

who do **YOU** say I am?



## Week 1 – Luke 19:1-9      Seek and Save the Lost

<sup>1</sup> Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup> A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. <sup>3</sup> He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short, he could not see over the crowd. <sup>4</sup> So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

<sup>5</sup> When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” <sup>6</sup> So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

<sup>7</sup> All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

<sup>8</sup> But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

<sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Have you ever been lost? Not like driving in a car and missed your turn lost. But out on a hike, walking through the woods lost? Separated from your parents in a big store or mall lost? Lost to the point where you aren't able to fix it on your own?

Do you remember how you felt when you realized you were lost? Because there are plenty of moments you can have and enjoy before you realize that you are lost. You can just be enjoying the trail, the walk, or beautiful items in a store without a care in the world until the moment you realize you are lost.

Once you realize you are lost, fear can become overwhelming. It's interesting because nothing has changed in your environment or circumstances from when you were enjoying the walk to when you weren't, except the realization of your condition.

It seems there is a certain power in our realization. Walking around just enjoying the moment has, and can be referred to, as *ignorance is bliss*. We are ignorant to the reality of our condition. We are ignorant to the ramifications of our condition. We are just going along like it's no big deal. And it isn't a big deal until we understand that it is.

Once we realize we are lost, we can't go back to a state of *ignorance is bliss*. Now we are compelled to do something about it. Often fear is driving us

toward a solution. Fear is driving us to get out of the situation that feels out of control.

If we are hopelessly lost, it means there is nothing we can do on our own to change our reality. We need outside help to rectify it.

That's how Jesus finds us. Hopelessly lost. Often we don't realize we are lost. And if someone tries to tell us we are, we become dismissive.

Thankfully the Holy Spirit is there to save the day. He stirs within us and drives us towards something we may not even understand. Like Zacchaeus seeking out Jesus for no particular reason at all. But the Spirit directed him to the right place at the right time to encounter Jesus and the rest, they say, is history.

God knew Zacchaeus was lost. He did all He could to change that. He found him and that changed everything.

### **Discuss:**

1. Do you remember a time when you were lost? How old were you? Where were you? How did you feel in the moment? How did you feel when you were found?

2. What kind of help did you receive while you were lost?
3. From a spiritual standpoint, when did you realize you were lost?
4. Do you remember when Jesus found you? How old were you? Where were you? What did that feel like?
5. When was the last time you felt hopeless?
6. What changed?

<sup>28</sup> After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. <sup>29</sup> As He approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, He sent two of his disciples, saying to them, <sup>30</sup> “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup> If anyone asks you, “Why are you untying it? say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

<sup>32</sup> Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. <sup>33</sup> As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

<sup>34</sup> They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

<sup>35</sup> They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup> As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

<sup>37</sup> When He came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen.

<sup>38</sup> “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”

“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

<sup>39</sup> Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

<sup>40</sup> “I tell you,” He replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

<sup>41</sup> As He approached Jerusalem and saw the city, He wept over it <sup>42</sup> and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. <sup>44</sup> They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”

Have you ever been to or seen a sporting event where the players have special walk-up music or introduction music or a special introduction handshake?

A lot of the time this happens before the beginning of a game or match. Before the player even performs his or her task, this music is played. Generally, the home crowd cheers for their player. And most generally the home crowd loves the pomp and circumstance that goes with the home team introductions. The crowd goes wild.

Have you ever been at a game where the home team doesn't perform as well as expected? Have you ever heard, live and in person, one of the players who was cheered so heartily upon introductions, then was booed as the realities of the game played out?

Caught up in the moment it may seem as if the player deserves it and it all makes so much sense. But have you ever sat back and thought about the radical turn of events? In just a few short minutes someone who is cheered by most in the building can be mercilessly booed by the same people.

All because some expectations weren't met.

This passage of Luke is Jesus' walk-up music to the city of Jerusalem. He had been there before, but never like this. Today, He entered the city like a King. To the cheers and antics of a loving people. What Jesus was bringing with Him was the peace of God. A peace that surpasses all understanding. An overwhelming peace is offered to the people who are shouting, "Hosanna! Glory to God in the Highest Heaven!"

Jesus entered the city treated as a King. It was customary at that time that people would welcome and honor a King by laying their cloaks on the ground before him. This was so the feet of the King's



horses wouldn't touch the ground but just walk on the people's cloaks.

The challenge is, Jesus' horse wasn't a horse. It was a colt of a donkey. Not exactly noble. Not exactly dominant. But that's not the kind of King Jesus was going to be. He was never there to dominate a people, to take anything by force. His way was to eliminate enemies by loving them instead of destroying them.

Is this the kind of King the people of Jerusalem were ready for?

It seems from the prophecy Jesus shares as He approached the city that the people weren't really ready. Right now, they are cheering and excited at the coming King, the Messiah entering the city. But would He live up to their expectations?

Jesus is a peace dealer. And like any dealer He's working hard to let us know what we need. Jesus wants us to have peace, because He is Peace. Our best life is in Christ. We often don't want to pursue peace, but Jesus knows what's best for us. He wants peace for us, in Him, because He knows that will put us in the best position to do His will.

## DISCUSS:

1. If you had walk up music, what song would it be? Why?
2. Where do you find yourself in this story? Are you following Jesus into town? Are you lining the road and offering your cloak? Are you standing in the background?
3. Do you believe you need peace?
4. What does peace look/feel like to you?
5. Do you pursue peace or happiness more?

<sup>25</sup> “There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. <sup>26</sup> People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. <sup>27</sup> At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup> When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

<sup>29</sup> He told them this parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. <sup>30</sup> When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. <sup>31</sup> Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

<sup>32</sup> “Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. <sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

<sup>34</sup> “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. <sup>35</sup> For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is

about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

Have you ever heard the saying; *all good thing must come to an end*? Usually this is shared when something stops that a lot of people enjoy. Maybe it’s perfect weather. Maybe it’s a Cinderella story of an underdog team making an historic run in sports. Maybe it’s a great life of service and philanthropy from someone who’s passed away.

Regardless of what it is for you, the statement *all good thing must come to an end*, is undefeated. All good things *will* come to an end...they always will. It has to.

Even this life will come to an end. All of us will die one day. And even the bigger picture of the entire world coming to an end, well, everything will end.

Jesus makes it clear this world and our time on it will come to an end.

Do your behaviors change as you become aware something is coming to an end? When you give your two weeks’ notice at a job, do you change your routine?

Have you heard of the song “Live Like You Were Dying” by Tim McGraw? The lyrics are powerful:

“...I loved deeper and I spoke sweeter and I gave forgiveness I’ve been denying...I hope you get the chance to live like you were dying...”

If the above is the result of living like we were dying, why aren’t we living that way in the first place? It seems like that’s a better way to live. Maybe you don’t need to go 2.7 seconds on a bull named Fu Manchu, but the rest is good.

Often we don’t want to pursue conversations about the end of good things because we say we want to enjoy the good while we have it. But maybe what’s more true is we aren’t ready to face the fact that one day it will be over and that will change everything.

We may fear the end. The end of our comfort, our way of life, our relationships. Maybe our fear is driving our avoidance of these topics.

In this text, Jesus is referring to Himself as the Son of Man. He references the book of Daniel to talk about the Son of Man coming on a cloud and in power, speaking to the second coming of Jesus. The second coming of Jesus will change everything.

How are we going to choose to live between now and then?

# It's Fine, I'm Fine,



# We're Fine.

Will we choose to sit around with the world on fire around us, pretend everything is fine and keep on living life the way we always have?

Or are we going to see a new forward? Expecting that the Son of Man is coming back and I only have so much time to live the life Jesus wants me to. It's time to move out of my comfort zone and towards the will of God?

It's 100% up to you. What are you going to do with what's true?

## DISCUSS:

1. If you knew you only had 6 months to live, how would your life change?
2. Why wouldn't you change to live that way now, regardless of your future?
3. What is a good thing that has been hard for you to see come to an end? Why?
4. Which is your preferred meme, dumpster fire or This is Fine?

## Week 4—Luke 22:7-20

## Lamb of God

<sup>7</sup>Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. <sup>8</sup>Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.”

<sup>9</sup>“Where do you want us to prepare for it?” they asked.

<sup>10</sup>He replied, “As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, <sup>11</sup>and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ <sup>12</sup>He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there.”

<sup>13</sup>They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

<sup>14</sup>When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. <sup>15</sup>And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. <sup>16</sup>For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”

<sup>17</sup>After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. <sup>18</sup>For I tell



you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

<sup>19</sup> And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

<sup>20</sup> In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

Have you ever seen the movie The Ten Commandments starring Charlton Heston?



The special effects in this movie are epic. But do you remember in the past it was shown on ABC every Easter weekend?

Such an interesting choice as the movie isn't about Jesus, but seems to be mostly about Moses. So why is it shown?

The Passover.

Passover began with the story of the Exodus. God's people were slaves in Egypt. God had heard their cries and He wanted to free them from the oppression they were facing. So God gave Moses to His people, the Israelites, and sent him to talk to the pharaoh about letting His people go.

Pharaoh wouldn't let God's people go, so God sent plagues upon the Egyptians. The last of the plagues was to kill every first-born child in the country. But God wanted to make sure the spirit of death wouldn't overtake any of the Israelite children. He told them what to do to make sure death wouldn't visit their houses.

He told them to sacrifice a lamb without blemish. To put the blood of the lamb on their door posts of their houses and to eat the lamb, all of the meat, before sunrise. If they did all those things and stayed inside their homes, they'd be good.

Then God asked them to practice this every year so that the people of God would remember that they had been slaves in Egypt and God rescued them.

So the Passover became this remarkable meal with a number of tentacles to mark different parts of the Exodus story. These traditions were passed on for generations. And everyone involved in the Passover knew how it was supposed to go.

Jesus changed the script. Jesus took something familiar to everyone in attendance and put Himself into the story. Instead of the Passover lamb dying as a sacrifice for the Israelites, Jesus points to Himself.

It is similar with the cup that Jesus speaks to in this passage. The cup is after dinner, it's likely the third cup of the Passover meal – the cup of Redemption. The blood of the lamb provides salvation from the plague of death to the first born. Jesus says it's His blood that provides salvation from now on. It's His blood that He will spill for His people.

The idea of Jesus being the Lamb of God is actually shared with us well before the Last Supper. In Genesis 22 a man named Abraham is asked by God to go to a mountain and to sacrifice his only son to God. On the way, Isaac asked his dad, "We have the wood and the fire, but where's the lamb for the sacrifice to God?" Abraham answered that God Himself would provide the lamb.

And He did. Abraham had followed through and was about to sacrifice his only son, when God told

him to stop. At that moment, Abraham saw a ram for the sacrifice, with his horns stuck in a bush. God provided the Lamb.

And so God does again provide the lamb for sacrifice by providing His Son for our salvation.

### DISCUSS:

1. Why would God do this, provide a Lamb to die for our sins?
2. Read the Genesis 22 passage out loud together (Genesis 22:1-14). What is remarkable in this story?
3. How do you feel about God as you read this story? At the beginning? Towards the end? At the end?
4. How do you respond when someone tries to change traditions you grew up with? Why?
5. Have you ever confessed all your sins to God? Would you be willing to do that now?
6. What is the Lamb of God dying to save you from?

<sup>54</sup> Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. <sup>55</sup> And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. <sup>56</sup> A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, “This man was with him.”

<sup>57</sup> But he denied it. “Woman, I don’t know him,” he said.

<sup>58</sup> A little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.”

“Man, I am not!” Peter replied.

<sup>59</sup> About an hour later another asserted, “Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean.”

<sup>60</sup> Peter replied, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. <sup>61</sup> The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.” <sup>62</sup> And he went outside and wept bitterly.

<sup>63</sup> The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. <sup>64</sup> They blindfolded him

and demanded, "Prophecy! Who hit you?" <sup>65</sup> And they said many other insulting things to him.

<sup>66</sup> At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. <sup>67</sup> "If you are the Messiah," they said, "tell us."

Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, <sup>68</sup> and if I asked you, you would not answer. <sup>69</sup> But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God."

<sup>70</sup> They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?"

He replied, "You say that I am."

<sup>71</sup> Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips."

As the great philosopher Mike Tyson once said, "Everyone has a plan, 'til they get punched in the mouth..."

Peter had big plans on how to stop what Jesus said would happen to Him. Jesus had predicted He would be handed over to His enemies to be tortured and killed. Peter said he'd stop it. Then he said he'd die right beside Jesus.

That was Peter's plan. Until he was faced with actually standing next to Jesus being sentenced to

death. Then Peter slunk around denying he knew Jesus...just as Jesus had predicted.

What is it about life preservation that causes us to do crazy things? Doing anything or saying anything to get ourselves out of a life-threatening situation? Or even a dream threatening situation?

We may lie, deny, point fingers, cheat, throw someone else under the bus, do anything to get the heat off of ourselves in order to extend our lives or extend our lives as we know it.

It all starts innocently enough. We are kids and we get busted doing something wrong. We use the standard lie or distraction method.

“Did you hit your sister?”

“Well, she, kicked me in the leg.”

“Did you hit your sister?”

“No.”

Unfortunately, we don't often grow out of that methodology. When we feel stuck or caught, we will do nearly anything to get out of it.

That's what happened to Peter. He'd probably been there before as a kid or even as an adult. In the series *The Chosen*, Peter is portrayed as someone who is behind in his taxes. Someone who is always on the

edge of the law, on the edge of respectable. In one scene he gets caught and tries to weasel his way out of the situation, similarly to how it's explained above.

We do this out of habit almost and we don't think about the impact our actions can have on others. We are just trying to move the impact off of ourselves. In this example, there's impact on Jesus as Peter does exactly what Jesus said he would and denied being His friend.

Jesus was the Rejected Messiah. He wasn't received by the Jewish elite. The Pharisees couldn't believe He was the long-awaited Messiah. Peter did believe He was the Messiah, but when his life was threatened, he rejected Jesus as well.

All of this being true brings more attention to what Jesus did for us, even though we refuse to stand up for Him.

What do you think hurt Jesus more, Peter denying Him within earshot or the Jewish leaders mocking Him and His claims?

Peter had a plan until he was face to face with his own end. How about you?



## DISCUSS:

1. Describe a time from your own experience that is similar to what's talked about above. When you did anything or said anything to get out of a life-threatening or dream threatening situation?
2. Can you describe what impact your actions had on those around you?
3. Can you imagine a situation like Peter was in, where he either had to deny not just his friend, but his Savior, or he would suffer and die along with Him? How do you think you would respond? Why?
4. Why do you think Jesus went through with everything even though He was rejected and abandoned?

<sup>26</sup>As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. <sup>27</sup>A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. <sup>28</sup>Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup>For the time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ <sup>30</sup>Then “‘they will say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’”

<sup>31</sup>For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

<sup>32</sup>Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. <sup>33</sup>When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. <sup>34</sup>Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

<sup>35</sup>The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”

<sup>36</sup>The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar <sup>37</sup> and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

<sup>38</sup>There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

<sup>39</sup>One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

<sup>40</sup>But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? <sup>41</sup>We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

<sup>42</sup>Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

<sup>43</sup>Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

<sup>44</sup>It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, <sup>45</sup>for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. <sup>46</sup>Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

<sup>47</sup>The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous

man.” <sup>48</sup> When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. <sup>49</sup> But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

<sup>50</sup> Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, <sup>51</sup> who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. <sup>52</sup> Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body. <sup>53</sup> Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. <sup>54</sup> It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

<sup>55</sup> The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. <sup>56</sup> Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

Do you have experience with the Baader-Meinhof phenomenon? It’s also known as the frequency illusion. A good example of how this works is when you buy a car. Let’s say you buy a blue car because

you are looking for something unique, something not everyone has.

Then you buy the car and are driving the car and everywhere you go, all you seem to see are blue cars. They are everywhere.

Are there suddenly more blue cars on the road? Or do you just notice them now because you are in one?

This is the Baader-Meinhof phenomenon or the frequency illusion.

This what must have happened for the disciples around the death of Jesus. Jesus had spoken to them multiple times and in some detail about being arrested, tortured and killed. But it didn't seem real to the disciples until it was actually happening.

Then seemingly out of nowhere, they are like, didn't Jesus tell us this was going to happen? Shouldn't we have seen this coming and have been prepared for it?

This type of torture, suffering and death weren't rare during this time in Jerusalem. The Romans were brutal. These things were happening all the time, but the disciples weren't focused on that yet.

Can you imagine the loneliness felt by the people who had given up their "normal" lives to follow

Jesus? He had become their everything. Their lives had just been filled with following Him and doing what He asked them to do. Now He's gone.

Do I just go back to my old life? Was this all for nothing? How could this happen? How could we get this so wrong? What did we miss? Was this all an illusion? Did the things we were a part of not really happen?

What's going to happen to us? Will they come for us too?

Can you imagine how unsettled they must have felt?

For us it is pretty easy to see why the crucifixion of Jesus happened and had to happen. He took all of our sins on Himself and died for them on the cross. But the day it happened, the disciples didn't have that perspective. Their Rabbi, teacher, leader, best friend, father figure, guide, was just gone.

And at the moment there wasn't a thought among the disciples that He was coming back. For us, we are like it's only three days. Hang in there, He's coming right back.

Can you remember the first three days of an impossible loss? A day doesn't feel like a day, it feels like an eternity. It's difficult to see any hope in

anything. We can see the end of the story these disciples were living. Can you imagine being on the ground during it?

They all had a picture of how this was supposed to go according to their traditions. And no one was seeing this as a possibility.

They couldn't see this as a possibility because the idea had gotten zero mindshare before this moment. Jesus said a lot of stuff they didn't understand. The talk of the Son of Man being handed over didn't stick. They couldn't imagine this all ending outside of a normal predictable victory by Jesus over their enemies.

Then once you've seen it, you can't unsee it. Once you start looking for this as what was predicted, you see it everywhere. Every book of the Bible points to Jesus. We can see it because we are looking for the version of Jesus we know about. He lived a perfect life, died for our sins and defeated death when He was raised from the dead on the third day. He's now seated at the right hand of the Father.

Now that we know it, we can see it everywhere. It's always been there, it's just that we can see it now.

## DISCUSS:

1. Do you believe Jesus had to die? Why or why not?
2. Google, "Scripture that predicts Jesus dying on the cross." Share with the group what you found and read the passages aloud.
3. How alone do you think the disciples felt after Jesus died?
4. How can anyone start again after having that happen to them?
5. What's the most astonishing part of the passage for this week to you? Share with the group.



<sup>1</sup>On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. <sup>2</sup>They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup>but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup>While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. <sup>5</sup>In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup>He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup>‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’” <sup>8</sup>Then they remembered his words.

<sup>9</sup>When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. <sup>10</sup>It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup>But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. <sup>12</sup>Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

It's not surprising the most unbelievable part of the story of Jesus is the most important part of the story of Jesus.

Jesus was resurrected from the dead. As Paul says, if that didn't happen, we are all fools. If He died and stayed dead, He's just like all the other prophets of God that the people Israel killed for their message from God.

But if He didn't stay dead...

Do you really believe God raised Jesus from the dead? Do you really believe Jesus was dead and now He's not?

It's the center of the Christian faith. It's the only thing that differentiates Jesus from other rabbis.

If you read other accounts of the death and burial of Jesus, you'll see where the Pharisees ask for the tomb of Jesus to be guarded so that the body couldn't be removed and there be a claim of resurrection.

The Pharisees wanted Jesus dead and they wanted Him to stay dead. That was most convenient for them. The normal mourning period in the Jewish tradition was seven days. But for great people, like Moses, the mourning period was 30 days.

Regardless how long Jesus' followers would have chosen to mourn, they still should have been mourning when the women found the open tomb. The women went to the tomb planning on mourning. They took with them the spices they had pulled together to properly prepare Jesus' body for burial.

The followers of Jesus stopped mourning His death on the third day.

That's unorthodox at best and weird at worst. They weren't mourning, they were gathering again and word on the street was He'd been seen alive, by a lot of people.

What does your logical, Western brain tell you? Is it possible for Jesus to have been resurrected? Do you believe it's true for you?

If you believe it's true, how will that impact your life?

If you look at the disciples' lives, the resurrection radically transformed their realities. They became bold in the face of conflict with the same people who killed Jesus.

They took the Gospel of Jesus to ends of the earth.

All of this because they had seen Jesus die and they had seen Him alive again. The resurrected Lord changed everything.

## DISCUSS:

1. What's the most difficult thing for you to believe about the Gospel of Jesus? Why?
2. How would you respond if someone said, "Any logical person should know resurrection isn't possible?"
3. Have you been changed by the resurrection of Jesus? How?
4. Can you name one thing you feel more empowered to do because of the resurrection of Jesus? Is there anything you no longer fear because the resurrection is true?