Session	5:	What	Happened
on Easte	r?		

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: Because Jesus rose from the dead, we can have hope that he will redeem and restore what's been broken in us.

Head Change: To know that Jesus's death and resurrection assure us that our sins have been dealt with once and for all.

Heart Change: To feel confident that the benefits of Jesus's death and resurrection have been applied to us.

Life Change: To believe by faith that our pain has a purpose because Jesus is alive.

SESSION'S QUESTION AND ANSWER

What happened on Easter?
After his crucifixion, death, and burial,
Jesus rose from the dead on Easter
Sunday, proving that he is God; that he
has dealt with our sin completely,
offering to forgive and transform us;
and that our present suffering is light
and momentary, and will one day be
redeemed.

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REVIEW LAST SESSION

TEVIEW ENDI GEOGION	
In our last session, we explored the questions,	
"Who did Jesus hang out with, and why?" We	
touched on his habit of hanging around outcasts and those who were overlooked. Before diving	
into today's session, let's discuss the Deeper	
Walk exercises you chose. Which one did you	
pick? How did it go?	
OPEN	
Did your family have Easter traditions when you were growing up? If so, what were they?	
Easter is the most significant date on the	
Christian calendar. While Easter may now be celebrated more widely in society, its emphasis	
is often more on Easter baskets, candy, and	
hunting eggs (none of which is necessarily bad)	
than on anything distinctly Christian. In this	
session, J.D. will remind us of Easter's significance, pointing to what happened on that	
day thousands of years ago and why it matters	
for us today.	
WATCH	
Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in J.D. Greear's	
teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he	
answers the following questions.	
What do the two possible sites of Jesus's	
burial have in common?	
What two things does the gradibility of	
What two things does the credibility of Jesus's resurrection rest on?	
What three assurances does the resurrection	

give us?

Show Session 5: What happened on Easter? (13 minutes).

DISCUSS

J.D. opened this session by highlighting that Jesus's tomb (though there is debate about its exact location) is empty. In John 20, we read about the empty tomb and the reaction of those who first discovered it. Read John 20:1–10. As J.D. said, Jesus's empty tomb was and remains "the first and most central Christian confession." What makes the empty tomb so central to the Christian faith? What happens to the Christian faith if Christ is not risen from the dead?

To explore the Bible's answer to the question, "What happens if Jesus isn't risen from the dead?", see Practice 2 in the Deeper Walk section at the end of this session.

To use J.D.'s words, believing that a man who was once dead is now alive again is "crazy" and "radical." And yet, as we see in Acts 4:1–20, this is exactly what Jesus's disciples—who saw him with their own eyes and spent time with him after his resurrection—swore until the end of their lives, often at great risk to themselves. To the amazement of the Jewish leaders, Peter and John bore witness to Jesus's resurrection despite the threats levied against them. Read Acts 4:1–20. What did Peter and John say that caught the Jewish leaders so off guard? Have you ever faced a similar situation, where you

were thought to be "crazy" or "radical" for
believing in the resurrection? How did that
make you feel? How did you respond, both
internally and externally?

Speaking of the resurrection, J.D. quoted N.T. Wright who said, "The credibility of the resurrection testimony rests on two things: the empty tomb and the eyewitness reports. Both are essential." In what ways do you find the empty tomb and eyewitness reports to be compelling evidence? What happens if we lose the eyewitness reports?

The question at the heart of this session is not only what happened on Easter, but also, "Why does Easter matter?" To answer that question, J.D. gave three reasons or assurances to show the resurrection's significance.

The first assurance is that "Jesus is who he says he is." Read John 11:25–26. If Jesus was raised from the dead—and he was—we can be sure that he is who he claims to be, which, in this passage, is "the resurrection and the life." How would you explain what it means that Jesus is "the resurrection and the life"? How does Jesus's resurrection inform your thoughts and beliefs about him and impact the way you live?

When we consider who Jesus is, many of us have unanswered questions, like "Why is there so much pain in the world?" or "Why do bad things happen to good people?" These questions (and others like them) may cause us to doubt God's goodness or even his existence. Quoting the late Tim Keller, J.D. said, "In light of the resurrection, we should be willing to doubt

our doubts" because our doubts "are not the definitive argument against God" we might think they are. Have you ever experienced doubts about God or his goodness? Are you experiencing them now? If so, what's the nature of those doubts? What could it look like for you to doubt your doubts? In what ways do you think Keller's advice could help you?

Since Jesus is alive, our doubts don't have to rattle us—we can trust that he has satisfying answers to our questions, even if we don't know the answers yet. Our doubts can be occasions for exercising faith, or as J.D. said, "accepting what we cannot understand based on what we can." Read Romans 11:33–36. Paul shows us in this passage how to respond to the things we can't yet understand about God. How would you describe Paul's attitude in this passage? What could it mean for you to accept the things you don't understand based on what you do understand, namely that Jesus is alive? How could you imitate the awe Paul articulates in this passage?

J.D. highlighted that, because Jesus is risen from the dead, "we can be forgiven and transformed." Read Romans 4:25–5:1. In these verses, we get a glimpse of the work Jesus did on our behalf. Citing this passage, J.D. said, "Jesus's [death and] resurrection [are] proof that God had accepted his sacrifice as the payment for our sins." Are there particular sins in your life—past or present—that you believe are unforgivable? If so, why do you think it's difficult to believe your sins have been paid for? To what extent does this passage strengthen your faith?

For a prayer from Scripture to remind yourself that you've been forgiven and transformed, see Practice 3 in the Deeper Walk section at the end of this session.

A lot of us worry that we've sinned too much for God to forgive us. But the apostle Paul, someone who tortured and even killed innocent Christians, stands as a clear example that our worries are unfounded. The resurrection proves that God can and does forgive us of all our sins, which were paid for at the cross and buried with Christ in his death. He walked out of the tomb; our sins did not. In what ways does Paul's life before meeting Christ encourage you? What does it look like to trust that Jesus's death and resurrection was the fatal blow to sin's power over you?

To complete an exercise to help you overcome sin, see Practice 4 in the Deeper Walk section at the end of this session.

Jesus broke sin's power over us when he walked out of the tomb, and the same power that brought his body out of the grave now lives in us. We have been transformed. Read Romans 8:11. In what ways have you seen your life transformed since coming to faith in Jesus? When have you seen the Spirit's power at work in your life?

The apostle Paul talks about the concept of transformation in stark terms. In 2 Corinthians 5:17, he writes, ". . . if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!" The power of the resurrection is such that those who are "in Christ" are brand new—redeemed, transformed, even resurrected. To what degree do you consider yourself a new creation? How might your day-to-day life change by focusing on seeing yourself as brand new in Christ?

J.D. quoted one of his friends who says, "If the tomb is empty, that means anything in your life is possible." Jesus is alive and the Spirit is at work, conforming you into the likeness of Christ. To what degree does the empty tomb give you hope that God can accomplish big things in your life? What big things are you hoping God will do in you, through you, or for you?

The third and final assurance J.D. gave in this session was that, since Jesus is risen from the dead, our present suffering—no matter how difficult it is—is "only light and momentary." All the pain of this world is temporary. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16–18. In what ways do you currently find yourself suffering or experiencing difficulties? Does it encourage you to hear that, through Christ, your suffering is temporary? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?

To complete an exercise to help put your pain and afflictions into a scriptural perspective, see Practice 1 in the Deeper Walk section at the end of this session. Not only is our suffering temporary, but we can be sure that God is at work in it. Read Romans 8:28–30. As we read in this passage, God is forming us, strengthening us, conforming us into the likeness of Jesus, and working all our suffering together for our ultimate good—this is his promise to us. How has God used suffering in your past to strengthen you, impart wisdom, or bring about good in your life? What could it look like to trust him in your current difficulties?

J.D. closed this session by rattling off a list of benefits we receive through Christ's death and resurrection: the forgiveness of sin, the offer of God's love, union with Christ through his Spirit, purpose, blessing, hope, redemption, restoration, and power. All these are offered to us free of charge if we simply believe in Jesus and follow him. Read Ephesians 1:3–14. What benefits of Jesus's death and resurrection does Paul list in this passage? Which one is most meaningful to you in this season of life? For what reasons?

The resurrection reminds us that good news is offered to us as a gift. We don't have to earn it. We don't have to work for it. We don't have to bargain or barter for it. We simply receive it. Jesus gives it to us, and we accept it with faith. What can you do to regularly remind yourself that all the benefits of being in Christ are given to you as a gift? What could it look like for you to express gratitude to God for his gifts and to offer those gifts to others?

LAST WORD

Cognitively, many people—both Christians and non-Christians—have heard about what happened on Easter Sunday a couple thousand

years ago. The man Jesus, a man who claimed
to be God, reportedly walked out of a tomb he'd
occupied as a dead man for three days. He lived.
And then he died. But then he was alive again.

In addition to being miraculous, Jesus's resurrection is true. And because it's true it has incredible significance for those who believe in him. It means he's not just a man; he's God in the flesh. And by his death and resurrection, he offers us the forgiveness of sins, purpose, and new life if we'll receive it. Have you received Jesus's gracious offer? If so, what can you do to extend Jesus's offer to others in your life?

SESSION'S QUESTION AND ANSWER

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DEEPER WALK

This section is designed to help you practice different ways to interact with God and reflect on what you've learned in this session. Pick at least one activity to try before the next session.

Practice 1: Memorization

In this session, since J.D. talked about suffering and afflictions, which can often rattle our faith in

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God. Make it your ambition to memorize the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:16–17.	
"Therefore we do not give up. Even though our	
outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. For our	
momentary light affliction is producing for us an	
absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory.	
So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but	
what is unseen is eternal."	
Democrate on the st. Cook also sould revenies a the st. vis. (III	
Remember that God doesn't promise that you'll escape suffering in this life. Instead, he promises	
that your suffering is producing something in	
you that is glorious and that he will use it for your ultimate good. Christ's death and	
resurrection assure you that God will keep his	
promises.	
Practice 2: Community	
What if Christ did not rise from the dead? The	
apostle Paul explores that exact question, and	
he is emphatic: if Christ isn't alive, that's a big, big problem for Christians.	
Spend some time with a friend or friend group, your family, or a group from church reading and	
discussing 1 Corinthians 15:12–19 together. Have	
someone in the group read the passage aloud,	
and then spend time discussing Paul's argument. You can use as many or as few of the questions	
included below to spark conversation.	
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In verse 14, Paul says, " if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is	
your faith." For what reasons would Christian	
faith be "in vain" if Jesus's resurrection didn't	
happen?	

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If Jesus didn't rise from the dead	d, how would	
the confession in verse 15 that "	God raised up	
Christ" bear false witness about	God?	
In verse 17, Paul goes even further,	saying, " if	
Christ has not been raised, your fa		
worthless; you are still in your sins.		
it reveal about Jesus if he wasn't		
the dead? Why would we still be In what ways would it be signific		
devastating) if we are still in our		
hope would we have?		
If other questions arise during your	time discuss	
them. End your time by praying and	·	
thanks to God that Jesus is indeed	risen from	
the dead, that our faith is not in vai	•	
are no longer in our sins—thanks b	e to God!	
Practice 3: Prayer		
Praying the Scriptures is a practice	the church	
has engaged in for millennia. Wher		
Scripture—when we speak God's v him—we align our hearts with his.	vords back to	
The digit out flour to with the		
The Scriptures are clear that, throu	•	
are forgiven. But sometimes it's dif		
believe that he would forgive us for we've committed against him. But		
us that our forgiveness and transfo		
such that God renders us "without	•	
you'll read and pray in this passage minute or two in silence, quieting y	•	
mind before God. Then pray Jude's		
by faith and with a heart of gratitud	•	
24–25.		
"Now to him who is able to protect	vou from	
stumbling and to make you stand in		
presence of his glory, without blem	nish and with	

great joy, to the only God our Savior, through
Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power,
and authority before all time, now and forever.
Amen."

Practice 4: Confession

Through Jesus's death and resurrection, and by our faith in him, the Holy Spirit gives us power to overcome the sin in our life. Though we will surely struggle with sin for the rest of our lives, the Spirit helps us put it to death. One of the most potent practices for thwarting sin's power, which the Spirit empowers us for, is confessing our sins to one another. It may seem simple or counterintuitive, but bringing our sin into the light by laying it bare before God and people we trust can be the difference between being healed and succumbing to temptation.

In James 5:16, the apostle instructs his readers to "confess [their] sins to one another and pray for one another, so that [they] may be healed." In this exercise, identify a trusted friend or family member to whom you can confess, ask them to hold you accountable, and begin meeting together regularly to obey James's words in this passage. With the help of the Holy Spirit, make it your ambition to trust that James 5:16 is true and that God will deliver you from the sins and temptations that wage war against you. In all this, remember that Jesus has defeated sin once and for all, and he's applied that victory to your account. No matter how much you struggle with sin today, rest assured that one day the power and presence of sin will be vanguished entirely.

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Why Does Jesus Matter? STUDY GUIDE

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