

# FIRST TWO SUNDAYS OF JESUS' RESURRECTED LIFE

Matthew 28:1-11; Mark 16:1-18; Luke 24:1-49; John 20:1-23

## STRUCTURE

**Key-persons:** Jesus, Mary Magdalene and the disciples

**Key-location:** Jerusalem

**Key-repetitions:**

- People realized that Jesus' body was not in the grave: the women (Lk 24:2-3); John and Peter (Lk 24:12; Jn 20:2-8).

- Jesus appeared to: Mary Magdalene (Jn 20:11-17); the other women (Mt 28:8-16); two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-32); the disciples gathered in Jerusalem when Thomas was absent (Jn 20:19-24) and a week later with the presence of Thomas (Jn 20:26-29).

- The announcement that Jesus had resurrected: an angel told the women (Lk 24:4-7); guards reported to the chief priests (Mt 28:11-15); women informed the disciples (Mt 28:8; Lk 24:8-11); two disciples from Emmaus informed those in Jerusalem (Lk 24:33-36); other disciples informed Thomas (Jn 20:25).

- People didn't believe the testimony that Jesus was alive: the Eleven didn't believe the women (Lk 24:11); the two on the road of Emmaus didn't believe the rumors (Lk 24:22-24); Thomas doubted the other disciples' testimony (Jn 20:25).

**Key-attitudes:**

- The disillusion felt by Jesus' followers after his death.

- The fear of the guards, when the angel removed the stone.

- The women's concern about who would remove the stone from the grave.

- The unbelief of those who heard that Jesus was alive.

- First the terror, later the joy, when Jesus appeared to his followers after the resurrection.

**Initial-situation:**

On Friday, Jesus died on the cross and was buried. On Saturday, the high priests and Pharisees requested for Pilate to give orders for soldiers to guard Jesus' tomb until the third day. This was to prevent the disciples from stealing the body and later telling the people that he had resurrected. Pilate gave orders for the soldiers to be posted.

Jesus' followers forgot his promise that he would resurrect. They were terrified of the Jewish leaders and hid behind locked doors.

**Initial-problem:**

At sunrise on Sunday; Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome made their way to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus.

**Final-situation:**

Jesus said that those who believe in him without seeing him are blessed.

## BIBLE STORY

**The Empty Tomb** Mk 16:1-8; Mt 28:1-8; Lk 24:1-12; Jn 20:1-10

Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might anoint Jesus' dead body (Mk 16:1).

Early Sunday morning, just as the sun came up, the women started on their way to the tomb. Suddenly, there was a violent earthquake. An angel of the Lord came down from Heaven, rolled away the stone, and sat on it. His appearance was as bright as lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were terrified; they shook and became like dead men who could not move (Mt 28:1-4).

The women were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the large stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

Then they saw that the large stone had already been rolled away. They entered the tomb and

saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side. They were terrified.

The man said, "Don't be afraid. You're looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was nailed to a cross. God brought him back to life! The place where they laid him is empty. Go, tell his disciples, especially Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he promised.'"

Trembling and terrified, the women fled from the tomb (Mk 16:2-8).

The women reported what had happened to the Eleven disciples. The disciples didn't believe the women; they thought the women were speaking nonsense (Lk 24:9-11).

However, Peter and John, set out running for the tomb. John outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and saw the strips of linen lying there but didn't go in. Simon Peter arrived after him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. Finally John went inside. He saw and believed that the tomb was empty. They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise to life from the dead. Then the two disciples went back to their homes (Jn 20:3-10).

### **Jesus Appeared to the Women Mt 28:9-15; Jn 20:11-18**

Mary Magdalene stood crying outside the tomb. She bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels dressed in white, seated where Jesus' body had been. One sat where his head had been, the other where his feet had been.

The angels asked Mary, "Woman, why are you crying?"

Mary answered, "They have removed my Lord's body, and I don't know where they've put him."

Mary turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she didn't recognize him.

Jesus asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"

Mary mistook him for the gardener and said, "Sir, if you have carried his body away, tell me where you put him, and I will go get him."

Jesus said, "Mary."

Mary turned toward him and cried out, "Teacher."

Jesus said, "Go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news, "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them everything he had said to her (Jn 20:11-18).

Some of the soldiers who had guarded the tomb went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. The chief priests and the religious leaders bribed the soldiers with a large sum of money, and told them, "Say that his disciples came during the night and stole his body while you were asleep. If this report gets to the governor, we will keep you out of trouble." The soldiers took the bribe and did as they were instructed. This story has been circulated among the Jews to this very day (Mt 28:11-15).

### **Jesus Appeared to Two Disciples on the Way to Emmaus Mk 16:12-13; Lk 24:13-32**

That same day, two followers of Jesus were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking about everything that had happened. Jesus approached them and walked beside them. But they didn't recognize Jesus (Lk 24:13-16).

Jesus asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?"

They stood still, long-faced and depressed. The one named Cleopas, asked Jesus, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and don't know the things that happened these last few days?"

Jesus asked, "What happened?"

They replied, "The things that happened to Jesus from Nazareth. He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. Our own chief priests and rulers handed him over to die on a cross. We had hoped that he was the one who would set Israel free. This is the third day since all this took place. Now, some women in our group dumfounded us. They went to the tomb early this morning, but didn't find Jesus' body. They came back with the story that they had seen angels who said he was alive. Some of our companions went to the tomb and found it empty just as the women had said, but they didn't see Jesus (Lk 24:17-24).

Jesus told them, "You're foolish; you're slow to believe all that the prophets said!" Then Jesus explained everything written about himself in the Scriptures, beginning with the books of Moses and going through the writings of all the Prophets (Lk 24:25-27).

They approached their village. Jesus acted as if he were going farther. But they pressured him to stay the night with them. So Jesus went in to stay with them.

Jesus went to the table with them, took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened; they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight (Lk 24:28-32).

The two got up and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven disciples and others gathered together behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. The Eleven was saying, "It's true! The Lord has really come back to life! Simon saw him!" Then the two from Emmaus told what had happened on the road, and how they recognized Jesus when he broke the bread (Lk 24:33-35; Jn 20:19).

### **Jesus Appeared to His Disciples Mk 16:14; Lk 24:36-43; Jn 20:19-29**

While the two were telling their story, Jesus appeared and said, "Peace be with you."

All were terrified; they thought they were seeing a ghost. Jesus said, "Why are you terrified? Why do you doubt? Look at my hands and my feet. It's really me! Touch me and see; ghost don't have flesh and bones like I have."

Jesus showed them his hands and feet. They still couldn't believe what they were seeing; it seemed too good to be true. Jesus then took a piece of broiled fish, and ate it while they watched (Lk 24:36-43).

Thomas, one of the Twelve, wasn't with the disciples when Jesus appeared to them. The other disciples told Thomas, "We've seen the Lord!"

But Thomas replied, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, and put my finger in those holes, and put my hand where the spear went into his side, I won't believe it" (Jn 20:24-25).

A week later, on the following Sunday, Jesus' disciples were again in the house. This time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; however, Jesus entered and stood among them. Jesus said, "Peace be with you!" Then he told Thomas, "Put your finger here; examine my hands. Put your hand into my side. Stop doubting! Believe!"

Thomas said, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus told Thomas, "You believe because you saw me; a better blessing is for those who believe without seeing me" (Jn 20:26-29).

## GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

## SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who were the first people to realize that Jesus' body was not in his tomb?
2. Who were some of the people who announced to others that Jesus had resurrected?
3. Who did Jesus appear to on the first two Sundays of his resurrected life?
4. Who were some of the people who didn't believe that Jesus had returned to life after death?
5. What difference does it make to you that Jesus rose from the grave?

## LIFE-LESSONS

1. Evidence which proves Jesus' resurrection:
  - 1.1 The missing corpse. Jesus' body disappeared from the grave and was never found (Jn 20:1-8).
  - 1.2 Evidence was required to convince the incredulous disciples. The disciples were convinced that Jesus was dead and they didn't believe the witnesses who saw Jesus after his resurrection:
    - They refused to believe the emotional testimony of the women (Lk 24:11).
    - Peter and John were surprised that Jesus was not in the tomb (Jn 20:9).
    - The disciples even touched the resurrected Jesus (Lk 24:39-40).
    - Thomas was fearful of being deceived by a vision or hallucination. He demanded that the resurrection be confirmed by sense of touch (Jn 20:24-25).
  - 1.3 Many witnesses saw Jesus after his resurrection. More than 500 saw Jesus (1 Cor 15:4-8). Many were alive when Paul made that statement. When their names were listed as being witnesses of Jesus' resurrection, no one denied that claim.
  - 1.4 The disciples were transformed after the resurrection:
    - Before, Peter was a coward, afraid of a domestic maid (Mt 26:69-75). He was transformed into a man with courage to confront those who had crucified Jesus (Ac 4:9-14, 18-20, 29);
    - The disciples, who at first doubted the resurrection, became so convinced of the fact that they suffered persecutions, risking their own lives;
    - The followers' sadness after Jesus' death was transformed into great joy after the resurrection (Lk 24:52).
  - 1.5 The expansion of the Church is a proof of Jesus' resurrection. The number of Jesus' followers grew from 120 (Ac 1:15) to 3,000, that were baptized (Ac 2:41-42), to 5,000 believing men (Ac 4:4), the number of men and women who believed in Jesus constantly grew (Ac 5:14), and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly (Ac 6:7).
2. During the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension, the Gospels mention ten appearances of Jesus, each one with one or more witnesses:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Mary Magdalene (Jn 20:10-18).
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> The other women (Mt 28:8-14).
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Peter (Lk 24:34).
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-31).
  - 5<sup>th</sup> The apostles, without Thomas (Jn 20:19-25).
  - 6<sup>th</sup> One week later: the apostles, with Thomas (Jn 20:26-29).
  - 7<sup>th</sup> The miraculous catching of fish and Peter's restoration (Jn 21:1-24).
  - 8<sup>th</sup> On the mountain in Galilee when the Great Commission was given (Mt 28:16-20; 1 Cor 15:6).
  - 9<sup>th</sup> James (1 Cor 15:7).
  - 10<sup>th</sup> On the occasion of the ascension (Ac 1:3-8). [*After the ascension, Jesus was seen by Paul (1 Cor 15:8).*]

3. Some of the consequences of the resurrection for those who believe in Jesus:
- Jesus' promises can be trusted. He kept his promise to rise from the dead.
  - Jesus is alive and ruling his kingdom.
  - Jesus' resurrection transforms the reality and despair of death into hope.
  - The followers of Jesus will also be resurrected. Death has been conquered; therefore, all believers in Jesus who have died will be resurrected (Jn 11:25).
  - They are transformed by Christ's death and resurrection, and begin to enjoy eternal life in the present time (Jn 11:26; 3:36; 5:24; 17:3).
  - The power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to give life to the spiritually and morally dead people, and to produce in them change and growth (1 Cor 15:12-19).
  - Physical death for the body becomes a time of temporary sleeping until the resurrection (Jn 11:11-13; 1 Th 4:13-17; 1 Cor 15:55).
  - Peace is the result of the conviction that Jesus Christ is alive, and that he paid the whole debt for the believer's sin (Jn 20:19, 21; 14:27; 16:33).
  - The resurrection provides the substance of the Christian's witness to the world.
4. Jesus' followers have the privilege of being considered siblings of Jesus. It was after his resurrection that Jesus called his followers "my brothers" (Mt 28:10; Jn 20:17). John's Gospel registers a progression to the intimacy between Jesus and his followers: 1<sup>st</sup>, the followers are Jesus' servants (13:13); 2<sup>nd</sup>, they are his friends (15:15); and 3<sup>rd</sup>, they are his siblings (20:17). The person who begins to follow Jesus as a servant (Jn 13:13), discovers that Jesus is his friend (Jn 15:13-16) and then, that Jesus considers him as his own brother or sister (Jn 20:17).
5. Jesus' resurrected body was the same body that he had before; however, it was transformed:
- It was composed of bones and flesh (Lk 24:39);
  - It was recognizable; he had the appearance of his previous body. The wounds from the nails and the spear remained in Jesus' resurrected body (Jn 20:27);
  - His body and his wounds could be touched and felt (Jn 20:27);
  - He could eat, though he didn't need to eat (Lk 24:42-43). Eating certified his body had substance;
  - He could go through locked doors; his body was not subject to natural laws (Jn 20:19).
6. People who seek answers to their doubts may be on the road to faith. Doubt can become a stepping stone to faith. When doubt leads to questions, questions lead to answers, answers increase faith. Jesus was not hard on Thomas for his doubts. Despite his skepticism, Thomas was loyal to his fellow disciples and to Jesus himself (Jn 20:25-28).