Small Group Guide: Living in the Reality of the Resurrection

Based on Mark 16:1-8

Overview

This guide is designed to help your group move beyond simply affirming the resurrection as a historical event and into a deeper, more personal engagement with what it means to live in the ongoing reality of a risen Jesus. The central question driving this discussion is: What does it mean to live in the reality of the resurrection?

Key Takeaways

1. Relationship with Jesus often goes before understanding. The women who went to the tomb did not know what they would find. They moved toward the darkness out of love and relationship, not theological clarity. Knowing Jesus can carry us into places where our understanding has not yet caught up.

2. The resurrection is not only a past event or a future promise -- it is a present, active reality. Jesus is not a distant figure who secured salvation and stepped back. He is alive, present, and actively at work in the ordinary moments of everyday life.

3. There is a gap between hearing the good news and receiving it. Just as the women fled in fear after hearing the announcement of the resurrection, we can intellectually affirm the resurrection while remaining functionally disconnected from its power in our daily lives.

4. The power of the resurrection works in two directions. Inward: Jesus is at work transforming the places in our own lives marked by death, shame, fear, and pain. Outward: That same resurrection life overflows into the world around us, making us participants in new creation.

5. There is no place in your story beyond the reach of Jesus. His presence was not absent in your hardest moments. Because he is risen, no part of your story is beyond the reach of his restorative work.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. When you hear the word "resurrection," what is your first instinct -- to think of it as something that happened in history, something you are waiting for in the future, or something that is active in your life right now? What has shaped that instinct?
2. The sermon opened with this question: What does it mean to live in the reality of the resurrection? Before diving deeper, how would you have answered that question before hearing this message?

Going Deeper

3. The women who went to the tomb set out to do a heartbreaking, ordinary task without a clear plan for how they would move the stone. The sermon described this as relationship going before understanding. Can you think of a time in your own life when you moved toward something hard out of love or faithfulness, even without knowing how it would work out?
4. The sermon drew a distinction between believing in the resurrection and knowing the risen Jesus. In your own words, what is the difference between those two things? What does that distinction look like practically in daily life?
5. The sermon described several signs that we may have tuned our hearts away from resurrection life -- things like a scarcity mindset, hoarding grace, clinging to unforgiveness, or bitterness. Which of these, if any, resonates with you as an area where you sense Jesus wants to do a new work? You are not required to share specifics -- even naming the category is a meaningful starting point.
6. The sermon made this statement: "Sometimes we would much rather have a Jesus who guarantees our future than a Jesus who is highly invested in our present." Why do you think it can feel more comfortable to keep Jesus at arm's length from our everyday lives? What makes his present involvement feel intimidating?

7. Reflecting on the idea that Jesus was present even in the hardest or most painful moments of your story -- does that feel true to you right now, or is it something you are still working to believe? What makes it easy or difficult to receive that truth?

Applying the Message

8. The sermon described two dimensions of resurrection power: the power of the resurrection in me and the power of the resurrection around me. Which of these two feels more real or accessible to you right now? Which feels more distant? Why?
9. The sermon said that resurrection life in us naturally overflows into the people around us -- that transformed scarcity becomes generosity, transformed bitterness becomes forgiveness, transformed shame becomes grace extended to others. Where do you see that overflow happening in your life? Where do you sense it is still being formed?
10. Paul wrote in Philippians 3 that his goal was to know Jesus and the power of his resurrection, not to achieve or earn his way through. What would it look like for you, in the coming week, to orient your effort toward knowing Jesus rather than managing your own life? What is one concrete, ordinary moment where you could practice that?

Practical Applications

This week, try one or more of the following:

- Set aside five to ten minutes of quiet at the start or end of a day. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you one place in your life -- past or present -- where you have assumed Jesus was absent. Sit with that place and ask the simple question the sermon modeled: "Even there, Lord?"
- Identify one symptom of spiritual misalignment in your life -- bitterness, scarcity thinking, unforgiveness, or another red flag the sermon named. Rather than treating it as something to be embarrassed about, bring it to Jesus as what the sermon called "a holy invitation." Ask him specifically to bring resurrection life into that place.

- Pay attention this week to one ordinary moment -- a commute, a meal, a difficult conversation -- and practice asking: "What might Jesus be doing here?" Notice what shifts when you approach the mundane with that question.
- Share with one person -- a friend, a spouse, a small group member -- one place in your story where you are beginning to believe Jesus was present even when it did not feel like it. Saying it out loud has a way of making it more real.

Closing Prayer Prompt

Close your group time by returning to the posture of prayer the sermon modeled. Invite group members to sit quietly for a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal one place where Jesus is actively at work in their lives right now -- not a place of failure or shame necessarily, but simply a place of ongoing, present transformation. After a moment of quiet, invite anyone who is willing to share one word or phrase that came to mind. Close by praying together, thanking Jesus for his present, active, resurrection life at work in each person in the room.