, valued women. Women financially supported the earthly ministry of Jesus with their own resources. *Luke 8:2-3* says, "... *Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. **These women were helping to support them out of their own means.***"

These women served almost unnoticed in the ministry of Jesus - by most everyone, except Jesus. Yet, it was these women whom Jesus chose to appear to first, and entrust with the message of the Good News that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead and was alive.

Yet the women's eyewitness testimony was not enough for these hard-hearted men. They did not believe the women. They did not obey the angel's and Jesus' command to go to Galilee, *even though He had already told them*. On the night of the last supper Jesus had said to them, *"For it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. **But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.**"* Matthew 26:31-3

PROVE IT:

PROOF #20

EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY: The eyewitness testimony of the women who had seen, touched, held, clung to, worshiped and heard Jesus speak to them was undeniable proof that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead.

I WONDER

I wonder how the women felt being chosen by God to announce the resurrection of His Son to the others. I wonder if they felt loved, respected, significant and important. I wonder if they felt highly valued by Jesus.

They knew Jesus was different from the other men they had known.

I wonder if Mary Magdalene was the designated leader of the group and the one who did all the talking. I wonder if the fact that Mary Magdalene, who once had seven demons living in her, had any impact on the others not believing her.

I wonder if at times they thought Mary Magdalene was still affected and haunted by her past life.

I wonder why the other disciples thought the testimony of the women sounded like *nonsense*. I wonder if they were so lost in their own grief and pain that they did not want to believe the Good News.

I wonder if people today have the same problem. I wonder if we get so caught up in our own lives, grief and sorrow that the Good News of the gospel that Jesus is risen and is alive today sounds like nonsense to us.

Sometimes we have our eyes looking down on ourselves so much that we can see nothing but the our own pain. Jesus wants us to look up and hear the Good News that He is alive and can meet our deepest needs.

He also wants us to share the Good News with others. Who can you share with today?

What do you wonder?

Jesus is Alive

“When they heard that **He was alive** and had been seen by the women...” Mark 16:11

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen**.*
- *Discuss with them the women disciples' testimony!*

Jesus with two of His Apostles | 9

The women poured out their hearts out trying to convince the other disciples that they had seen Jesus alive and had worshiped at His feet. The other disciples thought the women's testimony sounded like nonsense and idle words. Yet, their interest was sparked enough that a couple of them went to take a look for themselves.

As you begin today, take a moment and ask God to open your ears, mind and eyes and show you things you have never seen before and surprise you.

It's time to take a close look at how two seemingly spiritual giants in the faith responded when they saw for themselves the empirical evidence that Jesus has risen and was alive.

Read the following passages and jot down your questions and observations.

Luke 24:12; John 20:1-10

Why did Mary say to Peter, “*They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him*”?

How did Jesus show Himself risen and alive to the two disciples? Make a list:

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

The women had done their part. They had given eyewitness testimony to the fact that they had seen Jesus had risen and was alive. They had touched Him and worshiped at His feet. But the others thought the story was an idle tale, and they did not believe them. *Luke 24:11*

As the others were talking amongst each other, Mary ran to talk with Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. Mary told them, “*They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!*” Why would she say this? What did she mean? Was she still doubting after all she has seen and experienced? Who had taken the body of Jesus? Was she possibly saying this in frustration, just to get them to move and do something?

What she said evidently worked, and Peter and the other disciple wanted to see for themselves. I believe the *another disciple* was possibly the apostle John (known as the disciple whom Jesus loved and who had been reclining at the table close to Jesus at the Last Supper). Interesting enough, John never names himself in the book that bears his name the Gospel of John. He does identify himself at the end of the book in *John 21:20-24*. We know John was the disciple who reclined at the table next to Jesus. *John 13:23-25*

John was much younger than Peter and obviously faster, but not as brave. John arrived first but did not go in. He simply peered in and saw only the strips of linen laying there. When Peter arrived, moments later, he went straight in to see if the body was, indeed, gone. John quickly followed Peter in. Together they took a moment to look around but only found a few things in the tomb. They began examining the strips of linen that had once been wrapped around Jesus and were now lying by themselves. They looked closely at the burial cloth that had once been around Jesus head and was now neatly folded. They were looking at undeniable empirical evidence that Jesus had indeed risen.

At this moment, John believed Jesus has risen, but Peter was still very unsure and doubting, wondering what was going on. Although John believed, neither man *“understood fully from the scripture that Jesus must rise from the dead.” John 20:9*

Peter and John both decided to return to where they were staying in Jerusalem.

PROVE IT:

PROOF #21

THE EMPTY TOMB: The absence of the body of Jesus was the first proof Peter and John saw when they entered the tomb. There was no doubt the body of Jesus was **GONE!**

PROOF #22

STRIPS OF LINEN: The strips of linen that had once been wrapped around Jesus were now lying by themselves in a pile. How did the linens get there? If someone had stolen the body of Jesus, they wouldn't have wasted time unwrapping the linen strips that embalmed His body.

PROOF #23

BURIAL CLOTH: The burial cloth that had once been around Jesus' head and was now neatly folded. If someone had stolen the body of Jesus, they might have taken off the head covering to make sure they got the right guy, but would they have taken the time to fold it neatly? I don't think so.

These are three very convincing proofs that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead.

I WONDER

I wonder who unwrapped Jesus body and took the time to neatly fold the burial cloth. I wonder if it was an angel. I wonder if it was Jesus Himself.

I wonder why it is so hard for us men to believe (women too, sometimes). I wonder why men rely so much on what their eyes see in order to believe anything.

I wonder why all the *blind* people Jesus healed in the Bible were men. Were there no blind women in Jesus' day? Of course there were, but maybe Jesus was pointing out that our main problem as men is our eyes. We depend so much on our human eyes that we get blinded from the truth. We think we see and yet we do not. I know many women are saying, "*Amen!*" to that, at least my wife is.

I wonder what Peter and John talked about as they returned or if they just went their separate ways and needed time alone to think. Did they walk together or did John run on ahead again?

I wonder what they were thinking about. I wonder if Peter was contemplating what would happen if Jesus really had risen from the dead. I wonder if he was thinking about what he would say to Jesus when he saw Him again.

I wonder if Peter felt a little ashamed for denying Jesus after swearing he would not deny him. "*Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!*" *Matthew 26:35* I wonder if Peter was feeling ashamed for hiding outside the trial of Jesus and denying Him three times. *Matthew 26:69-75* He had wept bitterly over his lack of courage. His heart must have been heavy.

I wonder how many times I have denied knowing Jesus, just like Peter. I wonder why so many are ashamed when it comes to the gospel, the Good News that Jesus is alive. *Romans 1:16* says, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.*"

Don't be ashamed of the gospel! For Jesus took all our shame on Himself at the cross and the gospel frees us from all our shame. Jesus has forgiven us of **all** our sins. Jesus takes away our sin and our shame. *2 Corinthians 5:21*

What do you wonder?

Jesus Risen from the Dead

"He must rise from the dead." John 20:9

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them Peter and John's response to the news!*

10 | Jesus with Mary

Mary Magdalene had obviously followed closely behind Peter and John, returning once again to the tomb. Maybe she had come to see what Peter and John would do after they saw the evidence of the empty tomb. When Peter and John left, Mary reappeared in the story, she was standing at the entrance of the tomb. She was confused and struggled to know what to believe and was crying uncontrollably.

As you begin today, take a moment and ask God to open your ears, mind and eyes and show you things you have never seen before and surprise you today.

Now take a close look at Mary's one on one with Jesus, her Rabboni (which means Teacher).

Read the following passage and jot down your questions and observations.

John 20:11-18

How did Jesus show Himself risen and alive to Mary Magdalene? Make a list!

Why did Jesus not want Mary to hold on to Him?

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

Mary returned to the tomb following behind Peter and John. After they left, she stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over and looked once again into the empty tomb. She saw two angels in white sitting where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and one at the feet. The angels asked her why she was crying, and Mary reveals the fact that she has doubt in her heart. She was struggling to believe Jesus had really risen. *"They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."*

But wait, didn't Mary believe the first time she saw the angel and when she had seen Jesus and worshipped at His feet? Of course she did, but she still had some doubts in her heart. Maybe, after the other disciples didn't believe her and the rest of the women, she started second guessing what she had seen. Maybe when they told her she was telling an idle tale, she felt humiliated and started to doubt what she knew to be true. (I think we have all done that at one point in our lives.)

Mary, still weeping, turned around to see a man outside the tomb who looked like he was gardening. *"Why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?"* It was Jesus, but Mary did not recognize Him until Jesus said her name, *"Mary!"* It must have been the way Jesus said her name that gave Him away. This time she knew in an instant He was Jesus. No one had ever said her name with such love and concern, only Jesus.

Mary cried out, *"Rabboni!"* (which means Teacher) and ran over to hug Jesus and cling to Him. Jesus said, *"Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father."*

Then, Jesus told Mary to tell the others that God is His Father and theirs as well - that His God and their God, as well. Jesus wanted them all to know that they are His and He is theirs. *"Go to my brothers and tell them, I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God!"*

PROVE IT:

PROOF #24

TWO MORE ANGELS AND NO BODY: The two angels dressed in white sat where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. The missing body and the two angels were more convincing proof for Mary. Yet still not enough.

PROOF #25

JESUS SPEAKS MARY'S NAME: Jesus lovingly said, *"Mary,"* and everything changes for her. Dead people do not talk or call out a person's name. One day Jesus will call your name. When He does will you recognize His voice? *John 10:27*

PROOF #26

MARY'S TESTIMONY: Mary returned once again to the disciples with the news, "*I have seen the Lord!*" Mary got to experience a personal, one-on-one encounter with the risen Jesus. She heard her name and her life was changed! Mary obeyed once again and testified even though she didn't understand everything that was happening. She knew enough, Jesus was alive.

I WONDER

I wonder why the angels were sitting where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and another at the feet. I wonder if these were the same angels from earlier in the morning. I wonder why they were just sitting there in the tomb. I wonder if they were waiting for Mary and others to come. I wonder if they were talking to one another. I wonder if Peter and John saw them as well.

I wonder why Jesus first called Mary "*woman*." I wonder why Mary did not recognize Jesus and thought He was the gardener. I wonder if she was crying so hard and her head was down or her tears blocked her vision.

I wonder what kind of clothing Jesus was wearing. I wonder what Jesus was wearing because his old clothes had been divided up among the soldiers in four parts and His inner garment had been won by one of the soldiers in a game of chance. *John 19:23-24* I wonder what soldier won Jesus' tunic and what he did with it.

I wonder if Jesus' body still bore the marks of the scars from the crown of thorns and the beating He took before He went to the cross.

I wonder if His face and body were unrecognizable to Mary because of the scaring.

I wonder how Jesus spoke Mary's name. It must have been so loving and tender, she just knew it was Him. I wonder what His tone of voice revealed. I wonder what it will feel like one day when Jesus calls my name. I wonder how I will react when I hear Him say, *Mark!*

I wonder how long Mary stood holding on to Jesus. Was it minutes? Was it longer? I wonder why Jesus had not already returned to His Father.

I wonder why this time Jesus did not tell them to go to Galilee. I wonder if the others believed Mary this time.

What do you wonder?

Jesus the Lord

"I have seen the Lord." John 20:18

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them Mary's one-on-one with Jesus!*

Jesus with Simon | 11

After seeing, hugging, and getting some more instructions from Jesus for other disciples, Mary went back to the place where they were staying. She told the others her latest encounter with Jesus and also Jesus' new message, *"I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."* Meanwhile Jesus had another person He needed to see one-on-one.

As you begin today, take a moment and ask God to open your ear, mind and eyes and show you things you have never seen before and surprise you today.

Read *Luke 24:12*: What do you think Peter did on his way home after examining the evidence of an empty tomb?

Read *1 Corinthians 15:3-5*: Who did Jesus appear to, risen and alive, before He showed Himself to the Twelve?

Read *Luke 24:34*: Who do the travelers to Emmaus say Jesus appeared to, showing Himself risen and alive?

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

It seems Peter must have taken some time alone in the garden to contemplate and meditate on what he had seen in the tomb. The linen burial clothes laying there must have had him wondering what happened to Jesus.

No one stealing a body would take the time to take off all the burial linens and leave them set neatly in the grave. *Did someone want the burial clothes to be discovered? Could that someone be Jesus? Was this a clue or a sign?*

The two travelers to Emmaus (who are the next to see Jesus) told us that Jesus had already appeared to Simon (Peter). We also know that Paul in *1 Corinthians 15* told us Jesus appeared to Cephas (Peter). We also saw Peter call himself Peter in *1 Peter 1:1*. So was he Simon, Cephas or Peter? We see all three names in the verse *John 1:42*, “Jesus looked at him and said, *So you are **Simon** the son of Jonah? You will be called **Cephas** (which means **Peter**).*”

Simon, Cephas, and Peter were all different names for the same person. Simon was his Jewish name given to him by his earthly father Jonah. Cephas was his Aramaic name given to him by Jesus. Peter was his name in the Greek language given to him by his heavenly Father. This name change will be very important in the coming days as we see that when Jesus called him Simon, Jesus is saying he was living in his own human strength and doing his own will.

But, when Jesus called him Peter he was saying that he was living by faith and not by sight, doing the Father’s will. And sometimes Jesus called him Simon Peter, showing us that he was struggling to decide which person he will be - Simon in the flesh or Peter in the Spirit?

Although we have no written account of the meeting with Simon, nor of the location of this meeting, we do know it happened.

We possibly have a little insight as to what Simon was thinking about in *Luke 22:31-32*. Remember at the Last Supper when Jesus talked with Peter alone? He said this, “*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might **sift you like wheat**, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*”

Satan, before entering into Judas and leaving the upper room, asked Jesus if he could *sift Simon as wheat*. Jesus told Satan that he had His permission - the same permission God gave Satan in the life of Job in the Old Testament. *Job 1:8-12*

God used Satan to accomplish His purposes throughout the Bible. The last three days were difficult for Simon as he had been *sifted as wheat*. *Luke 22:31* Jesus had been praying for Simon to become Peter.

Sifting wheat was the process by which a farmer, using a pitch fork, would throw the wheat into the air so the wind would blow away the chaff. What would fall to the ground was the good part or the whole grain of wheat. Satan had spent the last three days throwing Simon in the air while the Father was blowing away his pride, self-reliance, and his strength to do things his way.

This sifting continued for Simon. What emerged at the end of these 40 days of the sifting process was Peter - a more humble, God-dependent man who was able to die to his will and accept the Father's will. What emerged was Peter, a man of faith!

PROVE IT:

PROOF #27

SIMON'S TRANSFORMATION INTO PETER: Simon's one-on-one encounter with the risen and living Jesus was another convincing proof. Simon the doubter was transformed into Peter, the man of faith. This was one of the strongest proofs that Jesus was alive. A transformed life is a strong testimony and is difficult to argue against.

I WONDER

I wonder what Jesus and Simon talked about in the encounter. I wonder if Simon fell at Jesus' feet like the women and worshiped. I wonder if Simon asked Jesus to forgive him for denying Him three times. I wonder if Jesus spoke Shalom to Simon.

I wonder what Jesus said to Peter. I imagine there were a lot of tears of repentance, reconciliation, restoration and rejoicing.

I wonder if Satan still asks God to sift His disciples as wheat like he did with Simon *Luke 22:31* and *Job Job 1:8-12*. I have certainly have had times in my life when I felt like I was being tossed up in the air by God as He painfully broke my pride and self-reliance.

One of Satan's names is the accuser of the brothers. *"Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for **the accuser of our brothers** has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God."* Revelation 12:10

I wonder if Jesus prays for us as He did for Simon. *"I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."* Luke 22:32 I wonder if Jesus is praying for me, that my faith would not fail. *"Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make **intercession** for them."* Hebrews 7:25 What an incredible truth and tremendous encouragement. *Jesus lives to make intercession for us.*

Thank you Jesus! Thank you for praying for me and for allowing me to be sifted as wheat so I might be a vessel of honor in your house and be used by you for your Glory alone.

Thank you for humbling me and causing me to be dependent on you alone and choose your will over my will. Thank you!

What do you wonder?

Jesus has Appeared

*“The Lord has indeed risen and **has appeared to Simon!**” Luke 24:34*

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them the conversation Jesus had with Simon!*

12 | Jesus walking with Two Disciples

As resurrection morning fades, the disciples were trying to process all that had happened. They heard multiple testimonies of people who have seen the empty tomb, and even some who had seen Jesus alive. They know something unusual and amazing has happened, but they were confused.

The disciples were discussing the stories of angels appearing, a large heavy stone being rolled away, an empty tomb, the burial linens, and the cloth that was around Jesus' face folded neatly in the tomb where the body of Jesus had been.

It was certainly a lot to take in over the last several days. Also, the rumor circulating around Jerusalem was that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus. That must have made them afraid.

Take a moment to pray and ask God to open your ears, mind and eyes and show you things you have never seen before and surprise you today.

Read the following passages and jot down your questions and observations.

Mark 16:12-13; Luke 24:13-35

How did Jesus show Himself risen and alive to these two disciples? Make a list:

What can we learn about the Kingdom of God from Jesus' encounter with these two disciples?

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

Jesus left Simon and now suddenly began walking along the road with two other disciples who left the group in Jerusalem and the upper room and decided it was time to go home. One of the disciples was Cleopas and the other was an unnamed person. After the long walk, the two invited Jesus to stay with them and eat dinner. This sounds like something a married couple might do.

Maybe it was Cleopas' brother, but then why not mention his name. Not mentioning a woman's name would go right along with the Jewish culture of the day, which had a very low view of women. Maybe they were a married couple, or maybe a brother and sister!

Regardless, the two disciples left the others and started walking to their home in Emmaus, a town about 7 miles west of Jerusalem. They were convinced Jesus was dead, and did not believe the women's testimony or their instructions to go to Galilee. They revealed what they had concluded, when they said *"Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, **a man** who was **a prophet**, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. He was **crucified** and **He is dead**; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel."* Luke 24:19-20 It didn't work out like they were hoping.

Their expectations that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah had been crushed. It was time to cut their losses, move on and begin rebuilding their lives.

As they walked and talked to one another, Jesus began to walk alongside them, but they did not recognize Him. They made a reference to the women's testimony saying, *"Some of the women in our group **saw a vision of angels**, who said Jesus was alive. But some of the others went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, **but Jesus they did not see**."* It was over, Jesus was dead and it was time to move forward. They had heard eyewitness testimonies of friends who had seen the empirical evidences of an empty tomb, burial linens, a face cloth neatly folded, but these were not proof enough for these two doubting disciples.

After listening to them, Jesus gently opened the Scriptures, *“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself.”* Choosing scripture from the the first five books in the Old Testament, written by Moses, and verses from the Prophets in the Old Testament, Jesus explained to them *what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself.*

I wish I could have been there to hear Jesus teaching. What an education they received that day. Yet, they did not recognize who Jesus was until He sat down with them, took the bread, gave thanks and broke it.

Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him. And He was gone as mysteriously as He had appeared to them.

PROVE IT:

PROOF #28

WALKING AND TALKING: Jesus walking and talking with these two disciples for 7 miles as he opened the Scriptures to them is joyful proof.

PROOF #29

THE SCRIPTURES CONCERNING JESUS: Jesus intellectually walked the two disciples through the Old Testament Scriptures, explaining to them what was prophesied about Him - scriptural proof.

PROOF #30

SITTING AT THE TABLE: Jesus sat down with them at the table in their house, took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to them. This is living proof He was alive.

I WONDER

I wonder why the two disciples did not recognize Jesus. I wonder if He was wearing a hood over His head. I wonder if His face was so disfigured by the beating He received from the Romans that He was unrecognizable. I wonder why they did not recognize Jesus' voice. Although they did say later to one another, *"Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"*

I wonder what verses Jesus chose to show convincing proof from the first five books of the Bible. I wonder what verses He chose from the Prophets as they walked along the seven miles to their home. I wonder if Paul chose the same verses in *Acts 28:23* as Jesus had used.

I wonder if Jesus has ever walked and talked along side of me with me recognizing Him.

I wonder if, in the Kingdom of God, we will be able to transport ourselves through space and time instantly, just like Jesus. I wonder if we will experience different dimensions.

When the pair arrived back in Jerusalem in the upper room where everyone was hiding, they told the other disciples what they had experienced and said, *"The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon Peter. We recognized Him when He broke bread with us."* And the others did not believe them!

I wonder why the other disciples did not believe these two eyewitnesses who had spent hours walking and talking with Jesus. *Mark 16:13* says, *"They told the rest, but they did not believe them."*

I wonder how thanking God, breaking the bread and giving it to them was so distinct that these disciples recognized Jesus by these details. I wonder if they saw Jesus' nail pierced hands while He broke the bread and if that was when they knew it was Jesus.

I wonder if Jesus told them as they walked that he had appeared to Simon Peter. I wonder why Paul mentions Jesus' meeting with Peter/Cephas in *1 Corinthians 15:5*, but not the meeting with the two travelers to Emmaus.

What do you wonder?

Jesus the Lord has Risen Indeed

“The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon Peter.” Luke 24:34

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them the experience of these two disciples!*

Jesus' Fearful Disciples | 13

After Jesus broke bread with Cleopas and the other disciple in their house, He disappeared. The two disciples then ran back to Jerusalem to tell the others everything the risen Jesus had said and done.

They told them how Jesus had met them on the way home, and how He had hidden His true identity from them so they would not recognize Him. They told them how Jesus walked and talked with them and how *their hearts burned within as Jesus opened the Scriptures to them*. They told them how Jesus had broken bread with them in their home and then revealed Himself to them and vanished.

Mark 16:13 says, “*They told the rest, but they did not believe them.*” It was now the evening of resurrection Sunday and the large group of hard-hearted disciples continued to discuss all that had happened during those first 24 hours.

Take a moment to pray and ask God to open your ears, mind and eyes and show you things you have never seen before and surprise you today. Get ready to see the next set of proofs that Jesus will give, showing Himself indeed risen and alive.

Read the following verses slowly and take some time to meditate on them. Then jot down your questions and observations.

John 20:19-21

Why did the disciples lock the doors in the place where they were staying?

How did Jesus show Himself risen and alive to His fear-filled disciples? Make a list:

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

As the first glorious day of Jesus' resurrection came to a close, the disciples were cowering behind locked doors because they were afraid for their lives. The Jewish leaders had made up a false story saying, "*His disciples came during the night and stole him away while the soldiers were asleep.*"

They had paid a large sum of money to the Roman soldiers to spread the lie throughout all Jerusalem. Everyone was looking for the disciples; they were on the Jerusalem's *Most Wanted* list. They were wanted for kidnapping the body of a dead person — JESUS.

As they huddled in the upper room, discussing and debating the events of the day, Jesus came and *stood among them*. (I love this about Jesus. Jesus stands in the middle of every doubt, every problem, and every fear that we have. He loves to be with us, because He loves us so much.)

Jesus said one word, "**Shalom**," translated in English as, *peace be with you*. But *Shalom* was much more than a greeting of peace. *Shalom* meant *peace with God* which can only come through Jesus. *Shalom* also included forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration with God. It was what Paul talks about in *Philippians 4:7*, "*And the peace (Shalom) of God ... will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*" *Shalom* came through forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God in the risen Jesus.

In *2 Corinthians 5:18* we read, "*All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.*" Jesus rose from the dead to reconcile us with God and give us *peace with God*. Jesus spoke one word "**Shalom**," and *all was well!*

Jesus showed them His hands and His side. The disciples began to jump up and down with joy because they had seen the Lord. What an evening that must have been! What excitement and hope must have filled the air as they beheld the risen Savior of the world! The Lamb of God risen and alive, right there with them! One day He will appear to us and we will see Him as well!

1 John 3:2-3 says, “We know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself as He is pure.”

PROVE IT:

PROOF #31

JESUS STANDS AMONG THEM: Jesus standing there alive in their midst was positive proof that He had risen from the dead, just as He said.

PROOF #32

SHALOM: Jesus spoke peace to them and reassured them of His love, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration with God. All was Well!

PROOF #33

JESUS' HANDS AND SIDE: The marks in Jesus' hands and in His side were clear evidence that He was the same man who had died three days ago on a cross outside the city. *Hebrews 13:12*

PROOF #34

THE DISCIPLES JOY IN SEEING JESUS: The disciples' gladness and joy at seeing Jesus was another proof. They were overjoyed because they finally believed it was all true when Jesus stood in front of them risen and alive.

I WONDER

I wonder if our resurrected bodies would be able to do what Jesus resurrected body was able to do. I wonder if, in the Kingdom of God, our resurrected bodies would be able to pass through locked doors like Jesus did. I wonder if our resurrected bodies would keep the scars from this life, like Jesus' body had done.

I wonder what it sounded like to hear Jesus said, "*Shalom*." I wonder if they all started crying for joy when He spoke these words of forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration.

I wonder what the disciples saw when Jesus showed them His hands. I wonder if there were scars where the nails went into His hands. I wonder if there was an actual hole where the nails had been.

I wonder what the disciples saw when Jesus showed them His side. I wonder what Jesus was wearing that evening. I wonder if Jesus had taken off His robe or garment so they could see clearly the marks in His side.

I wonder how long Jesus stayed with them this first night. I wonder if He had walked among them so everyone could get a close look. I wonder if each one placed their finger in His hands and side.

I wonder how the disciples expressed their personal joy and gladness at seeing Jesus. I wonder what they were saying to one another and to Jesus. I wonder if they were jumping up and down and dancing. I wonder what this worship experience was like.

What do you wonder?

Jesus Stood Among Them

"... Jesus came, and stood among them." John 20:19

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them this incredible worship experience!*

14 | Jesus First Commission

The first day of the resurrection of Jesus was packed full of all kinds of undeniable proofs that He was alive and risen. Jesus had appeared to many people on that day, showing Himself alive, allowing them to see, touch and embrace Him. He appeared to people one-on-one, in pairs, in small groups and in a large group. There was no denying He was alive.

Take a moment to pray and ask God to open your ears, mind and eyes and show you things you have never seen before, and surprise you today.

Read the following verses slowly and take some time to meditate on them. Then jot down your questions and observations.

John 20:19-23

After proving Himself alive, what does Jesus commission them to do? (vs. 21)

After giving them His commission, who does Jesus breathe on His disciples? (vs. 22)

With this gift, what are His disciples now going to be able to do? (vs. 23)

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

When Jesus appeared in their midst, He spoke *Shalom* to them. He then showed them His hands and side, and they all were excited. As the reality of what they were seeing with their own eyes settled in and the shock wore off, they must have been visibly frightened as they struggled to believe what their eyes were seeing.

So, Jesus spoke *Shalom* to them a second time. “Relax, be at peace, *all is well*, you are all forgiven, reconciled to God and your relationship is restored, stop doubting: believe and receive.”

Jesus waited patiently for them to gain their equilibrium and calm down. Then Jesus gave them the first of what would be six commissions. Jesus simply said to them, “*As the Father sent me, even so I am sending you.*”

Not “I *WILL* send you in 40 days!” but “*I AM sending you!*” I am sending you out right now into the world just as the Father sent me into the world. Go and live as I lived, say what I said, do what I did. This first commission was simple, and yet deeply profound.

This is our calling: *to be just like Jesus*. 1 John 2:6 says, “*Whoever claimed to be in Him, should live as Jesus lives.*” “*Whoever says He abides in Jesus, should walk as Jesus walked*” (ESV). Jesus tells us, “*Live as I lived, walk as I walked, speak as I spoke, do as I did.*”

After allowing His words to soak in, Jesus ***breathed on them***. Could you imagine what that felt like? Jesus walked around *breathing* on His disciples. Jesus breathed the breath of life. The same breath that was breathed into the first Adam and made him a living soul. *Genesis 2:7*

Then Jesus said, “*Receive the Holy Spirit.*” Wait a second, stop everything. I thought the disciples didn’t receive the Holy Spirit until Pentecost in *Acts 2*? Jesus gave them His Holy Spirit when He rose from the dead, just as He had promised them He would. *John*

7:38-39; 14:16-20 Wow! Take a minute and let this truth soak in.

Now that the disciples had the Holy Spirit in them, they were able to truly forgive others who had hurt them, spoken untruths about them and sinned against them in any way. They now had the power of *the Holy Spirit* in them to forgive as Jesus forgave.

They were now one with the Father, even as Jesus was one with the Father. They were in Him and He was in them. *John 17:22-23* They could now live out *Ephesians 4:32*.

Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on them, giving them the power to live like He lived, to walk as He walked, to think as He thought, and even to forgive people who had sinned against them.

The power to forgive comes from the Holy Spirit who lives in us. People who do not have the Holy Spirit cannot forgive as Jesus forgives.

PROVE IT:

PROOF #35

JESUS' FIRST COMMISSION: "*As the Father sent me, even so I am sending you.*" Jesus sent these disciples out on a mission to live as He lived, walk as He walked, and speak as He spoke.

PROOF #36

THE BREATH OF JESUS (GOD WITH SKIN ON): Jesus breathing on them is a proof that He was alive and risen. Dead people do not breathe.

PROOF #37

THE HOLY SPIRIT: Jesus' gift of the promised Holy Spirit is proof of resurrection power.

I WONDER

I wonder how long Jesus waited before speaking Shalom to the disciples a second time. I wonder if Jesus didn't move among them, slowly showing Himself alive and speaking forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration to them.

I wonder how Jesus spoke this first commission. I wonder if He waited for them all to be still and sit down. I wonder if He spoke these words slowly or even if He repeated them. I wonder if Jesus said this commission in front of the whole group in a general way, or if Jesus went to each of them individually, looked them in the face and said, *"As the Father sent me, even so I am sending you."* This commission seems very personal and intimate to me.

I wonder what it felt like to be breathed on by Jesus. I wonder if being breathed on by Jesus sent shivers up their spines or gave them goose bumps. I wonder how long Jesus took to breathe on them. I wonder if Jesus breathed on each one of them, one at a time. I wonder what Jesus' resurrected breath smelled like that night.

I wonder if the breath of Jesus was a sweet aroma of life as Paul talks about in 2 *Corinthians 2:14-16*.

I wonder what it felt like to hear Jesus say, *"Receive the Holy Spirit."* I wonder how the Holy Spirit came on them in the breath of Jesus. I wonder if they felt different immediately. I wonder if some of them received the Holy Spirit and others resisted receiving the Holy Spirit.

I wonder if Jesus first forgave them and then gave them the power to forgive. Forgive Judas for betraying Jesus. Forgive each other. Forgive themselves for not standing up for Jesus and for not believing the women and the two disciples who saw Jesus and talked with him on the road to Emmaus.

What do you wonder?

Jesus Breathed on Them the Holy Spirit

*“He breathed on them and said, **Receive the Holy Spirit.**” John 20:22*

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them the receiving of the Holy Spirit!*

Jesus finds doubting Thomas | 15

Today we will discover there was one disciple missing on Resurrection Sunday night. He missed Jesus' spectacular appearance, His first commission and the giving of the Holy Spirit. His name was Thomas. Thomas missed it all. But why? What a terrible night to be absent. How did Thomas respond when the others tell him what he missed? How did Jesus show Himself alive to doubting Thomas?

Take a moment to pray and ask God to open your ears, mind and eyes, and show you things you have never seen before. Ask Him to give you insight into Jesus and doubting Thomas.

Read the following verses slowly and take some time to meditate on them. Then, jot down your questions and observations.

John 20:24-25

What do think Thomas had been thinking about during this first week after the death of his friend and Rabbi, Jesus?

How do you think Thomas felt when the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord?”

What were the three things Thomas said had to happen for him to believe Jesus was risen and alive? Make a list:

1)

2)

3)

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

We know that Thomas, like the others, did not obey Jesus and did not go to Galilee like He had commanded them. *Mark 16:7; Matthew 28:10* Thomas must have been hiding out somewhere in the area of Jerusalem because he was close enough for the other disciples (who were also hiding out in Jerusalem) to visit him and testify, “*We have seen the Lord!*”

In verse 24, we read that Thomas was called *Didymus* which is the Greek word for twin. History tells us that Thomas had a twin brother, so maybe he went to be with his twin brother or with his family. Maybe this is why the Holy Spirit mentions *Didymus* here.

Not believing Jesus had risen from the dead, Thomas must have been felt miserable, sad, frustrated, disappointed, hurt, lost, angry and full of shame. He must have felt shame for not standing up for Jesus when he had so dramatically said months before, “*Let us also go, that we may die with him.*” *John 11:16* He must have felt shame for telling everyone Jesus was the Messiah. Now, it was obvious to him that he had been fooled. He must have felt angry because he had been promised a kingdom, a throne, a family, lands and a life with Jesus, and it seemed to be a giant deception. *Matthew 16:28; 19:28-29*

1 Corinthians 15:14-19 says, If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and

your faith is in vain... and we are still in our sins... We are even misrepresenting God and we of all people are to be pitied. Maybe Thomas was throwing a pity party for himself.

When the others told him he had missed Jesus' spectacular, supernatural appearance coming through the locked doors in the upper room, Thomas must have felt left out, forgotten, not important and insignificant to Jesus. Everyone had seen Jesus already, and he was the only one who missed out. He missed everything: Jesus' appearance behind the locked doors in the upper room, Shalom, Jesus' breathing on them, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

All week long the other disciples talked to Thomas and tried to convince Him that Jesus was alive. It appears as if Thomas had done a lot of thinking during the week and had come to the conclusion: *"I will never believe unless I see the marks of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into His side."* Unless he saw, touched and felt Jesus, he would not believe that He was alive and had risen from the grave.

Thomas spent the first week after Jesus' resurrection doubting and sitting in unbelief.

PROVE IT:

PROOF #38

THE TESTIMONY OF EYEWITNESSES: Jesus sent some of the disciples to testify to Thomas and say, *"We have seen the Lord."* The eyewitness testimony of the disciples is living proof that Jesus is risen and alive. Their belief and testimony are proof that Jesus was alive.

I WONDER

I wonder why Thomas had not gone back home to Galilee. I wonder why he stayed in Jerusalem and where he stayed, since he was not with the rest of the disciples.

I wonder why the other disciples stayed in Jerusalem after receiving the Holy Spirit and their first commission to go and live like Jesus lived. I wonder why they didn't go to Galilee, like Jesus had told them two times. *Mark 16:7; Matthew 28:10* I wonder why they felt the need to stay in Jerusalem. Was it to convince Thomas that Jesus was alive? I wonder if they felt like they had to leave as a group and did not want to leave Thomas behind.

I wonder where Thomas was hiding during this week of fear, doubting and shame. I wonder if he was in hiding with his family or if his twin was protecting him and bringing him food. I wonder what he was wrestling with in his mind. I wonder if he was thinking: *What is next for me? I just wasted 3 years following a false Messiah. Where do I go from here? What is my next move?*

I wonder if Thomas, during that week of shame, considered taking his own life, like Judas had done. How would he face all the people he had told, *"Jesus is the long awaited Messiah"*? How would he tell them he was mistaken, and Jesus was not the Messiah who would deliver them from the Romans? I wonder if Thomas was depressed and maybe even ready to end it all.

I wonder if Jesus was demonstrating how the Kingdom of God will advance. The Kingdom moves forward as we testify, *"We have seen the Lord!"* When we testify to the fact of Jesus' resurrection and preach the forgiveness of sins in His Name, His Kingdom advances.

I wonder if there is not a little bit of Thomas in all of us. I know there is in me. At times I doubt what I read in the Bible and what others tell me it means.

I doubt the words of Jesus and wonder if He will ever come back for me as He promised. Maybe there is a little Thomas in you as well?

What do you wonder?

Jesus Seen

"We have seen the Lord." John 20:25

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them why Thomas doubted the resurrection!*

16 | Jesus reveals Himself to Thomas

Why was it so hard for Thomas to believe the words of his friends, “*We have seen the Lord?*” Thomas had seen Jesus heal a leper, calm a storm, feed more than 5,000 people, walk on water, raise a widow’s son from the dead and even raise Lazarus from the dead after four days in a tomb. Thomas had made up his mind - he would not believe unless he saw Jesus alive with His own two eyes.

What Thomas needed was an ***encounter with the risen Jesus***.

Take a moment to pray. Ask God to open your eyes and give you insight into how Jesus met Thomas in his doubts and unbelief.

Read the following verses slowly and take some time to meditate on them. Then jot down your questions and observations.

John 20:26-27

Who do you think convinced Thomas to return to the group, even though he still did not believe and had three conditions of belief?

He would not believe 1) unless he saw the marks of the nails, 2) placed his finger into the mark of the nails, and 3) placed his hand into His side.

What evidence did Jesus give Thomas to prove without a shadow of doubt that He was alive and had truly risen from the dead? Make a list:

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

One week after Jesus' resurrection, the disciples were still in Jerusalem and not in Galilee, where they were told to go by the angel and by Jesus Himself. *Mark 16:7; Matthew 28:10* Instead, they were all together back in the upper room and this time Thomas was physically present with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus made another spectacular appearance out of thin air. Jesus entered through the locked doors and stood among them as living proof that He was alive.

First, Jesus sent some disciples to testify to Thomas, *"We have seen the Lord."*

Second, the disciples brought Thomas back to the community of faith. This is what each of us is called to do for the many doubting Thomases in our lives. Simply go and tell others, *"I have seen the Lord — Jesus is alive!"* Then, invite them to a community of faith that puts Jesus at the center of everything. Invite them to *Come and See Jesus!*

Third, *Jesus showed up!* Where was Thomas when Jesus showed up out of nowhere? When Thomas saw Jesus appear in the room with the doors locked, did he begin crying, fall to his knees or look for a corner to hide in? (I know what I would have done!)

Fourth, Jesus spoke *Shalom* (forgiveness, reconciliation, restoration and rejoicing) to everyone, including Thomas!

Fifth, Jesus turned His full attention to Thomas. With love in His eyes, Jesus looked directly at Thomas. Jesus was ever so patient with Thomas, as He is with each of us. Jesus lovingly reached out to Thomas in the middle of his fear, doubt and unbelief.

Sixth, Jesus called Thomas by name, inviting him to *come close and to have an encounter with the risen Jesus*. Thomas drew near to Jesus with tears in his eyes. Jesus offered forgiveness, reconciliation, restoration and a renewed relationship. Thomas was offered a fresh start with Jesus!

Seventh, Jesus extended His arms and showed Thomas His hands, saying: *“Put your finger here, and see my hands.”*

Eighth, Jesus slowly took off His outer garment, exposing His side to Thomas and He invited Thomas to *“put out your hand, and place it in my side.”* See, touch and feel - it is ME, JESUS!

Ninth, Jesus said to Thomas, *“Do not disbelieve, but believe.”* I am ALIVE!

PROVE IT:

PROOF #39

JESUS SHOWS UP: Jesus showed up again as proof positive that He has risen from the dead.

PROOF #40

JESUS SPEAKS SHALOM: Jesus spoke peace to all of them, but especially Thomas, reassuring all of them of His love, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration with Him. All was Well!

PROOF #41

JESUS SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO THOMAS AND SHOWS HIM HIS HANDS AND SIDE: The marks in Jesus hands and in His side that Thomas touched were clear evidence that Jesus had risen from the dead and was alive. Jesus gave Thomas his proofs without ever hearing what Thomas had said.

I WONDER

I wonder how Thomas felt the minute he saw Jesus appear in the locked room. I wonder if he wondered how Jesus got into the room. I wonder if he thought someone might be impersonating Jesus. I wonder if he believed his eyes or if he still doubted. I wonder if Thomas looked for the closest corner so he could hide.

I wonder what everyone else in the room did this time when they saw Jesus. I wonder if they all fell to their knees and started worshipping.

I wonder what Thomas felt as Jesus spoke *Shalom* to the whole group. I wonder if Thomas felt *Shalom*. I wonder if he felt, at that moment, Jesus' forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration. I wonder if Thomas' fear subsided when he heard his best friend and Rabbi Jesus, speak *Shalom*.

I wonder how Thomas felt when Jesus turned and made eye contact with him and spoke to him directly saying, *"Put your finger here, and see my hands; put out your hand and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."*

I wonder how many tears Thomas shed during this encounter with Jesus. I wonder what it felt like to touch Jesus hands and side. I wonder if Thomas could see and feel bone in His hand or His side. I wonder what Jesus' skin felt like.

I wonder if Jesus took off His robe to expose His side and to allow Thomas to see and place his hand in the wound in His side. This would have been a moment to remember. I wonder if anyone in the room remembered that the last time Jesus had taken off His robe (in the very same room), He had washed their feet 10 days before at the Last Supper.

I wonder if there is not a little bit of Thomas in all of us. I know there is in me. I believe and yet at times I struggle to believe.

I see Jesus do things in my life and believe He is real. Then, a few months later when I am faced with a hard situation. I struggle to believe Jesus can meet another need in my life. I begin to doubt again and, at times, sit in my unbelief, just like Thomas.

What do you wonder?

Jesus is Alive — Believe

*“Do not disbelieve, but **believe.**” John 20:27*

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them Jesus' loving response to Thomas!*

Jesus — Lord and God | 17

Jesus supernaturally answered Thomas' doubts and his three conditions to believe. He did so with a very personal encounter with Thomas. Jesus allowed Thomas to come close to see, feel and touch Him in a very intimate way. Jesus invited Thomas to put his hand into His side.

This is something you would only invite a close friend to do. How did Thomas respond to this incredibly intimate encounter with Jesus?

Take a moment to pray, asking God to open your eyes and give you insight into how Thomas responded to the living Jesus after being able to see and touch Him up close.

Read the following passage and jot down your questions and observations.

John 20:26-31

Upon believing, what did Thomas say? Write it down word for word.

What did Jesus say to Thomas in *John 20:29*? Write it down.

How is someone blessed who has not seen Jesus and yet believes He is risen and is alive?

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

Thomas drew near to Jesus and put his finger on the nail marks and placed his hand into Jesus side. Jesus responded by speaking gently and kindly to Thomas saying, *“Do not disbelieve, but believe.”* Jesus spoke words of life, hope and a future to Thomas. He speaks these same words to us, *“Do not disbelieve, but **believe.**”*

At this point, did Thomas look Jesus in the eye, or did he fall to his knees at Jesus feet? What we do know is what Thomas said to Jesus, *“My Lord and My God.”* What a declaration of faith!

Thomas now believed it was Jesus, his Rabbi and his friend, alive and risen from the dead. Thomas affirmed both the humanity of Jesus and His authority over him when He said, *“My Lord.”* He also affirmed the divinity of Jesus and His supreme authority over his life when he declared *“My God.”* After making this incredible declaration of faith, Jesus looked at Thomas and said, *“Because you have seen me, you have believed; **blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**”*

Who are the people who would believe in Jesus without seeing Him? Or without having the privilege of touching His hands and feeling His side? Do you believe that Jesus rose from the grave and is alive today? Then Jesus is talking about you and me. We are blessed, Jesus said.

Jesus knew that many generations of people would believe in Him, even though they never got the incredible opportunity Thomas had to see, feel and touch the risen Jesus.

Jesus actually prayed for this in front of Thomas when He prayed, *“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through the word of their testimony.”* That is us. Jesus prayed for us in *John 17:20*, as He spoke of us to Thomas and the first believers in *John 20:29*. How cool is that!

The Holy Spirit, writing through John, finished the story by telling us that Jesus did so many more incredible signs to show Himself alive and risen that are not written in the book of John.

Nonetheless, this story of Thomas and the other appearances of Jesus were written down so we would have living proof and the testimony of many eyewitnesses, so we would believe and not doubt that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God. He truly is alive and has risen from the dead.

Believe!

PROVE IT:

PROOF #42

THOMAS' DECLARATION OF FAITH: Thomas' declaration, "*My Lord and My God,*" left no doubt that Thomas believed with all his heart that Jesus was risen and alive. Thomas' belief in Jesus after seeing, feeling and touching Him is eyewitness proof that Jesus was risen.

PROOF #43

THOMAS' LIFE OF FAITH: Thomas eventually left his twin, his family, his homeland and his friends to go and share the Good News and make disciples in India. Thomas shared that He had seen the Lord, that He had risen from the dead and was alive. Thomas went and shared Shalom with the people of India. He called people to repent of their sins and believe in Jesus as their Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God, and Savior of the world.

Many people in India believed in Jesus because of the testimony of Thomas, just as Jesus had prayed in *John 17:20*. Thomas died in India in the year 72AD. He was put to death with a spear for his faith in Jesus. Thomas was willing to die for the truth that Jesus had risen from the dead and was alive. Thomas and many others would have never died for a lie. They knew it was the truth and gave their lives for Jesus.

PROOF #44

BELIEVERS THROUGHOUT ALL OF HISTORY: The people who have believed in Jesus as Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God and received life in His name are all living proof of the resurrection. The people of India, Africa and across the whole world who have believed and continue spreading the Good News are proof that Jesus was alive and living in us and through us.

I WONDER

I wonder how close Thomas was to Jesus when he placed his hand on Jesus side.

I wonder, as Thomas put his hand into Jesus' side, if Jesus placed His arms around Thomas to give him a bear hug and speak words of life and belief to him. I wonder how much time this whole encounter with Jesus and Thomas lasted. I wonder if it was much longer than one would think. I wonder if the moment seemed to last forever.

I wonder if Jesus slowly and deliberately took off His robe to allow Thomas to place his hand in His side. I think it would have been a moment Thomas would remember forever. I wonder if it occurred to Thomas, in the moment, that the last time Jesus had taken off His robe was in the very same room to wash Thomas' feet along with the rest of the disciples' feet.

I wonder how Thomas spoke these words to Jesus: *"My Lord and My God!"* I wonder if he was whispering or shouting. I wonder if Thomas spoke these words slowly and with deep conviction. I wonder if Thomas fell at Jesus knees when he exclaimed, *"My Lord!"*

I wonder if everyone else in the room felt to their knees in tears as well. I wonder if Thomas saw the marks on Jesus feet as his tears fell. Throughout Jesus' life many women had washed His feet with their tears. This may have been the first time a man did.

I wonder if Thomas fell with his face to the ground when he exclaimed, *"My God!"* I wonder if Thomas understood the depth of his declaration of Jesus as GOD!

I wonder if the Holy Spirit reminded Thomas of this incredible day for the rest of his life.

I wonder if, when I see Jesus face-to-face, He will say to me: *Mark, come place your fingers in my nail scarred hands and come place your hand in my side.* I wonder if He will take off His heavenly robe to show me His side and place my hand on the mark.

I know if I get to, one day, I will say like Thomas, *"My Lord and My God!"* *I am blessed to believe in JESUS!*

What do you wonder?

Jesus is Lord and God

*“Thomas said, **My Lord and My God.**” John 20:28*

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with the Jesus' loving response to Thomas!*

18

Jesus Second Commission

We have been focused on Jesus' encounter with Thomas' doubt and unbelief the last several days. Today, we turn our attention to the rest of the disciples who were also there in the room with Thomas and Jesus. In the book of John, the Holy Spirit gives us a close look at how Jesus deals with our doubts, fears and unbelief through the story of Thomas.

We must go to the book of Mark to find the rest of the story about how the other disciples were processing Jesus' resurrection.

Take a moment and ask God to open your eyes and give you a fresh new encounter with the risen and living Jesus today. Ask Him to show you new things you have never seen before.

Read the following passage and jot down your questions and observations.

Mark 16:14-18

Why do you think the disciples were still in the upper room and not in Galilee? Jesus had told them two times to go there. *Mark 16:7; Matthew 28:10*

Write down Jesus' second commission to His disciples in *Mark 16:15*:

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

In the book of Mark, we learn some additional information about this second encounter with the larger group of disciples. We know this is the second encounter, as is *John 20:24-29*, for several reasons.

One, *John 20:19-23* could not have been Jesus' first encounter to His disciples because Thomas was not there and Mark said, "*He appeared to **the eleven** themselves as they were reclining at table...*" Two, John is clear in saying that Jesus' third appearance to the disciples was at the Sea of Galilee weeks later. John writes, "*This was now the **third time** that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.*" *John 21:14*

In the book of Mark, we read that when Jesus made His second spectacular entrance, He began by rebuking the disciples for their lack of faith. Faith is *listening to Jesus, believing Jesus and obeying Jesus*.

These disciples were stubbornly refusing to obey Jesus and go to Galilee as Jesus had told them to. Instead they were sitting around a table, behind locked doors, eating and discussing their next move. Like many people today, they listened and believed, but do not OBEY!

After Jesus' gentle rebuke, He spoke Shalom (forgiveness, reconciliation, restoration and rejoicing). Then, He turned His attention to Thomas, speaking to him directly. *John 20:27-29*

After showing Himself alive to Thomas and the others for a second time, Jesus issued His second Commission, "***Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.***" This commission is the same as the first, just in different words. As the Father sent me, so send I you! Go and do what I did! Go and live the gospel, preach the Good News to everyone and teach others to live and preach the gospel.

Go make disciples just like I modeled for you, just like I trained you to do. Stop making excuses and just go do it. Start living by faith and not by fear. Start obeying me.

Jesus had already breathed on them the Holy Spirit, assuring them of His presence and power to complete the task. *John 20:22* He promised the Holy Spirit would go with them (lead them, guide them, protect them, and do mighty works through them) as they healed the sick, and cast out the works of darkness and went out preaching the Good News to every creature.

PROVE IT:

PROOF #45

JESUS' GENTLE REBUKE: Jesus' rebuke of the disciples unbelief and hardness of heart was proof that Jesus was risen. He saw and knew what His disciples had been doing. He was alive.

PROOF #46

THE DISCIPLES' UNBELIEF: The fact that the disciples struggled to believe was proof that Jesus is risen. If they would have believed right away and not struggled to accept Jesus' resurrection, it would have appeared as if the story was made up. Strangely, the disciples' unbelief and hardness of heart actually authenticates the resurrection because it eventually turns into belief after many convincing undeniable proofs Jesus gave them.

PROOF #47

JESUS' SECOND COMMISSION: *"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation!"* Jesus sending them out on mission to go into all the world with the Good News of His resurrection and His Shalom (forgiveness, reconciliation, restoration and rejoicing) was another proof that He was alive. Jesus sent them out to live as He lived, to walk as He walked, to do what He did, as proof that He was alive and risen. Dead people do not speak or commission people.

I WONDER

I wonder what the disciples were doing as they reclined at the table. I wonder if they were eating again. I wonder what they were talking about at the table.

I wonder if they were arguing over what to do next. I wonder if some of them were saying they should leave and others were saying they should stay.

I wonder if there was a debate among them as to whether or not it was time to leave Jerusalem and go to Galilee like Jesus had told them.

I wonder if they were wrestling with Jesus' words, ***"As the Father sent me, so send I you."*** I wonder if they were struggling to understand what He meant? I wonder if they were asking if Jesus' words were really a commission *to go* or permission *to stay*?

I wonder if they were discussing the Holy Spirit and how to listen and relate to Him.

I wonder if the table they were sitting at was the same one they had been at the night Jesus washed their feet and served them the Last Supper.

I wonder if they remembered and discussed that night as they tried to come up with clues for their next steps of faith.

I wonder what Jesus' rebuke sounded like to them. I wonder if they were embarrassed and felt ashamed for their lack of faith and hardhearted unbelief.

I wonder how they interpreted the second commission of Jesus, *"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation!"* I wonder how the night ended. I wonder how long Jesus stayed. I wonder what else Jesus said or did that evening that is not recorded.

I wonder how quickly they packed up and left for Galilee. *Matthew 28:16* tells us, *"Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee."* I wonder what they talked about on the way back home to Galilee.

What do you wonder?

Jesus had Risen

*"Afterwards He appeared to the eleven themselves as they reclined at the table, and He rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw Him after **He had risen.**" Mark 16:14*

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them the disciples' lack of OBEDIENCE!*

Jesus back in Galilee | 19

Matthew 28:16 tells us, “Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee.” The disciples eventually obeyed Jesus and left Jerusalem, making their way to Galilee where Jesus had told them He would meet them. *Matthew 28:10* Finally they obeyed and started living by faith, not in fear and not by sight. *2 Corinthians 5:7* Today, we will begin looking at Jesus’ third appearance to His disciples as a group.

Take a moment and ask God to open your eyes and give you a fresh new encounter with the risen and living Jesus today. Ask Him to show you new things you have never seen before.

Read the following passage and jot down your questions and observations.

John 21:1-8

Who was with Simon Peter? Make a list of the disciples:

What do you think Simon Peter and the other disciples were doing before they went fishing?

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

The disciples made their way back to Galilee hoping to see Jesus again. After all, Jesus had told them, through Mary, in *Matthew 28:10*, “*Do not be afraid, go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.*” The long journey home from Jerusalem to Galilee must have been full of more questions, doubts and uncertainty.

Where would they see Jesus in Galilee? When would they see Him? Where should they wait for Him? At Jesus’ house in Capernaum? In Bethsaida? On Mount Tabor? On Mount Carmel?

After arriving in Galilee, six of the disciples made their way to Simon Peter’s house. Notice what they are NOT doing. They are NOT going into all the world preaching the Good News. They are NOT living as Jesus lived, as Sent Ones like Jesus had taught and commissioned them to live. Why were they still not embracing their commission as Sent Ones to share the Good News with every person in the world? They must have still had some questions and doubts about everything that had happened.

Notice in this passage that Peter is being called, Simon Peter. Maybe this is a reference to his indecision and lack of faith. Maybe he was struggling to choose between Simon the fisherman and Peter the Sent One. Was it a struggle between living out the new identity Jesus had given him or returning to his old familiar identity as Simon the fisherman?

It seems that six of the disciples were hanging out with Simon Peter, possibly at his house in Bethsaida. *John 1:44* Maybe they were eating and talking some more.

Simon Peter sure seemed to be frustrated and uncertain about what he was supposed to be doing. Simon Peter finally got sick of waiting and announced to the others, “*I am going fishing.*” Can you hear the impatience and frustration in his voice? Simon the fisherman won the battle and off they sailed into the night to fish. “*We will go too,*” said the others. Following Simon Peter, they all boarded his boat and went out fishing.

Just like in *Luke 5:5*, Simon Peter fished all night and caught nothing. Early in the morning, Jesus called out, “*Young men, have you caught any fish?*” The boat was about 100 yards away and they did not recognize Jesus or His voice.

Maybe they thought Jesus was someone looking to buy some fish from them as the sun was coming up. “*No, we have caught nothing,*” they responded. “*Throw your net off the right side of the boat and you will find some fish.*” The seven men threw the nets off the right side of the boat and the fish began to overwhelm their nets.

Seeing this, John looked at Peter and said, “*It is the Lord.*”

Simon Peter immediately put on his outer garment and threw himself into the Sea of Galilee. Why would you put on your cloak and then jump in the water to swim? Maybe Peter thought he was going to walk on water to Jesus, like he did in *Matthew 14:29*.

But this time Jesus didn’t tell Him to come, he did it on his own and ended up swimming the 100 yards to meet Jesus.

PROVE IT:

PROOF #48

JESUS’ THIRD APPEARANCE: Jesus appearing to them on the beach of the Sea of Galilee near Tiberias was another convincing proof He had indeed risen.

PROOF #49

JESUS’ VOICE: Jesus calling out to them from 100 yards away was more proof that He was alive, as dead people do not speak. Jesus repeating a miracle that they would recognize and Peter’s response in that miracle were also proof positive.

I WONDER

I wonder why the disciples didn't leave Jerusalem and just started telling everyone they could that Jesus had risen from the dead. I wonder if they were still too afraid to share the Good News, like I often am.

I wonder why it was so hard for those first disciples to simply obey Jesus. Maybe it was for the same reason it is so hard for me to just obey?

I wonder what the disciples talked about on their long walk home to Galilee. I wonder how long the journey took them. I wonder how many days they were in Galilee before they ended up with Peter. I wonder where the rest of the disciples were at.

I wonder why they were not with Peter or why these seven were not with the others at Jesus' house or wherever they were. I wonder if the rest of the disciples had chosen to simply return home to their families.

I wonder how long they were at Simon Peter's house before Simon Peter said, "*I am going fishing.*" I wonder what they were talking about at Peter's house. I wonder who the two unnamed disciples were. I wonder if they were part of the 72 others Jesus had sent out into Perea.

I wonder how tired the seven were after fishing all night and catching nothing. I wonder if they were fighting on the boat all night. I wonder if, after casting their nets several times, they started remembering and telling stories of the many adventures they had experienced with Jesus on the Sea of Galilee. I wonder if they remembered how Jesus had calmed the storm and even walked on water.

I wonder why Peter put on his outer garment before jumping into the water. I wonder if he thought he was going to be walking on water again. I wonder how hard it was to swim with a cloak or robe on. I wonder how long it took Peter to swim 100 yards with his clothes on. I wonder why the others didn't jump in with him.

I wonder if, after seeing Peter sink and start to swim, they thought to themselves: *No walking on water today, I will just ride in the boat back to shore.*

I wonder how long it took them to get to the shore dragging the nets behind them full of fish. I wonder if Jesus was laughing on shore as He watched His friends in this very joyful but comical situation.

What do you wonder?

Jesus is the Lord

*“The disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, **It is the Lord!**” John 21:7*

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them Peter's response to seeing Jesus!*

20 | Jesus' Beach Breakfast

The disciples have finally obeyed Jesus and returned to Galilee where Jesus had told them He would meet them. *Matthew 28:10* But, they still were not obeying His first two commissions. The first was in *John 20:21* the evening of His resurrection when He told them, ***“As the Father sent me, so send I you.”*** They were still not obeying the second commission either from one week later in *Mark 16:15*, ***“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”***

They had gone back to their old lives and Peter, with six others, had returned to fishing. It was there that Jesus decided to show up and meet them on the beach in front of the town of Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee. Let's return to the beach where the disciples just experienced another fishing miracle. Let's enjoy an early morning breakfast on the beach with Jesus and the seven fishermen.

Take a moment and ask God to open your eyes and give you a fresh new encounter with the risen and living Jesus today. Ask Him to show you new things you have never seen before.

Read the following passage and jot down your questions and observations.

John 21:1-14

What had Jesus prepared for his disciples on the beach?

Take a moment and think through all the elements that went into this breakfast. Make a list of all Jesus had done in preparation for this important moment with His disciples:

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

After being back in Galilee for several days waiting for Jesus, seven of the disciples ended up hanging out at Peter's house. Simon Peter told the group he was tired of just sitting around waiting for Jesus to show up and announced to them all, *"I am going fishing."* Have you ever gotten tired of waiting on God to answer you or show you what He wants you to do? Maybe you have prayed, like I have, and felt the silence of God. Many times God's silence is in essence an answer. He is saying *wait on me, trust me, the answer is "not yet."* Often, it is not the answer I am looking for.

While the disciples were enjoying their night of empty nets as they fished for fish - and not people like Jesus had commissioned them to do - Jesus was busy preparing the Last Breakfast. Jesus collected wood to build a large fire, made bread and caught a few fish of His own. Jesus must have had the fire going for hours to have enough hot coals to cook bread and fish for a party of eight. He had enough bread and fish for seven hungry fishermen who had been working hard all night. He prepared breakfast for eight on the beach. A warm fire was waiting for them, along with hot bread and flame-cooked fish grilled over an open fire and... Jesus. What could be better?

We last left Simon Peter swimming to shore (not walking on water) and the other six disciples docking the boat and dragging their nets ashore full of fish. Jesus invited them now to come and enjoy the incredible breakfast He has lovingly been preparing for hours.

Jesus told them to bring a few of the miraculous fish they had caught with His help. Interestingly enough, it is Simon Peter who returned to the boat and net to get the fish. There Simon, the fisherman, paused to take a head count - 153 large fish. Have you ever counted fish jumping around in a net or on a beach? I imagine it is not an easy job or one you could do quickly and get an exact count, like 153. It must have taken quite some time to separate the fish and count them all. But Simon not only counted the fish, he also took the time to closely examine his previous net, only to discover not a single tear in the whole net. Jesus had provided them with another miracle!

Jesus called to the group again, “*Come and have breakfast.*” As they gathered around the fire and enjoyed the hot bread and grilled fish, they spent time with Jesus. It was clear to all seven of them that Jesus was the Lord of heaven and earth, and they were rejoicing in His Majesty over all creation. When the food was good and ready, Jesus served each one of them. He took the bread first, broke it, and then the fish. Breakfast was served by the Master, the Lord! God was serving men once again.

PROVE IT:

PROOF #50

JESUS, FIRE, BREAD AND FISH: Jesus building a fire, preparing bread and fish are all things living people do.

PROOF #51

JESUS SERVING THEM: Jesus serving His disciples bread and fish and eating with them are all things that point to the fact that He was alive and risen from the dead. Undeniable proof.

I WONDER

I wonder if Jesus visited some of His favorite spots to be alone with the Father while he was waiting for the disciples to arrive in Galilee.

I wonder how long Jesus had been on the beach. I wonder how long it took Him to prepare the fire and where He got the fish and bread from. I wonder what Jesus was doing on the shore, as He patiently waited for Simon Peter and the others to get close enough to shore to shout to them.

I wonder how long Jesus had been planning this encounter. I wonder how good this breakfast for eight, made by Jesus Himself, was. I wonder if Jesus smelled like smoke from the fire.

I wonder why Simon went back to the boat to count the fish. I wonder why he didn't just obey Jesus and bring a few to share with everyone else. I wonder what he was thinking. I wonder if he was thinking about how much money he could make selling those fish.

I wonder if Simon picked up his precious net to see all the places it had been torn from such a great catch of fish, only to discover no tears. *"Although there were so many fish, the net was not torn."* I wonder what Simon was thinking as he examined his net.

I wonder if Jesus was frustrated or laughing as He watched Simon count all the fish and closely examine his net. I wonder if Jesus was thinking, *how am I going to ever get Simon, the fisherman, to ever become Peter, the fisher of Men.*

As Master and Lord, Jesus served them breakfast. I wonder if they remembered His words months earlier when He said, *"The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."* Matthew 20:28 I wonder what they talked about as they ate.

What do you wonder?

Jesus the Lord has Risen Indeed

“The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Peter.” Luke 24:34

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them Jesus' Last Breakfast with His disciples!*

Jesus' Walk on the Beach | 21

The disciples have finally obeyed Jesus and returned to Galilee where Jesus had told them He would meet them. *Matthew 28:10* Even so, they were still not obeying His first two commissions. The first was *John 20:21* on the evening of His resurrection, ***“As the Father sent me, so send I you,”*** The second commission Jesus gave them was one week later in *Mark 16:15*, ***“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”***

They went back to their old lives and Peter, along with six others, had returned to fishing. It was there that Jesus decided to show up and met them on the beach in front of the town of Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee.

Let's return to the beach where the disciples have just experienced another fishing miracle. It was Jesus' first miracle after His resurrection. Let's enjoy an early morning breakfast on the beach with Jesus and the seven fishermen.

Take a moment and ask God to open your eyes and give you a fresh new encounter with the risen and living Jesus today. Ask Him to show you new things you have never seen before.

Read the following passage and jot down your questions and observations.

John 21:15-17

As Jesus and Peter walk along, Jesus asked Peter 3 questions. Peter gave 3 answers.

Jesus gave 3 instructions. **Write them down under each of the questions:**

What does Jesus ask Peter? What is Peter's response? What does Jesus tell Peter to do?

1)

2)

3)

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

The group of 7 had been huddling around the warm fire enjoying an incredible Jesus-breakfast of hot bread and grilled fish. When the meal was done, Jesus stood up and began to walk. He asked Simon Peter and the others to join him. We see this in verse 20 where it said, *"Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them."* John, and maybe the others, had been trailing Jesus and Simon Peter.

As they walk along, Jesus and Simon Peter found themselves alone and in a deep conversation. Jesus was asking Simon the fisherman to leave his fishing nets and fully embrace his calling as a Fisher of Men and a Shepherd of God's people.

As the two began their walk, they must have passed by Simon's boat, the nets, and the 150+ fish still sitting there waiting to be processed and sold for a large sum of money. Jesus began with a question: *"Simon, son of John, do you love (agapaō) me more than these?"* Notice that Jesus called him Simon. Simon, son of John, the fisherman, the businessman - do you love me more than your love for fishing, your boat, net, and business?

Jesus used the Greek word, *agapaō*, for love when he asked Simon this question. This love is all in, nothing held back, no strings attached, a pure love. This is the kind of love with which God loves you and me. Simon, do you love me more than your boat, your net, the 150+ fish and all the money you can make selling them?

In essence Jesus was saying, *"Do you truly love (agapaō) me more than your life?"*

Simon responded, *"Yes, Lord; you know that I love (phileō) you."* Simon told Jesus he

loved him but chose the Greek word *phileō* in his response. This is the Greek word for brotherly love or family love. The love one has for an earthly brother or family member. In essence, Simon was saying, “*Jesus you know I love you like a brother.*”

Jesus responded, “*Feed my lambs.*” If you truly love me, then start **seeking the lost** lambs and feed them My words, just as the Father sent Me to do with you. *Luke 19:10*

Jesus then asked a **second question**: “*Simon, son of John, do you love (agapaō) me?*” Simon must have kept walking with Jesus, leaving his boat, nets and the fish all behind.

Simon responded, “*Yes, Lord; you know that I love (phileō) you.*” Once again he answered with *phileō* (brotherly love) instead of *agapaō* (pure, sold out love, I am all in, no strings attached love).

Jesus responded, “*Tend my sheep.*” If you truly love me, then start tending My sheep. Sanctify yourself and then sanctify them with My words, just as I did with you. *John 17:17-18*

Jesus then asked a **third question**: “*Simon, son of John, do you love (phileō) me?*” Jesus was questioning Simon’s love even as a brother. Notice, it was not the old man Simon who was grieved but the new man Peter who was grieving.

He responded, “*Lord, you know everything; you know that I love (phileō) you.*” Once again he answered with *phileō*, brotherly love or family love.

Jesus responded, “*Feed my sheep.*” It is time to start serving My sheep instead of being served, just as the Father sent Me to do with you. *Matthew 20:28* It is time Peter, once and for all, to die to yourself and start walking as I have walked. *1 John 2:6* Peter took a huge step of faith by leaving his fishing business forever. Simon, the fisherman, became Peter the shepherd. *Peter 5:1-5*

Do you love Jesus? If so, walk as Jesus walked. Jesus said, “*As the Father sent me, so send I you*” *John 20:21* and “*Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.*” *Mark 16:15* “*Feed My lambs, Tend My sheep, Feed my sheep.*” *John 21:15-17*

PROVE IT:

PROOF #52

JESUS WALKING AND TALKING WITH PETER: Jesus’ conversation and third commission to Peter as they walked on the beach were clear signs of someone who was alive and had truly risen.

I WONDER

I wonder how long Jesus and Simon paused in front of the boat, net and all the fish on the ground. I wonder what Simon was thinking. I wonder if he was in a battle to decide to keep walking with Jesus or pick up his net, load the fish on his boat and head home a fisherman.

I wonder how long he debated in his mind what to do. Maybe he was asking himself: follow Jesus or return to my fishing business?

I wonder what Jesus was thinking as Simon was making up his mind, once and for all, to change vocations - to move from a fisherman to a Fisher of Men and Shepherd of Jesus' Sheep. I wonder what his turning point was.

I wonder what's holding you back from following Jesus' first three commissions: *"As the Father sent me, so send I you"* John 20:21 and *"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."* Mark 16:15 *"Feed My lambs, Tend My sheep, Feed my sheep."* John 21:15-17

I wonder what is keeping you from loving God with all your heart, mind and soul.

What do you wonder?

Jesus the Lord has Risen Indeed

*"Jesus asked, **Do you love me?**" John 21:16*

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them Jesus' walk with Peter on the beach!*

22 | Jesus' Invitation to Suffer

Jesus first met Simon in *John 1:42*. Simon responded to Jesus' call to "*Come and See*," repented and believed in Jesus as Messiah. Simon Peter then responded to Jesus' call "*Follow Me*." After following Jesus for a year and a half, Simon Peter responded to Jesus' third call "*Come, Follow Me and become a Fisher of Men*." After learning to become a Fisher of Men, Simon Peter responded to Jesus' fourth call to be a *Sent One (an apostle)*.

Now, Simon the fisherman has taken his next step of faith to become *Peter, the Shepherd of Jesus' Sheep*. After receiving this invitation, we never read of Peter using his birth name (Simon) again. Peter left everything, never to return to his fishing business again. Peter chose to love (*agapaō*) Jesus more than anything. He was finally all in, no strings attached, sold out, no turning back.

What would be Peter the Shepherd's next step of faith?

Take a moment and ask God to open your eyes and give you a fresh new encounter with the risen and living Jesus today. Ask Him to show you new things you have never seen before.

Read the following passage and jot down your questions and observations.

John 21:18-25

What was Jesus saying to Peter in verse 18?

What was Peter's concern after hearing Jesus' prediction of how his death would glorify God?

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

After Peter made his decision to love Jesus more than His own life, Jesus shared with him what laid ahead for Peter the Shepherd. It would be a long road full of suffering. This is the same thing Jesus shared with Saul when he met him on the road to Damascus. *"But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he **must suffer for the sake of my name.**'"* Acts 9:15-16

Just as the Father did not withhold suffering from His Son but gave Him up for us all *Romans 8:32*, so Peter would suffer as would Paul and as would each one of us who chose to love Jesus more than anything, with no strings attached.

*"Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus **will be persecuted.**" 2 Timothy 3:12* This is our inheritance in Jesus, *"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided **we suffer with him** in order that we may also be glorified with him."* *Romans 8:16-17* For first comes the crown of thorns and then comes the crown of glory.

Like Peter and Paul, we will receive the crown of glory if we shepherd like Jesus shepherds us. *"And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."* 1 Peter 5:4 The crown of glory awaits all who are willing to wear the crown of thorns.

Jesus told Peter that the path ahead for him would lead to death, just as it did for Jesus. There are many ways to die - death to self, death to his will over God's will, death to what others would think about him, his reputation, and physical death to his body of sin. Peter was to die in a way that would glorify God. According to Christian tradition, Peter requested to crucified upside down because he felt unworthy to die in the same manner Jesus had.

He wanted to make sure everyone for all time would know he was not the Christ but only a *Sent One*. Peter's death brought glory to God because his death was not about himself, but all about Jesus.

Peter died that day on the beach - he died to himself, his will, his plans, and like Paul, some years later, said *"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* *Philippians 1:21* Peter, like Paul, learned that the secret of life is to die to yourself and allow the life of Jesus to take over your mortal body. *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."* *Galatians 2:20* Jesus called Peter, Paul, you and me to: *Follow Me to Death*. There are many ways to die.

How will you die?

Peter was curious how John (the one Jesus loved and who leaned on Jesus at the Last Supper) would die. *John 13:23* Jesus simply responded, *do not worry about anyone else. You, Just Follow Me*. Are you willing to take the first step and die to yourself?

The first step in obeying Jesus is to die to yourself and be crucified with Jesus. Abundant life awaits you on the other side of death to yourself, your will, your desires, your plans. It is worth it! *"Follow the Master, JESUS!"*

PROVE IT:

PROOF #53

JESUS PREDICTION OF PETER: Jesus' words to Peter about how he would live his life as a dead person and how he would die to the glory of God were impressive proof that Jesus had risen. Dead people do not predict the future or speak words of life as Jesus did to Peter.

I WONDER

I wonder how long Jesus and Peter walked before Jesus told him of the type of death he was going to die.

I wonder if Peter was encouraged to know that he would be faithful this time until the end - not like the last time when he denied Jesus and ran.

I wonder how much Peter really understood of what Jesus said. I wonder if he took comfort that he would glorify the Father in his death.

I wonder why Peter turned around to see John and why he wanted to know what would happen to him. I wonder why he called his friend John "*this man*." I wonder why it was important for Peter to know how John would end his life.

I wonder what happened to the boat and all the fish that Peter, John and Jesus had left on the boat. I wonder if they all returned and sailed back to Peter's house with the catch or if they gave it all away.

I wonder what Peter's last time out on his boat was like. Living our old life can be emotional. I wonder if Peter cried at all.

What do you wonder?

Jesus the Lord has Risen Indeed

Jesus said, “**You follow Me?**” John 21:22

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.**
- Discuss with them Jesus' walk with Peter on the beach!

Jesus' Fourth Commission | 23

After the last breakfast and the long walk with Jesus on the beach, Jesus must have instructed Peter, John and the others to assemble the disciples on the mountain (possibly where He had chosen them as *Sent Ones* (Apostles) in *Luke 6*.

Jesus assembled His team one last time in Galilee before making their way back to Jerusalem for the Feast of Weeks (First Fruits/Pentecost) which takes place 50 days after Passover. *Leviticus 23:15-16*

The seven disciples who were with Jesus for the last breakfast must have passed on the word that Jesus wanted to meet with everyone on "*the mountain*" because a huge crowd of more than five hundred disciples of Jesus from all over Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem and Perea gathered.

We read in *1 Corinthians 15:6* that "*Jesus appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time...*" This appearance with more than five hundred disciples was most likely the one we will look at today. This is often called the Great Commission.

Take a moment and ask God to open your eyes and give you a fresh new encounter with the risen and living Jesus today. Ask Him to show you new things you have never seen before.

Read the following passage and jot down your questions and observations.
Matthew 28:16-20

What did the 11 disciples, and possibly 500 others, do when they saw Jesus?

What is Jesus' fourth commission? Write it down word for word.

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

Jesus called a meeting of His disciples on a mountain in Galilee, which they obviously all were acquainted with. It appears as if Jesus had sent instructions through the seven at breakfast to invite the others to this mountain.

As they arrived, the worship service began. More than five hundred disciples began to worship Jesus and yet Matthew points out, *"some still doubted."* Wow! After a time of worship, Jesus spoke to them and gave them all what many have called the **Great Commission**, yet in reality, it is an **Every Day Commission**.

This commission of Jesus, like the other three, was intended to be lived out each and every day as a lifestyle by those who are true disciples of Jesus!

Jesus' First Commission: **"As the Father sent Me, so send I you"** was given by Jesus in Jerusalem on the evening of the day He rose from the dead. After giving the commission, Jesus breathed on them the Holy Spirit. *John 20:21-22*

Jesus' Second Commission: **"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation"** was given by Jesus in Jerusalem eight days after He had risen from the dead. *Mark 16:15*

Jesus' Third Commission: **"Feed My lambs, Tend My sheep, Feed my sheep"** was given by Jesus in Galilee on the beach a few weeks after He had risen from the dead. *John 21:15-17*

Jesus' Fourth Commission: ***“Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations”*** was given by Jesus in Galilee on the mountain several weeks after He had risen from the dead. *Matthew 28:19*

Each time, Jesus gave them the same commission, but in more specific detail. There is really only one main command in this commission. Jesus told them that as you go through life, wherever life takes you, to do this one thing: ***make disciples***. Notice he did NOT say: make Christ followers, plant churches, build buildings for me, begin organizations, start denominations, or the myriad of other things people in the church find themselves doing.

Jesus simply told them to ***make disciples***.

Jesus spent three years of His life making disciples. He said in *Luke 6:40*, “*When a disciple is fully trained, he will be like his Master.*” Jesus made disciples and He expected them to do the same. Jesus expected them to be just like Him. Just like Him on the inside; having His character, His attitude, His mind. And to be just like Him on the outside; having His priorities and walking as He walked. *1 John 2:6*

Paul put it this way in *Ephesians 4:13 and 15*: *until we all attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Jesus Christ and to grow up in every way into Jesus who is the head, of the body.*

Jesus wants you and I to be *just like Him* in the way we think, in how we feel, in our attitudes and emotions, in our heart, in our hands, and in the way we relate to God the Father and others. God predestined us to become like Jesus in everyday life. *Romans 8:29* That is the goal: *Christ likeness*. Jesus in me and living through me.

When you look in the mirror, who do you see? If you see yourself, God still has some work to do. God wants you and others to see Jesus in you. A mature disciple is someone who looks, talks, feels and acts like Jesus, the Master. Do you measure up to the stature of Jesus, or does God have some work to do yet?

PROVE IT:

PROOF #53

JESUS BEING WORSHIPED BY HIS DISCIPLES: Jesus' appearance to His disciples on a mountain top and receiving worship from them were undeniable proofs that Jesus had risen and was alive.

I WONDER

I wonder where - which mountain in Galilee - Jesus gave this commission. I wonder if it was the same mountain where He had appointed His first twelve Sent Ones (apostles). *Mark 3:13-19, Luke 6:12-16.*

I wonder if it was Mount Carmel. This mountain seems to meet all the criteria from the description given in *Luke 6:12-19* and from it you can literally see *the world*. This mountain was a very well known place to any disciple of Jesus because it was the place where Elijah called down fire from heaven. God manifested His glory to Israel and flexed His muscles there. *1 Kings 18*

I wonder how Jesus arrived on the mountain. I wonder if He got there before the others, or if He walked up when they arrived or if He appeared out of nowhere like in the upper room.

I wonder how long they worshiped Jesus before He began to speak. I wonder how they worshipped Him. I wonder if they fell to their knees in praise and adoration. I wonder if some began to sing or even danced. I wonder if He circulated among them and gave each one a hug.

I wonder how long that took if there were more than five hundred disciples there.

I wonder what the disciples had been talking about from the time Jesus appeared to them on the beach to the time they saw Him again on the mountain.

I wonder if they had been discussing the first three commissions and what Jesus fully meant by them.

What do you wonder?

Jesus the Lord has Risen Indeed

When they saw Him **they worshipped Him**, but some doubted? Matthew 28:17

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- Tell someone today **Jesus has risen**.
- Discuss with them this commission of Jesus!

24 | Jesus — “Make Disciples”

A huge crowd of more than five hundred disciples of Jesus gathered to worship and hear from the Risen Jesus. After receiving their worship, Jesus delivered a powerful commission to them. In this commission, Jesus laid out what He expected of them from that day going forward.

Take a moment and ask God to open your eyes and give you a fresh new encounter with the risen and living Jesus today. Ask Him to show you new things you have never seen before.

Read the following passage and jot down your questions and observations.

Matthew 28:18-20

Where did Jesus receive His authority to give them this commission?

Take a moment once again to write down Jesus' commission. Today personalize Jesus' Commission. Example: *"Mark, as you go through life, with your wife, your children, your friends, neighbors and enemies, I want you to make disciples..."*

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

Jesus had all authority in heaven and on earth given to Him by His Father. His authority knew no bounds or limits, and His authority became our authority as we obey Him and do what He told us to do: *"make disciples."*

When Jesus gave His first disciples this commission, they knew exactly what He meant. They lived with Him for three years and watched Him connect each day with the Father, obeying the Father by making disciples. They, in fact, were those first disciples.

Jesus had come to earth to *do the Father's will and accomplish His work*. The **will** of the Father was for Jesus to die on the cross. *Luke 22:42* The **will** of Jesus for every true disciple is to die to themselves. *Galatians 2:20* The **work** of the Father was for Jesus to **make disciples**, leaving behind a group of people who would continue the work He began. *John 17:4* The **work** of Jesus for every true disciple is to reproduce and bear much fruit by **making disciples**.

The process of making disciples was clear to them because they lived with Jesus for three years, observing His relationship with the Father and His relationship with others. Jesus was *intentional, relational and missional*. If we simply look closely at the life of Jesus and observe Him in action, we can see this three year process of how to make disciples.

Jesus began the disciple making process with a question: **What are you seeking?** *John 1:38* He followed it up with a challenge: **Come and you will See!** Jesus invited them into a conversation about who He is. Jesus started at the beginning and explained to them that He is God, the Creator of everything, in Him is Life, and He is the light of the world. He, God, became a man to live among us to show us how to live in a right relationship with God and the people around Him, and to die for us. He concluded by explaining that if anyone would receive Him as Messiah, Lord, Master, Savior, they would be saved, and become children of God. *John 1:1-18*

To all those who believed in their heart and confessed with their mouth Jesus is Lord and Messiah, He issued this next challenge: **Follow Me!** *John 1:43* For the next one and half years they followed Jesus, learning more in-depth who He was, observing His relationship with His Father, His character, and His priorities.

Next, Jesus issued to them His next challenge: **Come, Follow Me and I will make you Fishers of Men!** *Matthew 4:19* Jesus then took them on six fishing expeditions to share the Good News of the gospel with others. They watched and learned how to *fish for men* from Jesus.

Jesus then called all His disciples together and appointed the first twelve Sent Ones (apostles). He began to train them to go out and **make disciples** and began to bear fruit.

After training them, He sent them out two-by-two to go into every village and call people to: **Come and See, Follow Jesus, and become Fishers of Men.** *Matthew 10; Mark 6; Luke 9*

Jesus trained and appointed the next seventy two Sent Ones to **make disciples** and bear much fruit. *Luke 10:1-12* They returned rejoicing and Jesus was full of joy in the Holy Spirit. *Luke 10:17*

After giving His first disciples the fourth commission, Jesus assured them that He would be with them always.

Jesus' promise was conditional. Jesus said he would be with them as they went out into all the world and made disciples. Jesus is not with me in my disobedience. Jesus is with me in my obedience to Him. Jesus cannot and will not participate in my sin, rebellion, and stubborn disobedience. Jesus' promise is for all who will take seriously His command to *"make disciples."*

Are you truly making disciples, just like Jesus? If so, the authority, presence and power of Jesus are with you and He will guide you and direct your steps as you put Him first in your life.

PROVE IT:

PROOF #54

JESUS' COMMISSION TO DO AS HE HAD DONE AND MAKE DISCIPLES: Jesus commissioning His disciples to tell everyone what they had seen and heard was the act of the living and not the dead.

I WONDER

I wonder what the disciples had been discussing among themselves over the 30 days Jesus had been appearing to them. This is now the fourth appearance to His leadership team: Peter, James and John, two appearances to the group who had eaten the last supper with Him in Jerusalem (once without Thomas and once with Thomas).

There were several appearances to small groups of women and men, along with several personal one-on-one appearances. I wonder what they were thinking, and how they processed everything that was going on.

I wonder why some were still doubting. *Matthew 28:17* I wonder if they were discussing authority, saying one to another: *"We need authority to do this."* Maybe they remembered the authority Jesus gave them when He sent them out two-by-two. *Luke 9:1-2*

I wonder if they were discussing what exactly Jesus' commissions really meant, **"As the Father send Me, so send I you"** and **"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation"** and **"Feed My lambs, Tend My sheep, Feed my sheep."** How were they to do this? When were they to start? Where were they to start? What exactly were they to do?

I wonder if they felt somewhat confused still and if that was why Jesus tells them to go and **make disciples**. They had seen, witnessed, experienced, and lived with the best disciple-maker of all time - JESUS!

Now it is time to multiply, reproduce, bear much fruit, and walk as Jesus walked to make disciples just like Jesus had modeled and taught them to do. **"Just live as I lived!"**

What do you wonder?

Jesus the Lord has Risen Indeed

"I am with you always." Matthew 28:20

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss Jesus' disciple-making process!*

Jesus in all the Scriptures | 25

After meeting with the larger group of more than five hundred disciples on the mountain, Jesus instructed the group to return to Jerusalem for the all important Feast of Weeks (First Fruits/Pentecost) that is upon them.

The Feast of Weeks took place 50 days after Passover. *Leviticus 23:15-16* The Feast of Weeks is a celebration of the First Fruits of the harvest time in Israel. As the group gathered once again in Jerusalem about 10 days before the Feast of Weeks, Jesus made His final earthly appearance to the group as a whole there in Jerusalem.

Then He ascended into heaven to take His rightful place at the right hand of God. *Luke 22:69*

Take a moment to pray, asking the Father for eyes to see the next set of evidence that Jesus gives to prove that He was indeed risen and alive.

Read the following passage and jot down your questions and observations.

Luke 24:36-49

Why do you think the disciples were so surprised and afraid when the disciples see Jesus?

How did Jesus prove He is alive to them this time? Make a List!

What did Jesus say would happen and what did he order them to do?

Luke 24:48,49; Acts 1:4-5

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

The group of disciples all gathered in Jerusalem the week before the Feast of Weeks. They were certainly discussing the events of the last 40 days and Jesus' four commissions and how they were to fulfill them. While they were talking about all this, Jesus appeared and stood among them, once again. It does not seem to matter how many times Jesus appeared to them; they were always surprised and frightened. I guess I would be too.

Seeing they were startled and frightened, Jesus spoke once again to them, "***Shalom***, *be at peace, all is well, I am here.*" As the group settled down, Jesus began with two questions: *Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts?*

Jesus asks you and me the same questions. *Why are you so troubled right now in your life? Why do doubts still arise in your heart about who I am and what I can do, after all I have done for you?*

Maybe Jesus patiently and lovingly walked among them, hugging each one and showing each one His hands and His feet. Maybe He instructed them to touch and see He that He was alive, not just a spirit. He had flesh and bones. He was alive indeed!

While the group was full of joy and, at the same time, still struggling to believe what they were seeing and experiencing, Jesus asked for something to eat. They brought him some boiled fish. As He was eating the boiled fish with them, He began a teaching time about Himself and the Kingdom of God.

He reminded them of what He had already shared with them many times during the three years He had walked with them. He reminded them that everything written in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms was fulfilled in Him. Everything had happened, including Judas betraying Him, His suffering, death on a cross, burial in a borrowed tomb, and resurrection from the dead. They were all part of the Father's master plan to save the world.

He reminded them it was written that the Messiah must suffer *Isaiah 53:3-5*, be killed, rise from the dead *Psalms 16:8-10*, and repentance and forgiveness of sins must be proclaimed in Jesus' name to all nations *Isaiah 49:6* and *Psalms 130:4-8*. Jesus told them many times that *He must go up to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised* *Matthew 16:21*. Jesus then opened their minds to understand the Scriptures and what had been written about Him in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.

Then Jesus ordered them to stay in Jerusalem and wait to be *clothed with power from on high*, and then they would all be witnesses of His life, His suffering, His death, His burial and His resurrection. He shared with them again that the Father would send them the promised Holy Spirit which He told them on the night in which He was betrayed. *"I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you."* *John 16:7* The Holy Spirit will be your Helper, your guide, your strength, your power, your constant companion as I was while I was on earth. So it is important that you wait here in Jerusalem to be *clothed from on high with the power of the Holy Spirit*.

PROVE IT:

PROOF #55

JESUS' FLESH AND BONES: Jesus, inviting the disciples to touch Him and see that he was flesh and bone was undeniable proof that He was alive.

PROOF #56

JESUS EATING A BOILED FISH: Jesus eating a boiled fish in front of them was another powerful proof that He was alive. Dead people do not eat.

I WONDER

I wonder why Jesus asked for something to eat. Was He hungry? I wonder if, in the Kingdom of God, we will eat like Jesus did here. In *Revelation 19:9* we read, “*Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.*” Jesus also told His disciples they would one day eat and drink with Him in His Kingdom. *Luke 22:18* Eating and drinking must be two things we will also do in the Kingdom of God.

I wonder what we will eat and drink at the Jesus marriage supper. Will we eat food from around the world? I wonder if we will return to the food in the Garden of Eden, since the tree of life will reappear and give 12 kinds of fruit, one for each month. *Revelation 22:2*

I wonder what Scriptures Jesus shared from the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms to convince His disciples of who He was. I wonder if He referenced *Deuteronomy 18:18* from the Law; *Joel 2:30-32* from the prophets; and *Psalms 16:8-11*. There are so many to choose from.

Have you discovered them? Jesus in the Old Testament is a great study. Remember, neither Jesus nor Paul had the New Testament to teach from.

They had to prove who Jesus was and what He would do only using the Old Testament. *Luke 24:44, Acts 28:23* I wonder how many Christians could prove Jesus from just the Old Testament.

I wonder how Jesus *opened their minds to understand the Scriptures* . I wonder what the disciples thought Jesus meant when He said, “*you will be clothed with power from on high.*”

What do you wonder?

Jesus the Lord has Risen Indeed

“Touch and See. *For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”* Luke 24:39

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- *Tell someone today **Jesus has risen.***
- *Discuss with them this appearance of Jesus to His disciples.*

26 | Jesus' Fifth Commission

Jesus presented Himself alive after His suffering by many proofs. After appearing to them over forty days and speaking to them about the Kingdom of God, Jesus prepared them for His departure from this earth. Before He left, He wanted to give them a fifth commission - to say the same thing once again in other words, believing by faith they would hear and obey.

Take a moment to pray and get ready to see the final proofs that Jesus gave these first disciples, showing that He was indeed risen and alive before He went to His rightful place at the right hand of God the Father.

Read the following passages and jot down your questions and observations.

Luke 24:50-52, Acts 1:1-11

Where did Jesus take the disciples after their meeting? *Luke 24:50*

What did the disciples ask Jesus when they had all finally arrived and what was Jesus' response? *Acts 1:6-7*

Disciples:

Jesus:

What did Jesus do then?

Luke 24:50; Acts 1:7

Write down word for word Jesus' 5th commission to His disciples.

Acts 1:8

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER:

After a two mile walk, Jesus and His disciples finally arrived on the Mountain of Olives, near Bethany. The disciples asked their final question to Jesus, *"Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"* What a question! They still seemed to be laser focused on the restoration of the earthly kingdom of David.

Jesus said, *"It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority."* The answer: Stay focused, look up and stop looking down, take one step of faith at a time, concentrate on obedience and stop trying to figure out when Jesus will come back and establish His Kingdom.

Then Jesus lifted up His hands and blessed them. As He blessed them, He was lifted up in the air.

As He rose in front of them, He gave them His fifth and final commission. *"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

As Jesus finished this blessing, He was carried up into heaven and disappeared from their sight. At this moment Jesus entered a massive party in heaven. The SON had come home; Jesus had returned. The trumpets sounded, the Angels sang, and all of heaven rejoiced at the return of the King's Son. Jesus walked through heaven and took His rightful place at the Father's right hand. *Luke 22:69*

Meanwhile, as the disciples stood gazing up into heaven, two angels stood next to them in white robes. They asked the disciples, *“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.”* Then the disciples returned to Jerusalem; they worshiped and were filled with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God.

There they waited to be clothed with the Holy Spirit and with power from on high to continue Jesus’ disciple-making movement of multiplication.

PROVE IT:

PROOF #57

JESUS WALKING WITH HIS DISCIPLES: Jesus walking the two miles with His disciples to the Mount of Olives was proof He was alive and risen from the dead. Dead people cannot walk.

PROOF #58

JESUS ANSWERING HIS DISCIPLES’ QUESTION: Jesus’ answering His disciples about the future was another proof He was alive.

PROOF #59

JESUS’ FIFTH COMMISSION: Jesus giving His disciples another commission as He was lifted from the earth was yet another proof that He was alive.

PROOF #60

JESUS’ ASCENSION: Jesus’ ascension into heaven in front of His disciples’ eyes was another proof that Jesus was alive and that He is God.

There are at least 60 undeniable proofs over the course of 40 days! He has Risen! He has risen indeed!

I WONDER

I wonder what the group talked about on the 2 mile walk out of Jerusalem and up the Mount of Olives to Bethany. I wonder if they were discussing their next question for Jesus and who would ask it. I wonder who asked the question about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel.

I wonder if Jesus moved among them as He blessed them. I wonder why Jesus raised His hands to heaven. I wonder if He was trying to get them to look up.

I wonder how Jesus was carried up into heaven. I wonder if two angels carried Jesus up into heaven and then returned to earth. I wonder what the party was like in heaven at Jesus' homecoming. I wonder how long the party lasted.

I wonder how long the disciples were standing there looking up into heaven before the two angels appeared. I wonder if the two angels were the same ones who appeared to the women at the tomb of Jesus after His resurrection.

I wonder if Jesus will one day let us see His hands, feet and side so that throughout all eternity I never forget what He did for me, and that I am in heaven, not because of anything I have done, but only what He has done for me.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8

I wonder if, for all eternity, Jesus will retain all His many scars, so every day I see Jesus I will never forget what He did for me.

And, so that, for all eternity I will worship and praise Him for what He has done for us.

What do you wonder?

Jesus the Lord has Risen Indeed

“You will be witnesses and in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8

**Personal Witness:
I have seen the
Risen Lord**

Write down where you have seen the living Jesus over the last 24 hours.



**Go and tell someone!
Be a witness!**

- Don't keep the Good News to yourself, tell someone today **Jesus has risen**.
- Discuss with them the ascension of Jesus and His commission to be His witness.



Singular is a ministry uniquely birthed in Latin America.

We are a diverse group of people united by a singular focus on Jesus and a dedication to the movement of disciple-makers around the world.

We equip people with the strategy Jesus modeled for us and walk alongside others in a way that is relational, missional and intentional.

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