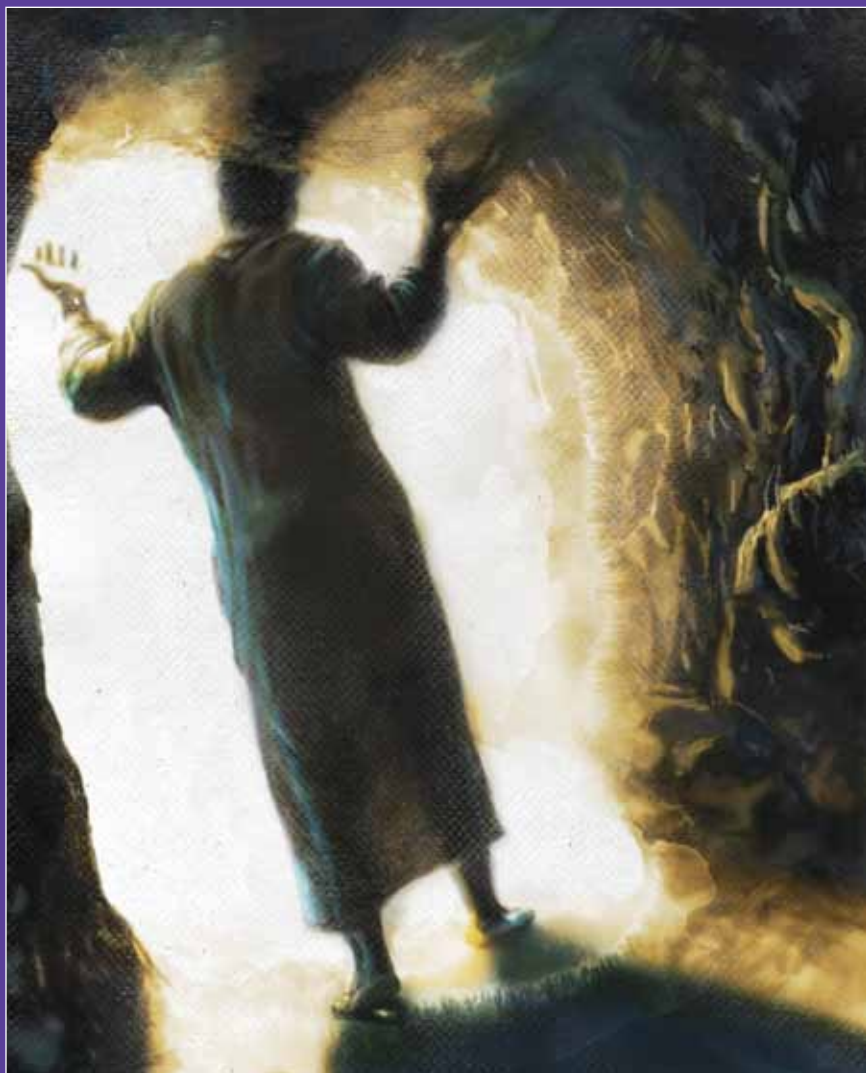


HE IS RISEN



Celebrating Our Eternal Hope



An Easter Devotional





A GIFT FOR

FROM



HE IS RISEN



Celebrating Our Eternal Hope

From the Editors of *Today in the Word*
A ministry of Moody Bible Institute



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GLORY GIVEN TO JESUS CHRIST

DEDICATED TO
The readers of *Today in the Word*





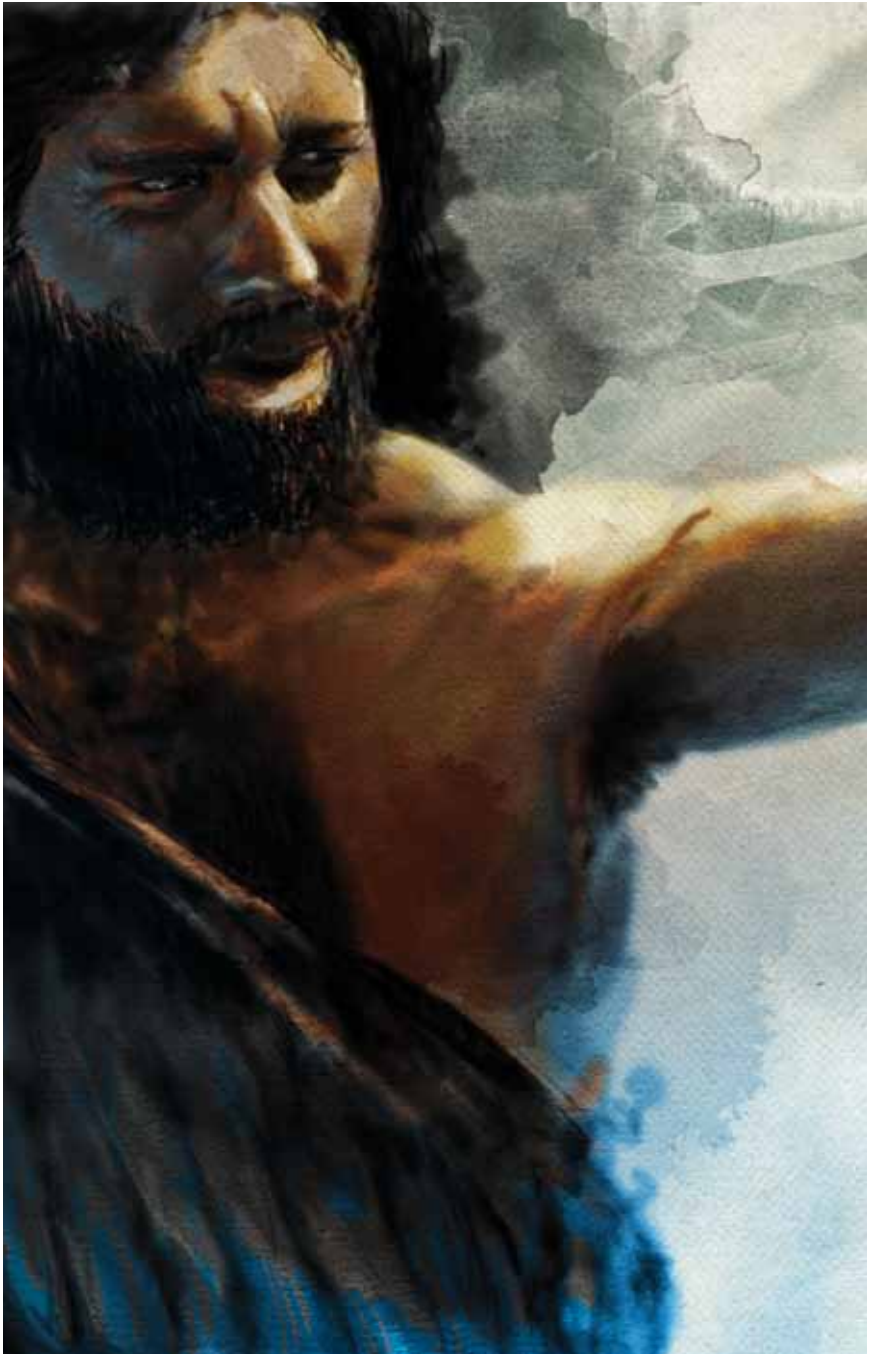
We would like to welcome you to our special Easter devotional, *He Is Risen*.

In addition to your individual Bible study and time with the Lord, we encourage you to use this devotional to share with your family and friends in a time of focusing on the Easter story together. Each illustration and reflection should draw our focus to different aspects of the events leading to Jesus' Resurrection. Jesus took on human flesh to be our substitute. He died on the cross to pay for our sins; otherwise we could not exist before God's holiness. He was buried to remove our sins from God's presence, to allow us to have a place in heaven before God. He was resurrected to defeat death and redeem those who have trusted in Him, so we could spend eternity in heaven with Him. This should make us all want to proclaim, "He is risen!"

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul B. Currie".

Paul B. Currie
Executive Editor
Today in the Word





THE LAMB OF GOD

Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

John 12:13



The old saying warned, “Three times a bridesmaid, never a bride!” This has been the plot point for numerous stories in which a woman continually has to serve as an attendant in someone else’s wedding, while everyone wonders if she’ll ever get her moment in the spotlight as the bride.

John the Baptist served as the forerunner of the Messiah, but when offered the chance to take the spotlight he turned all the attention to Jesus. His powerful preaching had drawn a large crowd, prompting the religious leaders of the day to investigate. He could have launched a revolutionary movement if he had declared himself Messiah. But John didn’t rebel against his role as a witness to the Light (John 1:8). Quoting Isaiah 40:3, he was calling people to repentance because the Lord had come.

Several years later, as Jesus made His way to Jerusalem, the crowds seemed to follow the instruction of John the Baptist to “make straight the way of the Lord” (John 1:23). They greeted Jesus with

palm branches and shouts of “Hosanna!” Perhaps some thought that at last this was the moment when the Messiah would overthrow the Roman occupation and liberate their country. They didn’t realize that Jesus came for something far greater: liberating them from the control and destiny of sin.

Within a week, Jesus was arrested, tried, convicted, and executed. The praise of the crowd turned to jeers. How often do we do this when things don’t go our way? We don’t realize that what we want pales in comparison to what God wants to give us. We want health; God wants to give us eternal life. We want material stuff; God wants to give us spiritual gifts. We want to avoid conflict; God wants to make us more than conquerors.

Before Easter, churches around the world celebrate Palm Sunday, acknowledging that Jesus is King. But we should remember that this day is not the end of the story. Jesus’ suffering and death lay between the Triumphal Entry and His victorious Resurrection. Will we follow Jesus no matter what lies ahead?



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

John the Baptist understood that his role was to point people to Jesus. When John’s followers complained about Jesus’ growing popularity, John replied: “He must become greater; I must become less” (John 3:30). He found joy in giving all the glory to Jesus. May you find joy in serving our risen Savior and pointing others to Him.



POUR OUT AN OFFERING

*For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those
who are being saved and those who are perishing.
2 Corinthians 2:15*



The tradition of writing thank-you notes seems to have fallen on hard times in recent years. With the rise of e-mail, text messages, and social media, sending a thank-you note that is written on paper with a pen and addressed with a stamp is becoming a lost art.

Expressing gratitude is entirely appropriate, but what about when “thank you” doesn’t seem enough? Mary from Bethany had loved sitting at the feet of Jesus to hear His teaching. And then He performed a miracle that changed her family forever: He brought back to life her brother Lazarus after he had been dead for four days (John 11). How could she say thank you to her Lord, Savior, and Friend? Mary responded with extravagant worship. Her jar of nard was an expensive perfume, its value estimated to be equivalent to a year’s wages. She poured the fragrant liquid over Jesus’ feet, going far beyond the typical act of hospitality and foot-washing. She did not worry about whether others would criticize her act of thanks and praise. As the perfume covered Jesus’ feet, her en-

tire house was filled with the sweet smell of generous devotion (John 12).

While Mary was focused on expressing her love and gratitude, Jesus knew the greater significance of her worship. He knew that in a few days, He would be crucified and buried. Mary’s perfume served as His anointing for burial, a tender preparation before the suffering His body would endure.

Judas Iscariot had his own selfish motives for criticizing Mary’s worship. Though he claimed to care about the poor, he really hoped the money from selling the perfume would line his own pockets. Jesus made an important point in response to Judas: He noted that we have an ongoing obligation to help those in need, but we should also take opportunities for extravagant worship. We can’t be so focused on the regular duties, even those we are doing in service to the Lord, to miss the chance to pour out our offerings at His feet when our hearts have been stirred to gratitude at all He has done for us.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, and Mary was deeply grateful. Jesus has offered us eternal life—have we responded by offering Him our best? Our lives are a sweet aroma to God, when we worship and praise our Savior. Like Mary’s house, the space around us will be filled with the sweetness of gratitude when we give thanks to the Lord.



THE COST OF BETRAYAL

*What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?
Matthew 16:26*



In Alexandre Dumas's classic novel, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Edmond Dantes is falsely accused and imprisoned. After he escapes, he acquires an enormous fortune and uses it to seek revenge on all those who participated in plotting his demise. He destroys fortunes and wreaks havoc until he is satisfied that he has made people pay for what they had done to him.

Judas Iscariot also bided his time in order to destroy someone's life, but unlike Dantes, Judas couldn't claim that he was serving justice or repaying the evil that had been done to him. He plotted against Jesus, the sinless Son of God.

From what Scripture tells us, it seems that Judas was motivated by money. He went to the religious leaders and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?" (Matt. 26:15). In exchange for his betrayal, the religious leaders offer him the paltry sum of thirty pieces of silver. During Jesus' last remaining days before His death, one of His own disciples was waiting and

watching for the chance to hand Him over to His enemies.

Judas thought he would receive money for his betrayal. Perhaps he also thought he would receive status with the religious leaders, maybe have some influence now with the powerful. Instead, betraying Jesus cost Judas everything, even his own life. It's not clear if Judas knew that the religious leaders would seek to have Jesus killed, but after Jesus had been condemned to death, Judas was filled with regret and remorse about his actions (Matt. 27:1–5). He tried to return the money, but that didn't change the death sentence that had been pronounced on our Lord.

Although Judas felt bad, he didn't confess his sin to God. He still didn't grasp that Jesus was the person on whom his salvation depended. Rather than confess his sin and shame and guilt, Judas wallowed in it. Instead of trusting Jesus for forgiveness and eternal life, he chose to take his own life. He knew the Hope of the world, but he chose despair.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Judas had personal access to Jesus, but it didn't guarantee a changed heart. He was so close to the greatest gift the world has ever known, but traded it for a small sum of money. We also have personal access to Jesus. Treasure this gift of a relationship with our Savior, with His salvation, comfort, and forgiveness. Jesus offers us hope.



TRANSFORMED BOLDNESS

*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven
given to mankind by which we must be saved.*

Acts 4:12



Peter is one of the most colorful characters in Scripture. When Jesus walked on water, Peter jumped out of the boat too and walked on water toward Jesus. In response to Jesus' transfiguration, he blurted out that the best course of action would be building three tabernacles.

Peter's impetuous, impatient passion also led to his remarkable confession about Jesus: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God" (Matt. 16:16). He declared that he would follow Jesus no matter what, even if everyone else disowned Him. And when Judas led an armed guard into the Garden of Gethsemane to arrest Jesus, Peter leaped into action, taking out his own sword and slicing off the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant (John 18:10).

Of course, Peter did deny that he knew Jesus—in fact, he denied Him three times, just as Jesus had predicted. Unlike Judas, however, Peter was willing to confess his sin and accept the Lord's forgiveness. After His resurrection, the

Lord restored Peter by allowing him three opportunities to declare his love for his Savior.

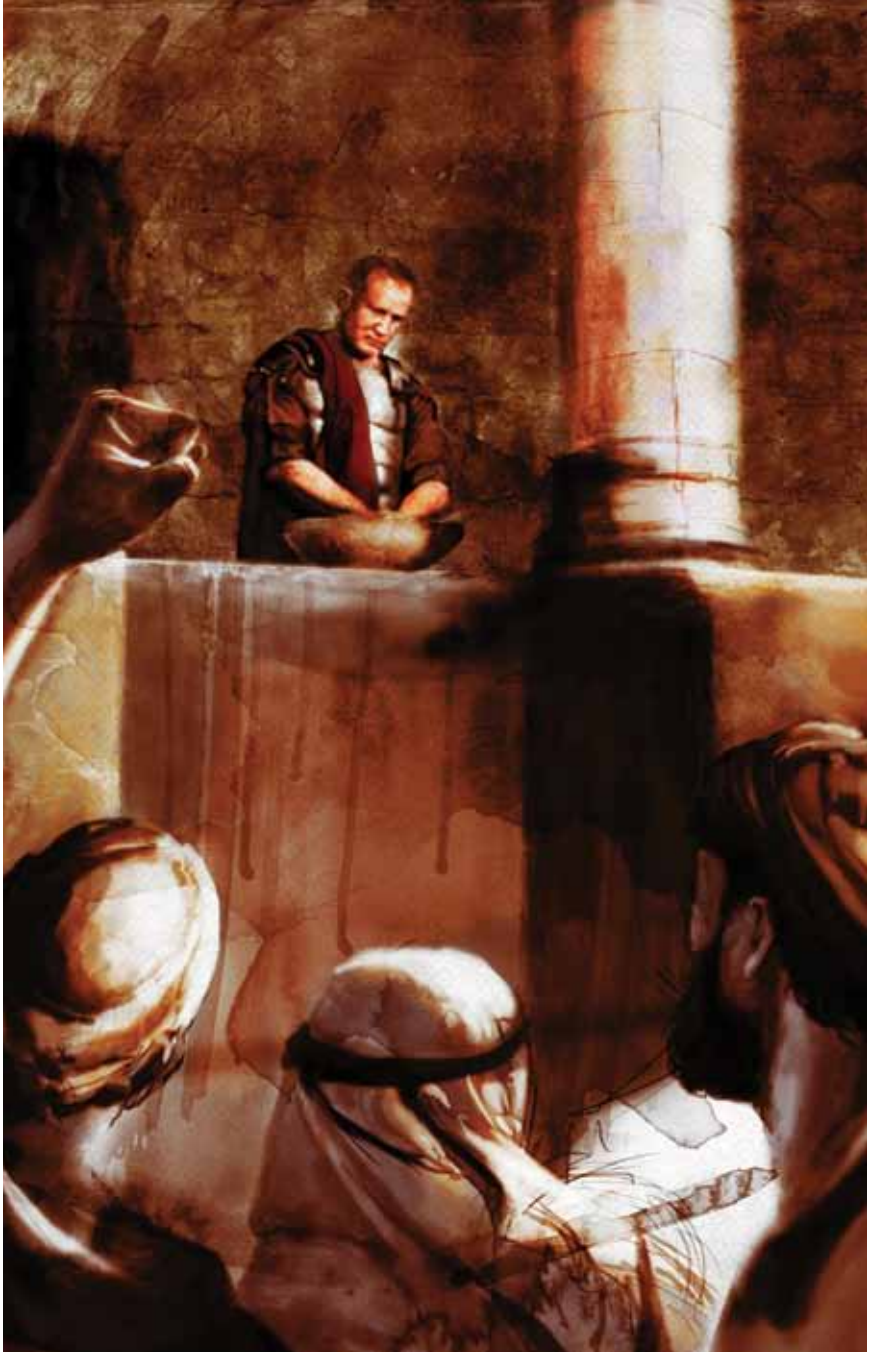
Peter was an uneducated fisherman. He was brash and outspoken. He didn't have a great track record of following through on his promises. He hardly seems like the person who should become the leader of believers after Jesus ascended to heaven! Yet in the book of Acts we witness a miraculous change in Peter. His eagerness to speak is transformed into bold preaching. His confident assertions are transformed into bold testimony for Christ. His willingness to take charge is transformed into bold leadership for the growing number of believers. The man who denied Jesus three times now proclaimed, "There is no other name under heaven . . . by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The power of the resurrected Christ can transform any personality into profitable service for God. If Peter can become a powerful witness for the risen Lord, then any of us can as well.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Do you feel like you can trust the Lord to use all of you—even the quirks of your personality—for His glory? Just as He did with Peter, the Lord delights to transform us into people who testify to His resurrected power. Your life can proclaim the goodness, love, and salvation found in faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.



PASSIVE BUT STILL ACCOUNTABLE

*Don't have anything to do with that innocent man.
Matthew 27:19*



President Harry Truman famously had a sign on his desk: “The buck stops here.” He understood that as president, he bore the responsibility for making hard decisions. One of his most famous decisions was to relieve General Douglas MacArthur from his command in Korea. When MacArthur publicly criticized Truman’s handling of the conflict in Korea, the president believed that he needed to assert the leadership of his office as commander-in-chief. He could not pass the buck on military responsibility to anyone, not even a five-star general.

Pilate did not have the equivalent of Truman’s sign. He had been appointed by the Romans to govern the unruly patch of the empire. Historical evidence indicates that he was disliked by the Jews and distrusted by the Romans. He also squabbled with Herod over control of areas like Galilee. Pilate’s political future depended on keeping order and snuffing out dissent.

When the Jewish religious leaders presented him with Jesus, Pilate wanted to avoid unrest. Though he thought Jesus

was innocent of whatever charges were being alleged against Him, Pilate was not interested in risking his position on behalf of this Galilean. He tried to pass the buck by sending Jesus to Herod, but Herod sent Him back. Then Pilate tried to pass the buck by offering the crowd a choice of who they wanted released at Passover, but they chose Barabbas.

Pilate’s own wife sent him an urgent message not to get involved with Jesus because He was innocent. But Pilate was more interested in covering his own tracks to appear blameless than he was with protecting the innocent Lamb of God. When it became clear that the crowd was growing more agitated, Pilate issued his ultimate pass-the-buck attempt. He washed his hands and declared that he was not responsible for the death of Jesus (Matt. 27:24). Pilate did not realize that legal loopholes and dramatic hand-washing couldn’t make him guiltless of his part in Jesus’ death. No matter how much he tried to be “innocent” of Jesus’ death, he ultimately was a part of it, just as we all were. Jesus came to die because of our sins.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Jesus confronts each of us with a choice of how we will respond to Him. We have heard the truth of who He is and the salvation He offers. He stands before each of us, waiting for us to acknowledge that He is the King, He is the Savior, and He is the Messiah. We can’t pass the buck, we simply need to trust in Him.



BEARING THE CROSS

*Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.
Galatians 6:2*



The Edinburgh Cyrenian Trust was established over forty years ago in Edinburgh, Scotland, as a movement of volunteers to work with the homeless and others on the margins of society. Throughout the United Kingdom, other Cyrenian groups have organized for the purpose of helping people in need. They take their name from Simon of Cyrene, who carried the cross of Jesus.

After being tortured, mocked, and deserted, Jesus was condemned to die by crucifixion, a brutal death penalty enacted by the Romans for the vilest criminals. Part of the sentence included carrying your own cross to the site of execution outside the walls of the town. This was physically exhausting as well as socially humiliating, since everyone could jeer as the condemned man maneuvered the cross through the city streets.

Scripture doesn't tell us exactly why Simon of Cyrene was chosen to carry the cross for Jesus. We also don't know much about Simon himself, but we have some intriguing clues. He was from an

area in what is now Libya. A significant Jewish population lived there, so he might have been a Jew who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover.

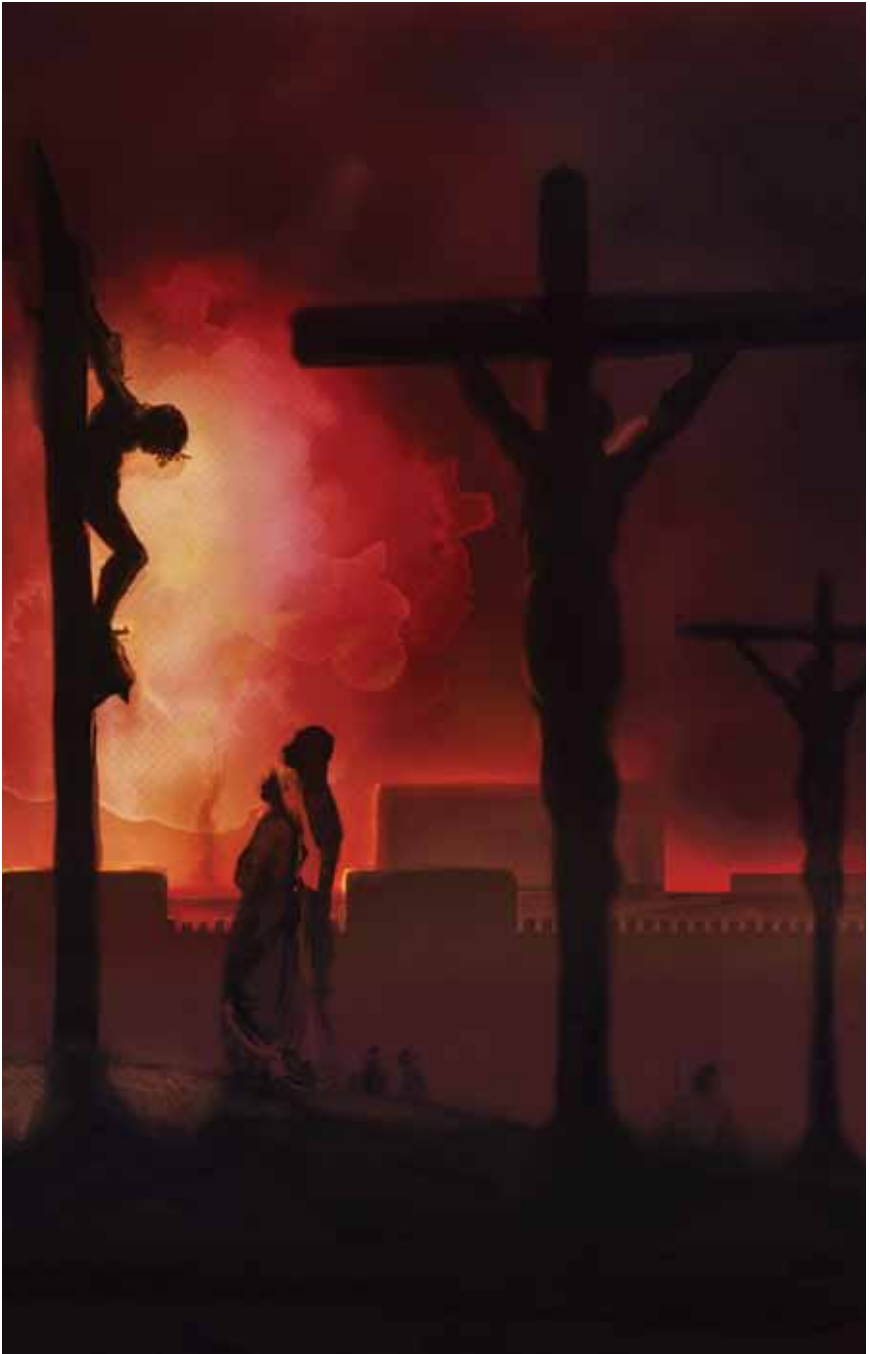
We know that Christian communities in Cyrene existed very soon after Jesus' ascension (Acts 11:20). We also know that Simon wasn't given a choice about whether he wanted to assist Jesus with carrying the cross. He was on his way somewhere else; he was just "passing by" (Mark 15:21). Once the Roman soldiers grabbed him out of the crowd and informed him that he'd be carrying a cross for a condemned man, he likely thought that this was an extreme case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Simon couldn't have imagined that his name would be remembered more than 2,000 years later as the man who assisted Jesus. He had the opportunity to bear the burden quite literally for someone else—in this case, the Savior of the world. We are also called to bear the burdens of others, and Scripture reminds us that in this way we are fulfilling the command of Christ.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Sometimes what feels like an interruption is actually an opportunity for a divine encounter. The Lord may have someone He wants us to serve, or perhaps He has something prepared for us to learn. May we be willing to embrace the divine interruption and serve the Lord in whatever way He leads!



RECOGNIZING SALVATION

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Luke 23:42



One of the great threats to survival in a crisis happens when someone becomes disoriented. People have been reported to walk in circles during a blizzard, unable to find a nearby shelter. Firefighters understand the danger posed by smoke, which can make a simple route to a door or window confusing. Whether it's trying to dig out from an avalanche or find the surface when underwater, the inability to know which direction leads to safety can be deadly.

Sin has the same effect. It turns the world upside down, making it hard for us to recognize the escape route that's available to us. The layers of deceit can distract us from the way of salvation, making us think that we can do it on our own or take a path that doesn't include submitting our lives to Christ. The two criminals who were crucified with Jesus each had the opportunity to accept salvation. One recognized the Truth; the other went to his death without knowing the Way and the Life.

It has been said that in times of duress,

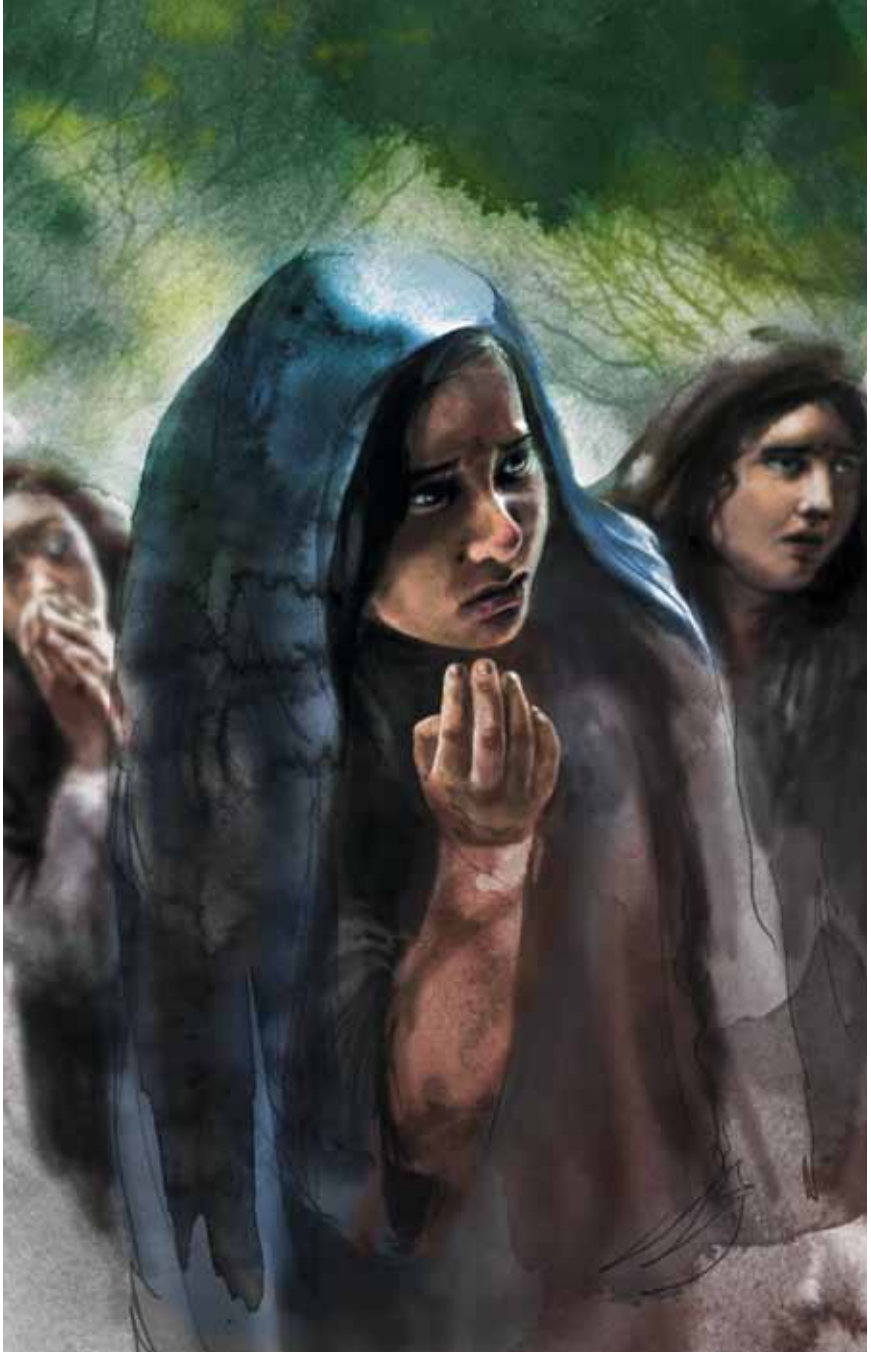
our fundamental tendencies and instincts emerge. As we see the suffering of Jesus in Scripture, He remained without sin. He did not lash out at His enemies. He did not despise the people around Him, not even these two criminals. He extended compassion and salvation to someone who called on His name. One of the criminals on the cross decided to join the crowd and mock Jesus. This criminal thought rescue might come if Jesus would get them all down off their crosses. The other criminal, though, recognized a key truth: he was guilty, and Jesus was innocent. Although he would die on a cross because of his criminal past, Jesus promised him that he would live in eternity with the Lord (Luke 23:39-43).

In a world confused by sin, this criminal had recognized that salvation was only possible through Jesus the Messiah, the compassionate Savior. At the moment when Jesus was offering Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, He also extended forgiveness and eternal life to a condemned criminal who called on His name.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Jesus had time for this criminal in the midst of His immense physical and spiritual suffering. Are we extending compassion to those who are searching for truth, those who interrupt our busy schedules, our plans, and our agendas? May we always be willing to share the good news about salvation in Jesus.



I HAVE SEEN THE LORD!

“Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.” . . . So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

Matthew 28:5–8



Few people have known a pain like what Mary Magdalene experienced. She was alienated physically, mentally, and spiritually from friendship, worship, and community because of the oppression of seven demons. Then one day, everything in her life changed forever: she encountered Jesus, and He set her free. Mary responded by devoting her life to Christ. Along with several other women who had been physically and spiritually healed, she traveled with Jesus and the disciples, supporting their ministry financially (Luke 8:1–3).

When Jesus was crucified, these women were the ones who remained faithfully at His side. Peter had denied Him, and the other disciples were in hiding, but these women wept and mourned at the cross. Mary Magdalene watched with grief and horror as her Savior and Deliverer hung on a cross. Jesus, who had cast out demons and healed the sick and restored her to life, was dead.

Even this heart-rending loss didn't prevent the women from serving the Lord.

They prepared the spices and oils to anoint His body and went to the tomb. What tremendous courage to risk hostile Roman guards to show their love for Jesus in this practical way!

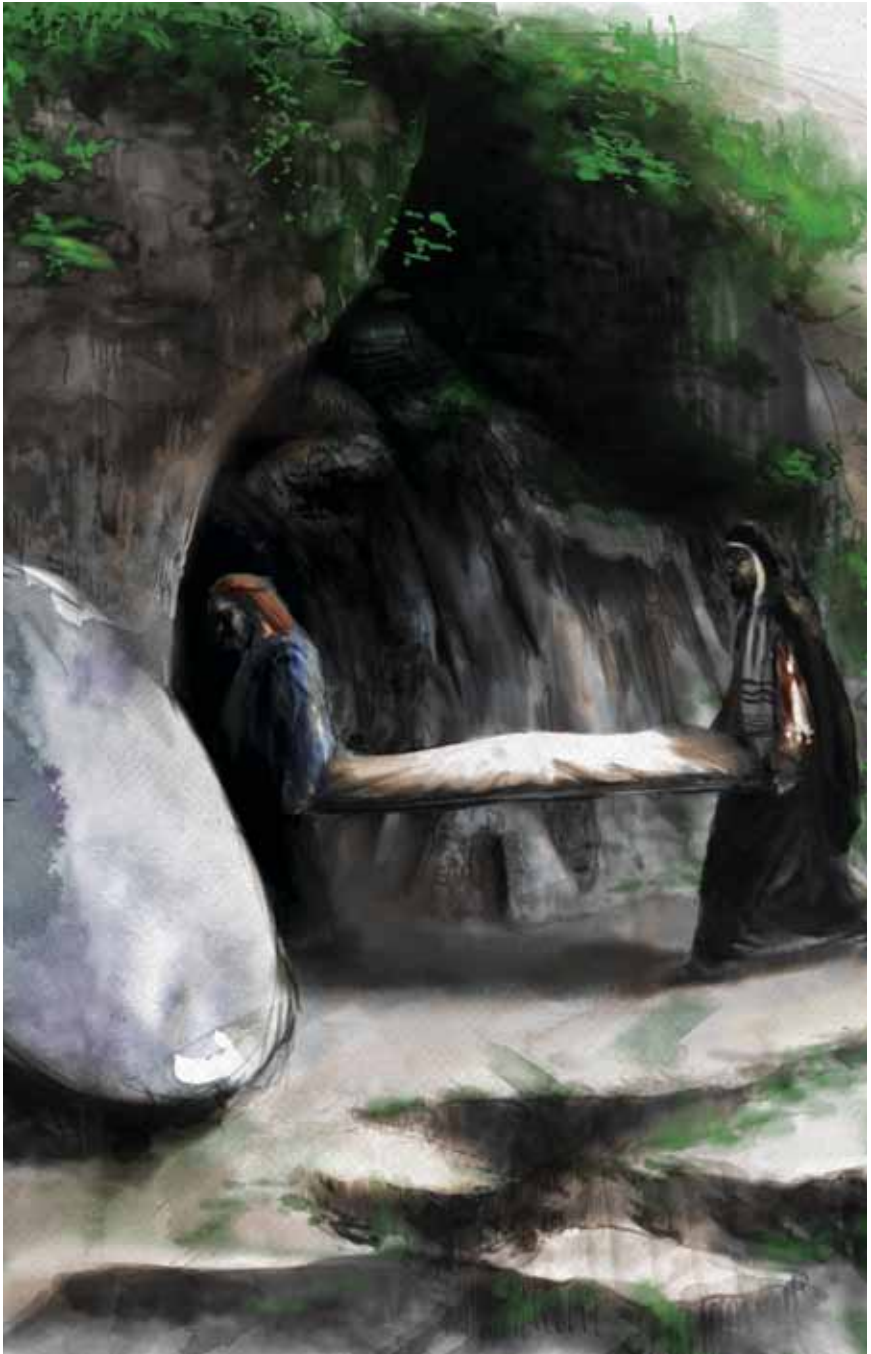
The Gospel of John focuses on Mary Magdalene's experience at the tomb of Jesus. It captures her anguish; when she saw that the body of her Lord was gone, she broke down in tears. When asked why she was crying, she turned to the man she thought was the gardener and begged to retrieve the body of Jesus. She was committed to performing this last act of service and devotion. And then one of the most tender words in Scripture was uttered: "Mary" (John 20:16). It was Jesus. He was alive. And He called her by name.

In obedience to Jesus, Mary ran to tell the disciples the amazing news. "I have seen the Lord!" Jesus was not dead—He was alive again! Once more He had turned her suffering into joy. Instead of anointing a dead man, she could testify about a resurrected Savior. Jesus had risen, and that changed everything.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

When Mary Magdalene encountered Jesus, her life changed forever. Do we always grasp the depths of the way that Jesus and His resurrection have transformed our lives? We testify to the saving power of God who takes death and suffering and redeems it into eternal life and joy. He knows our names and tenderly calls us. He is risen!



BORN AGAIN

Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.
John 3:3



The adage proclaims, “Money can’t buy happiness.” Whether or not money is connected to happiness (however it’s defined), money certainly cannot buy spiritual peace, lasting contentment, or profound love. Money can’t buy eternal life or a relationship with God. In fact, sometimes the feeling of self-sufficiency that accompanies wealth can be a barrier to acknowledging our need of God and our dependence on Jesus Christ for salvation.

Thankfully, the way of salvation is open to all—rich and poor, educated or unschooled—through trusting in the person and work of Jesus as the only way to access the salvation and forgiveness of God. Joseph of Arimathea was in the most elite economic and religious circles. He was wealthy and also a member of the highest ruling council of religious leaders. Despite all his material and social advantages, though, Joseph recognized that the way to the kingdom of God came through Jesus (Luke 23:51). Joseph asked Pilate for permis-

sion to bury the body of Jesus. Nicodemus, a fellow religious leader who had long been curious about Jesus, assisted him by bringing 75 pounds of spices, a remarkable display of generosity (John 19:39). They cared for the body of our Lord, providing the linen graveclothes and a tomb for Him to be buried in keeping with the requirements of the Jewish law.

Notice the courage this required from Joseph of Arimathea. The religious leaders had accused Jesus of blasphemy and condemned Him to die. Joseph was acknowledging that he believed Jesus was the Messiah. He had to publicly request the body from Pilate, so now the political leadership also knew that he followed the King of the Jews. He and Nicodemus also had to use their own wealth to prepare the body for burial.

Joseph risked his status, position, power, and personal fortune to serve Jesus. He valued the kingdom of God more than his wealth, and was willing to be born again in order to have eternal life.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

God welcomes everyone to faith in Jesus Christ. Joseph of Arimathea offers us an encouraging example of someone who valued eternity more than earthly wealth. He used his resources to serve the Lord, providing a ministry that others could not.



MONEY AND LIES

*The soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed.
Matthew 28:15*



A group of children in first grade were playing a game: “What would you do with \$100?” Some of their answers: build a princess castle, fly to the moon, and buy a stuffed animal collection. We may chuckle at the way children have no concept of the value of \$100, yet adults still struggle with knowing the spiritual value of our resources. Ask yourself: what would you do for \$1 million?

An even more challenging question is what would you do to protect yourself from embarrassment? This question confronted the guards who had watched Jesus’ tomb. They had been assigned to guard a dead man—and now He was gone. Scripture indicates that the chief priests feared that something might happen with Jesus’ body; they told Pilate that they needed to deploy guards because they thought Jesus’ disciples might steal away the corpse. Pilate agreed to authorize a sentry around the tomb (Matt. 27:65).

The religious leaders were correct to worry that something might happen

to Jesus’ body, but they were wrong to think that any number of Roman guards would prevent His body from leaving the tomb. In the face of an earthquake and an angel, the terrified guards “became like dead men” (Matt. 28:4). Jesus had been miraculously resurrected, no-body could keep Him in the grave.

Confronted with the evidence of the missing body, the guards and the religious leaders had a choice. They could believe Jesus’ claims to be raised from the dead or they could concoct a lie to save themselves from embarrassment. They decided to pay the guards to spread a story that really should have been even more embarrassing to their dignity—that the disciples had somehow out-manuevered sleeping Roman soldiers to capture the body.

The guards at the tomb had first-hand knowledge that something miraculous had happened to Jesus, yet they chose to take the money and lie rather than deal with the implications of Jesus’ resurrection. They responded with no sense of spiritual priorities.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

You know about the resurrection of Jesus. You have seen its power. Will you acknowledge the power of Christ’s resurrection in your life, or will you value other things like money, prestige, or your own desire to be in charge? Will you testify to the life-changing resurrection of Jesus?



FROM DOUBT TO PRAISE

I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!

Mark 9:24



Missouri has been called the “Show Me State.” In 1899, U.S. Congressman Willard Vandiver declared, “I come from a state that raises corn and cotton . . . and frothy eloquence neither convinces nor satisfies me. I am from Missouri. You have got to show me.” Residents of the state have prized their reputation for demanding evidence, not fanciful tales.

Thomas would have made a good resident of Missouri. Before we are too hard on Thomas, though, let’s remember what he had been through. He had given up everything to follow Jesus—and then he had seen Jesus die a horrific death on a Roman cross. He knew nails had pierced the hands and feet of Jesus. He knew that a spear had pierced through the side of Jesus’ body. Thomas knew that people don’t recover from this kind of physical trauma to get up and walk around a few days later.

Thomas needed evidence. And here is the beauty and grace in the story of Thomas—God was gentle with Thomas and provided him what he needed to

believe and be restored to Jesus. When he heard the other disciples proclaiming that they had seen Jesus, Thomas couldn’t overcome his sorrow and skepticism, his inability to believe. He stated: “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into his side, I will not believe” (John 20:25). Thomas’ faith was not extinguished, but it was faltering. In this situation of struggling faith, Jesus appeared to Thomas.

God knows our struggles. He knows our weaknesses. And He shows up. When Thomas joined the other disciples, Jesus appeared and spoke directly to Thomas, offering him the evidence he requested. He gave Thomas the chance to touch and feel with his hands what his heart and mind could not comprehend—that Jesus was indeed alive.

Thomas realized that in the presence of Jesus, no further evidence was necessary. He thought he needed to handle the wounds; he discovered that he needed to hear the voice of Jesus. His doubt turned to praise: “My Lord and my God!”



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Jesus told Thomas, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29). We have the presence of God with us through the Holy Spirit. We serve the same God as Thomas, a God who is gracious, a God who understands our struggles, a God who still shows up. This is a God we can trust.



BIBLE STUDY WITH JESUS

*He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.
Luke 24:27*



Many people love to read books by and attend conferences with their favorite preachers and Bible teachers. Founder's Week at Moody Bible Institute draws thousands each year who want to soak up biblical teaching; books and Bible studies by Bible teachers and preachers sell thousands of copies every year. As wonderful as their teaching is, can you imagine having a small group Bible study with Jesus Himself—in person?

The two men walking on the road to Emmaus were profoundly discouraged about the death of Jesus (Luke 24:17–22). They had hoped that He was the Messiah, the Redeemer—and He had been killed three days earlier. They had heard the reports of the women, announcing that the body was gone and Jesus was alive, but they didn't seem to know whether to believe this account.

When a stranger appeared with them on the road, they told the story of what had happened, not knowing it was Jesus. And as they recounted the events—the account of His own recent suffering and

death—they got the end of the story wrong! It would be like hearing someone tell you the story of your life, but then they mess up the ending.

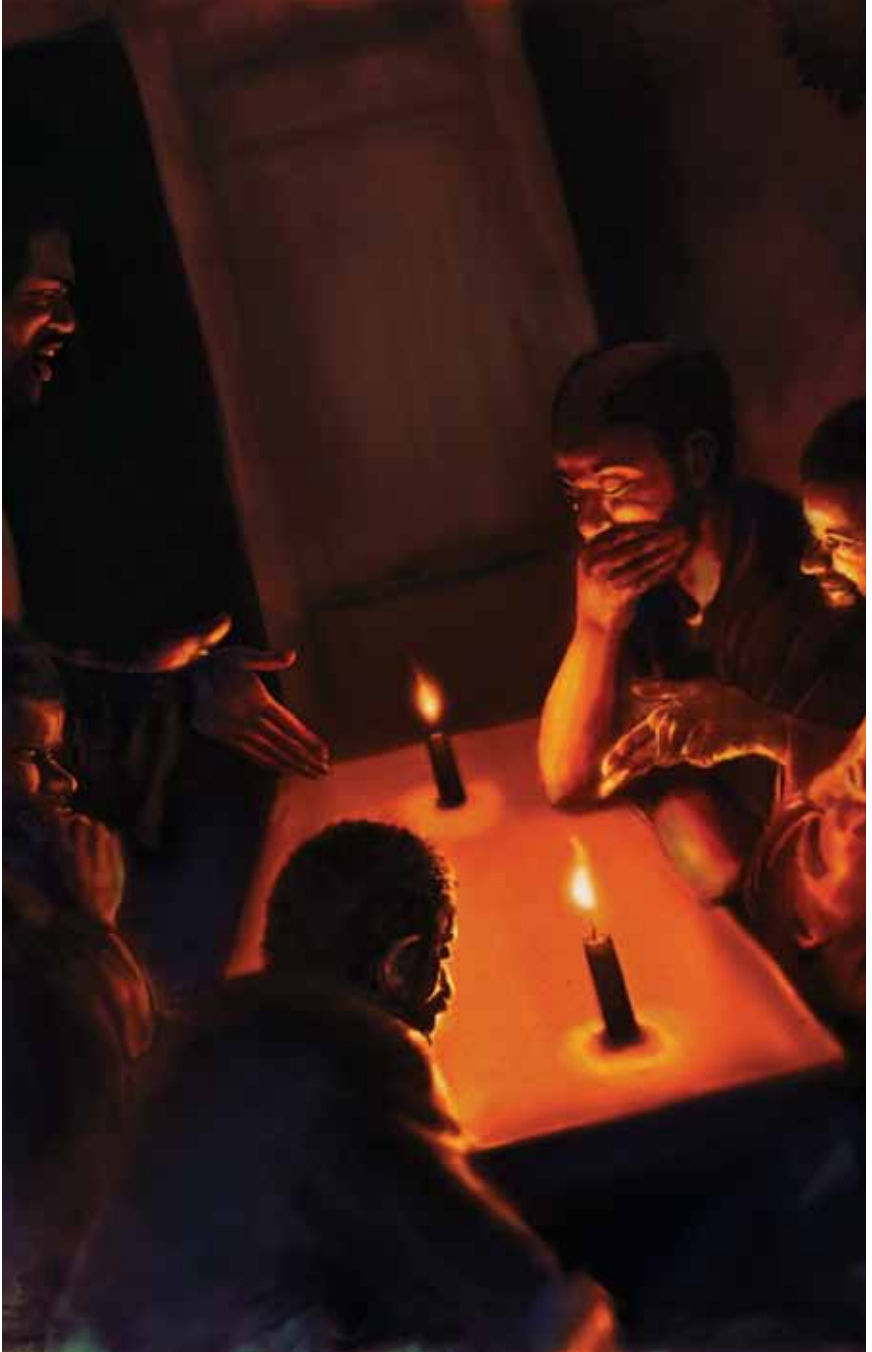
Jesus didn't let them persist in their ignorance. As they walked the seven miles, He began at the beginning of Scripture and explained how the Word of God testified about Him, the true and living Word. They experienced hearing the Bible explained by the very Author Himself. Jesus told the story, and corrected their ending: “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all the nations” (Luke 24:46–47).

The two men realized it was Jesus, and immediately returned the seven miles back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples what had happened. After they gathered together, Jesus appeared again to explain the Scriptures further. The Word of God and the Son of God testify about each other, so that our spiritual eyes are opened to recognize Jesus.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

When we first see the men on the road to Emmaus, they are despondent. By the end of Luke 24, they were filled with great joy, praising God continually. This should encourage us in our study of Scripture, and our prayer should be in all our study that we will see the risen Lord in the pages of His Word.



POWER OF THE SPIRIT

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses.

Acts 1:8



The first time D. L. Moody tried to join a church, his application was rejected. His Sunday school teacher, Edward Kimball, later stated, “I can truly say, and in saying it I magnify the infinite grace of God as bestowed upon him, that I have seen few persons whose minds were spiritually darker than was his when he came into my Sunday school class.” Of course, Moody went on to become one of the most influential evangelists of the nineteenth century, preaching to thousands and leaving a legacy of Christian ministry that remains today through Moody Bible Institute, Moody Radio, Moody Theological Seminary, and Moody Publishers.

The disciples showed a similar lack of promise. Before Jesus’ death, they were petty, argumentative, jealous, impetuous, and clueless. After Jesus’ death, they were fearful and doubtful. Indeed, the disciples represent the range of human behaviors and reactions. But see what happens to the disciples after Jesus’ resurrection! This unlikely group of fishermen, tax collectors, and political radi-

cals became bold witnesses for the gospel of salvation made possible through the death and resurrection of Christ.

Jesus had promised them that this would happen. After His ascension, the disciples gathered together faithfully for prayer and worship. At Pentecost, the feast celebrated fifty days after Passover, the Holy Spirit filled the group of disciples and worshipers. They now had the power of God indwelling and empowering them, and they began to proclaim the gospel. During Peter’s first sermon, Scripture says that three thousand people came to saving faith (Acts 2:41).

As Jesus had commanded, the disciples preached in Jerusalem and then throughout the region. Philip’s witness led to the conversion of an Ethiopian official (Acts 8:26). Church tradition has asserted that Thomas went to India to spread the gospel. Peter realized that the Gentiles were welcome into God’s kingdom when the Lord instructed him to baptize Cornelius (Acts 10). The disciples were filled with power and passion to share the truth with the world.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Perhaps you are not the most talented, the wealthiest, or the best connected person. God still wants to use you! He takes people who are filled with fear, doubt, or jealousy and transforms us by His Spirit into powerful witnesses of the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. The Lord has a job for you in this world, and He will equip you.



OUR RESPONSE TO JESUS' RESURRECTION

*Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried,
that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

1 Corinthians 15:3–4



When Easter Sunday is over, our regular routine resumes; school, work, and other activities dominate our time. Only a week or two later, it can feel like Easter has become a distant memory, a holiday we'll think about again next year.

This would be a tragic mistake. The resurrection of Jesus should be fundamental for our lives. The apostle Paul devotes a portion of his letter to the Corinthians explaining why Jesus' resurrection matters for us. For one, if Jesus is not alive, then we believe a lie (1 Cor. 15:17). While Jesus' death was necessary for our salvation, it was not sufficient—only through His resurrection are we promised a relationship and eternal life with God. Many people have died throughout history, but only One was raised from the dead into an incorruptible body. Only Jesus destroyed the power of death over our existence.

Second, the resurrection of Jesus provides the assurance for our hope that we, too, will be freed from the power of sin and death forever when we are resur-

rected (1 Cor. 15:52). Jesus' resurrection ensures the full resurrection for all those who believe in Him. It is the proof that God keeps His promises. If God raised Jesus, then we know that He will be faithful to raise us up.

Third, Jesus' resurrection means that we can live for Him with hope and power. Easter is not just about what happened in the past with Jesus' resurrection and what will happen in the future with our own resurrection. Scripture repeatedly connects His resurrection with God's power (Acts 4:33; Rom. 1:4; Phil. 3:10). That means that, no matter what trials and difficulties we're going through, our daily lives can be filled with joy and boldness because of Jesus' resurrection. We can experience the foretaste of resurrection power today.

Here we see the Trinity at work in our lives. God the Father raised Jesus from the dead, and fills us with the power of the Holy Spirit to live for Him. Jesus is risen! Hallelujah! Our lives are changed, both today and forever.



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

He is risen! How will you respond, today and throughout the year? The disciples provide us with a good example. After they saw the risen Lord, they gathered together in prayer, praise, and worship. Then they shared the good news about Jesus with others. These are ways that we can live in the power of the resurrection, too.

HOW TO KNOW CHRIST

*The Bible, as God's Word, proclaims how a person
can come into a living and vital relationship
with Jesus Christ.*



Acknowledge you are a sinner.

While some may think they are “good people,” everyone has committed sin. *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).*

Recognize you deserve death.

Because God is holy, He must judge sin. The penalty for sin is eternal separation from God. *“For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).*

Understand Christ died for your sins.

The good news of the Bible is that God graciously supplied a substitute for the penalty you deserve. *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).*

Put your trust in Christ as your Savior.

God invites you to come into a relationship with Him through faith in Christ's death on your behalf. *“For by grace you have been saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not a result of works, that no one should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

If you put your faith alone in Christ alone, you will come into a loving and eternal relationship with Christ. *“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13).*

If you have made this decision and if you would like to talk with someone, we invite you to call 1-888-NEED-HIM. For more information, please visit www.moodyministries.net/knowningChrist.



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