**1. Motivate**

What are some things once thought impossible that have become a reality?

* on demand video
* cell phones
* smart watches (remember Dick Tracy’s wrist radio)
* sending men to the moon

An intro video is available. Watch it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_6nceqvgl> If you have no Wi-Fi where you teach, best to download from <https://tinyurl.com/3dp5kbwr>

* the international space station
* people ashamed of the American flag
* the destruction of the twin towers on 9/11
* Israel officially becoming a country in 1948
* the return of McDonalds McRib
* the Interstate highway system
* reruns of Route 66
* digital cameras
* popularity of cruise ships
* ease of air travel
* complications of air travel

**2. Transition**

Maybe you thought it would be impossible for someone you know to get their life straightened out.

* New life *is* possible when we trust in the risen Christ.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 The Empty Tomb Gives Proof

Listen for John’s response.

John 20:3-9 (NIV) So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

What prompted Peter and John to go to the place where Jesus had been buried?

* doesn’t say here, but Mary Magdalene had been to the tomb and found it empty
* she told Peter and John

What did Peter see, and how does he appear to have responded to what he saw?

* he went on into the tomb
* saw strips of linen lying there flat
* saw the burial cloth
* folded up, separate from the linen

How did the other disciple, John, respond to what he saw?

* got there first but only peered in
* (Peter barged on in)
* finally John went in
* he saw and believed
* neither man realized the OT prophecies about the Messiah dying and rising from the dead

How do you think John’s *seeing* was different from the Mary’s and Peter’s *seeing*?

* He saw and believed
* they just saw things out of place – they saw “stuff”
* he saw and began to remember
* he made the connection of the empty tomb and Jesus’ teachings that He would arise from the dead

What obstacles can keep people from fully *seeing* the reality of the resurrection and its implications?

* lack of knowledge
* total bias against Christ
* don’t want to give up their sinful actions and attitudes
* misinformation
* liberal influence, peer pressure, family pressure

How does the empty tomb give us hope?

* Jesus did not die and cease to exist
* Jesus rose again to give *us* eternal life
* Jesus was not defeated by death
* We may experience physical death (as He did) but we will experience *spiritual* life eternally

Consider elements of our faith that we *believe* but *don’t fully* understand …

* The Trinity
* The indwelling of the Holy Spirit
* *Why* God would love us enough to die for us
* The *how* of creation and the universe
* The *when* of the Second Coming of Christ

⇨ It is entirely possible to place your faith in trust in Jesus by believing in His death and resurrection *without* fully understanding the theology regarding salvation

3.2 Jesus Proved He Is Alive

Listen for events of Jesus’ first reappearance.

John 20:19-23 (NIV) On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

How soon after His resurrection did Jesus appear to His disciples?

* seems to be about a week
* tomb found empty on a Sunday
* they are gathered together on a Sunday

Why do you suppose they were gathered together?

* discuss what they had been hearing and seeing
* trying to remember together what Jesus had previously told them
* hiding out from Roman and Jewish authorities
* afraid that they would get blamed for stealing the body (that’s what the soldiers were told to say)

When kinds of situations might cause *us* to experienced doubts and questions about our faith?

* during tragedies
* when we run out of money
* just cannot cope with life
* seems like the world is so evil and it just keeps getting worse
* our prayers weren’t answered – like we thought they should or in time to help

If you had been in that room with the disciples, how might you have reacted when Jesus appeared?

* surprised
* confused
* thought you were hallucinating
* combination of joy and anger … “why did He do this to us?”

Jesus greeted them with “Shalom” … “Peace be with you”. How has Jesus brought peace to your life?

* assurance of sins forgiven
* God’s presence in the midst of a bad situation
* God’s supply of my needs
* God’s protection
* wisdom and strength to live a life pleasing to God
* guidance in life decisions

What was the nature and scope of the mission He gave them (and *us*) and what preparation has He given?

* compared their mission to His mission
* sent to preach the Good News of the Kingdom/Rule of God in people’s lives
* sent to preach the Truth of sins forgiven
* sent to tell what they had seen, heard, and participated in

 3.3 Believing Is Seeing

Listen for Thomas’ revelation.

John 20:27-29 (NIV) Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

How was this appearance different from the first? What did Jesus invite Thomas to do?

* Thomas with them this time
* Jesus showed Thomas the nail marks, the wound in his side
* told him to stop doubting and believe

Do you consider Thomas a skeptic or an honest searcher?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Skeptic | Honest Searcher |
| * “He was *dead”*
* “they put Him in a tomb”
* “people don’t come back from that (well, maybe Lazarus)”
* “no way!”
 | * I must have a *personal* encounter
* would not take eyewitness testimony
* I really want to know for sure
* I want it to be true, but it seems so impossible
 |

None of us have seen Jesus physically. What do we learn from the response of Thomas?

* he wanted firsthand experience with the risen Jesus
* he actually did see and feel the wounds
* he knew Jesus personally and identified who He was and what was His condition
* we have an eye-witness recording what he saw and heard
* we also have a record of how it affected him, how it changed his opinion, his belief

Thomas wanted a personal, firsthand experience and got it. What kind of firsthand experience can we have with the risen Jesus?

* when we pray, we believe that He hears us
* when we receive Him as Savior and Lord, God’s Holy Spirit dwells within our hearts and minds
* when we read His Word, God’s Spirit applies it personally to our lives

Thomas doubted, even though he was with Jesus for 3 years. How should *we* deal with our doubts about Christianity?

* tell God what you are struggling with
* remind yourself of Who God is … all His attributes ([101 Reasons to Praise the Lord](https://average-heros.tripod.com/id17.html))
* be reading His Word daily

* declare your trust in Him each day
* get together with other folks who are studying the Bible
* consider spiritual counselling

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Trust.

* If you have never trusted Jesus as your Savior and Lord, give your life to Him now.
* Talk to your Bible study leader or read the inside cover of this book.

Prepare.

* Write out your testimony of how you came to trust in Christ.
* As you write, take note of how Christ has given you a new life.

Proclaim.

* Identify someone in your life who has not trusted Christ.
* Invite the person for coffee or lunch and have an intentional gospel conversation with him or her.

Word Search Puzzle

Well, Happy Easter … This is the best celebration all year long for we who believe. Meanwhile, you have some words to look for! Humph! No candy or eggs for you if you don’t figure out these words. They go left to right, right to left, up, down, and diagonal. The Easter Bunny won’t be any help, that’s for sure. Humph! And there’s more good Family Activities at <https://tinyurl.com/3dp5kbwr>

LOOKED
LORD
OTHER
OUTRAN
OVERJOYED
PEACE
PETER
REACHED
RECEIVE
RUNNING
SCRIPTURE
SENDING
SHALOM
SHOWED
SIDE
SPIRIT
STOP
STRIPS
THOMAS
TOGETHER
TOMB
UNDERSTAND

AMONG
BECAUSE
BELIEVED
BLESSED
BREATHED
BURIAL
CLOTH
DISCIPLE
DOORS
DOUBTING
EVENING
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