

Are You A Follower

Connect Group Guide - 4.5.26

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to open hearts and minds to the truth of the resurrection and its power to transform lives today.

Icebreaker

Share a story: Tell about a time when you believed something without seeing it firsthand (like a historical event or a place you hadn't visited yet). What convinced you it was true?

Key Scripture References

- 1 Corinthians 15:14-17
- Romans 10:9-10
- John 14:6

Message Overview

At the center of Resurrection Sunday is a truth that demands a response: the tomb is empty, and because it is, everything changes. This is not tradition or wishful thinking but reality. The tomb was truly empty, hundreds witnessed Jesus alive, fearful disciples became bold witnesses, and the very city that condemned Him was shaken by His resurrection power. This is the foundation of our faith. The resurrection declares that Jesus is not one option among many but the only way to God, and it proves that death does not have the final word for those who believe. It confronts each of us with a decision because neutrality is not an option when it comes to Jesus. The same love that held Him on the cross now intercedes for us, and because He is alive, forgiveness is available. When we confess Him as Lord and believe God raised Him from the dead, our past is washed clean, guilt is removed, shame is broken, and we are made new. The resurrection is not just about what happened two thousand years ago, it is about what can happen in our lives today when we stop being fans and become true followers.

Key Takeaways

1. The Evidence for the Resurrection

- The tomb was empty (even Jesus' enemies admitted this)
- Over 500 witnesses saw Jesus alive after His death
- The disciples were transformed from fearful to fearless
- The city that crucified Jesus was turned upside down by the gospel

2. Four Truths About the Resurrection

1. The resurrection proved Jesus is the only way to God
2. The resurrection means death is not the end
3. The resurrection means you cannot stay neutral
4. The resurrection gives you the opportunity to be saved today

3. The Central Question

- Every person must answer: **What will you do with Jesus?**

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

1. **Pastor Mike shared four reasons he believes Jesus is alive.** Which of these resonates most with you and why?
 - The empty tomb
 - The 500+ witnesses
 - The transformation of the disciples
 - The transformation of the city
2. **Read John 14:6.** Why do you think the claim that Jesus is "the only way" is so offensive to modern culture? How do you respond when someone challenges this?
3. **The message stated, "For the believer, the grave isn't a prison, it's a doorway."** How does this perspective change the way we view death and suffering?

Going Deeper

4. **Discuss the difference between being a "fan" of Jesus versus a "follower" of Jesus.** What are the practical differences in daily life?
5. **Pastor Mike said, "If you delay Jesus, you're really rejecting Him."** Why is spiritual procrastination so dangerous? What excuses do people (or we ourselves) commonly use?
6. **The Mila story illustrated that we're born sinners.** How does understanding our sinful nature help us appreciate grace more fully?
7. **Romans 10:9 says if we confess and believe, we "will be saved" (not "might be").** How does this certainty impact your daily confidence as a believer?

Personal Reflection

8. **Pastor shared that he's "met Jesus" through personal relationship.** How would you describe your own experience of knowing Jesus? Can you point to specific ways He's been real to you?
9. **"Obedience is what draws the presence in."** What area of obedience is God currently calling you toward? What's holding you back?
10. **The courtroom illustration showed Jesus taking our place.** When did this truth first become real to you personally? How does it affect you today?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one or more of these practical steps to take this week:

For Those Exploring Faith:

- Write down honest questions you have about Jesus and the resurrection
- Ask a trusted Christian friend to share their testimony
- Read one of the Gospel accounts of the resurrection (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, or John 20-21)

For Believers:

- **Move from fan to follower:** Identify one area where you've been a "fan" rather than a follower. What specific step of obedience is God asking you to take?
- **Share your story:** Tell at least one person this week about what Jesus has done in your life
- **Practice daily surrender:** Each morning this week, pray, "Jesus, help me die to myself and follow You today"

For Everyone:

- **Memorize Romans 10:9** - "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."
- **Worship intentionally:** Set aside time to sing or pray to Jesus, even if no one else is around (like the pastor's example)

Leader Notes

- Be sensitive to people who may be carrying deep shame or feeling unworthy
- Emphasize that this is a safe space where everyone has a seat at the table
- Consider having communion together as a group if appropriate
- Follow up during the week with anyone who shared something particularly vulnerable

Prayer Requests & Closing