

## FOLLOWING JESUS: EASTER MATTERS

### 1. **JESUS IS DEAD AND THE PEOPLE ARE IN SHOCK.**

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. (Mark 16:1)

And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. <sup>3</sup> And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" <sup>4</sup> And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. (Mark 16:2-4)

### 2. **JESUS' CLOSEST FOLLOWERS DIDN'T ASSUME JESUS' RESSURECTION, BUT THAT THE BODY WAS STOLEN.**

So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." (John 20:2)

but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. (Luke 24:11)

### 3. **IF YOU ARE SKEPTICAL OF JESUS' RESSURECTION THEN YOU ARE IN GOOD COMPANY.**

But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened. (Luke 24:12)

### 4. **THEY DOCUMENTED THEIR OWN DISBELIEF.**

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." (John 20:19)

But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. <sup>38</sup> And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?" (Luke 24:37-38)

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." (Luke 24:44)

### 5. **THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CREATED CHRISTIANITY AND LAUNCHED THE CHURCH.**

You are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:48)

### 6. **WE BELIEVE BECAUSE OF THE EYEWITNESS TESTIMONIES.**

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, James, Paul and many more.

### 7. **THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS AN EXTRAORDINARY EVENT WITH PROFOUND IMPLICATIONS.**

#### **MEMORY VERSE**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (1 Peter 1:3)

to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, (1 Peter 1:4)

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, (1 Peter 1:6)

but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. (1 Peter 1:19)

- A. WE KNOW GOD IS FOR US, BECAUSE JESUS DIED FOR US, NOT BECAUSE THINGS ALWAYS WORK OUT FOR US.
- B. GOD IS PERSONAL.
- C. SUFFERING IS NOT EVIDENCE OF GOD'S ABSENCE.
- D. HEAVEN IS REAL.
- E. FORGIVENESS IS AVAILABLE.
- F. YOU ARE LOVED BY GOD.

#### GOING DEEPER

1. Talk about your memories of Easter as a child. What meaning was attached to Jesus' death for you then?
2. Read Luke 24:1-12. What was Jesus' closest followers' initial response to the empty tomb? Do you identify with the disciples' doubts about the resurrection? How does their subsequent belief affect the credibility of their testimonies?
3. Read 1 Peter 1:3-9. Have you experienced pain or suffering that makes it difficult for you to have faith?
4. Do you know someone who has experienced pain or suffering but still has enduring faith? If you were to ask them how or why, how do you think they would respond?