



Overview:

One of the greatest proofs that Jesus rose from the dead is how individuals who knew him gave testimony of his resurrection by their words and by their transformed lives.

Lessons:

1. The Shocking Testimony of the Women at the Tomb
2. The Imperfect Journey of Doubting Thomas
3. How Peter's Failure Proves the Resurrection
4. How Paul Lost His Religion and Found Jesus



THE SHOCKING TESTIMONY OF THE WOMEN AT THE TOMB

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TALKING POINTS

The testimony of the women at the tomb is proof that Jesus really did rise from the dead and that his heart is for everyone – even the outsiders.

- During his ministry, _____ sought the "_____"- the overlooked and marginalized in his world. Matthew 8:2-3, Mark 2:15-16
- _____ were "outsiders" in Jesus' day, yet they're in the middle of the resurrection story. Luke 8:1-3, Luke 24:1-11
- If the resurrection story had been made up, it would not have been put in the mouths of women. The _____ of the women at the tomb is proof that Jesus really did rise from the dead and that his heart is for everyone-even the outsiders.

DISCUSSION

1. *Share a time you felt like an outsider. How did that experience impact you? How have you been guilty of treating others as outsiders?*
2. *Read Matthew 8:2-3. Why do you think Jesus chose to touch the leper when he healed him? What is Jesus modeling for us in this story?*
3. *Read Mark 2:15-16. Why did Jesus choose to spend his time with sinners instead of religious leaders? How can churches violate this example today? Have you ever felt like an outsider at church? Explain.*
4. *Read Luke 24:1-11. Why do you think it was the women who went to the tomb that morning? What does it reveal about the disciples that they didn't?*
5. *What are your thoughts about the resurrection story? What questions do you have?*
6. *Read Romans 6:5-11. Identify all that this passage says about Jesus and us. Why does Jesus' death and resurrection matter to us? Have you put your trust in Jesus?*

THE IMPERFECT JOURNEY OF DOUBTING THOMAS

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TALKING POINTS

The apostle Thomas appears several times in the Gospel of John, and each time we learn something about what an imperfect journey toward faith looks like.

- Like many of us, _____ started with zeal. He was willing to die for his faith. John 11:16
- Somewhere along the way Thomas got _____. Though he had been walking with Jesus, he didn't fully get who he was. John 14:5-7
- After the death of Jesus, Thomas became a _____. He needed proof of life, not just a second-hand testimony. John 20:25

When Thomas encountered the resurrected Christ, he _____ his faith. The interaction proves that Jesus is not afraid of our doubts. John 20:26

DISCUSSION

1. *Share some of your questions or doubts you've had about faith, the Bible and Jesus. How have you gone about finding answers to those questions in the past?*
2. *"Doubt is not the opposite of faith." Why is there room for doubt regarding matters of faith?*
3. *Read John 11:16. Share your journey of faith. How is it similar to Thomas and how is it different?*
4. *Read John 14:3-5. Share a time you were confused about what God was doing/not doing in a difficult situation. How did your confusion affect your walk with God?*
5. *Read John 14:6-7. How did Jesus answer Thomas' question? Why do you think he went beyond the question to more foundational information?*
6. *Read John 20:25-29. How did Jesus respond to Thomas' doubts? How has Jesus proved himself to you, reaffirming your faith?*

HOW PETER'S FAILURE PROVES THE RESURRECTION

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TALKING POINTS

The apostle Peter bears witness that Jesus is alive and that he overcomes even the deepest feelings of guilt and failure.

- _____ had a bold exterior, but his faith backstory is filled with shame and failure. Luke 22:54-62
- The resurrected _____ met Peter in his shame and gave him a fresh start. John 21:4-17
- The rest of Peter's story is _____ that Jesus really did rise from the dead and that he can turn around our most shameful failures. John 21:18-19, Acts 2:14,32

DISCUSSION

1. How do you relate to the life of Peter—boldness for God in some ways and failure in other ways?
2. Read Luke 22:54-57, 60-62. Why do you think Peter lacked boldness here? What does it mean to weep bitterly?
3. Read John 21:4-17. Do you think Peter recognized that Jesus asked him three questions for his three denials? Explain. How has Jesus given you second and third chances in your life?
4. Read John 21:18-19 and Acts 2:14,32. What do these verses reveal about Peter's life? Why do you think he was willing to be bold in Acts 2 but not in Luke 22?
5. What holds you back from being bold for Jesus in your life? What will you do to change that?

HOW PAUL LOST HIS RELIGION AND FOUND JESUS

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TALKING POINTS

The apostle Paul bears witness that the living Lord Jesus invites us to come to God, not through religious rules and rituals, but by knowing and trusting in him.

- Paul was successful at living a _____ life, but his confidence in his own goodness actually turned him against Jesus. Philippians 3:4-6; Acts 26:9-11
- Paul had a _____ encounter with the resurrected Christ – and in one moment his entire approach to God was turned upside-down. Acts 9:3-5, 19-21; Philippians 3:6-9
- Paul's story is proof that Jesus really did _____ from the dead and that he can be found by anyone who's willing to _____ they've got it wrong. Philippians 3:9-11

DISCUSSION

1. How have you seen religion turn people off? What tends to be the attitude of religious people?
2. Read Philippians 3:4-6 and Acts 26:9-11. Describe Paul's attitude in both texts. What was his point?
3. Read Acts 9:3-5, 19-21. Why do you think Jesus chose to meet Paul in the way he did? How did this encounter change Paul's mission?
4. Read Philippians 3:6-9. What does Paul mean that he counts everything else as garbage? What's the "garbage" in your life that has kept you from fully pursuing God?
5. Read Philippians 3:9-11. What are the new insights Paul gained from encountering Christ? How will your approach to Jesus change after hearing Paul's story?

