



Enter the Story

Resurrection

A narrative about faith, doubt, and belief.

THE BIBLE

Matthew 27-28, Mark 16
Luke 24, John 19-21

Prepare for the Story

ICEBREAKER

- *Have you ever been mistaken for a celebrity? If so, who?*

Rewind the Story

Can someone highlight what has happened in the story so far ...

- Kingdom Ways – The nature of the Kingdom of God
- No Ordinary Man – Supernatural experiences with Jesus
- One Week to Live – The final week in the life of Jesus
- Hour of Darkness – The crucifixion of Jesus

Hear the Story

Scene One: The Tomb

After Jesus died and His body was taken down from the cross, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body. Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but this was a secret because he was afraid of the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away.

He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus and Joseph prepared Jesus' body according to Jewish burial customs, and they took the body to a new tomb, one in which no one had ever been laid.

At this time, the Pharisees went to Pilate. *"Sir,"* they said, *"We remember that while Jesus was still alive, that deceiver said, 'After three days, I will rise again'. So, give the order for the tomb to be made secure; otherwise, His disciples may come and steal the body and tell people that He has been raised from the dead."* Pilate granted their request and secured the tomb by putting a seal on the stone and posting guards at the entrance.

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene and some of the women who were followers of Jesus went to the tomb to anoint his body with spices and oils. They asked each other, *"Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"*

Then suddenly, there was a violent earthquake, and an angel of the Lord came from heaven, moving toward the tomb. He rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men."

Then the angel said to the women, *"Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; He is risen, just as He said. Come and see the place where He used to lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples!"* So, the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

After hearing the news, Peter and John started running for the tomb. John arrived first but didn't go in. When Peter reached the tomb, he ran in. They both saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. When they saw this, they believed. Then they went back to where they had been staying to tell the others what they had discovered.

Meanwhile, Mary Magdalene stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she looked in the tomb again and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, *"Woman, why are you crying?"*

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, *"and I don't know where they have put Him."* At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize who He was. She thought He was a gardener.

He asked her, *“Woman, why are you crying? Who is it that you are looking for?”* Still thinking He was the gardener, she said, *“Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have put Him, and I will go and get Him.”*

Jesus said to her, *“Mary.”* She turned toward Him and cried out, *“Teacher!”* Jesus then told her to go to the disciples and tell them what she had seen. When she saw the disciples, she said, *“I have seen the Lord!”* And she told them everything Jesus had said to her.

Scene Two: Road to Emmaus

That same day, two of Jesus’ followers were going to a village about seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus came up and walked along with them, but they were kept from recognizing Him.

He asked them, *“What are you discussing together?”* They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked Him, *“Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who doesn’t know what has happened these last few days?”* *“What things?”* he asked. *“About Jesus of Nazareth ... He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people ... Our rulers handed Him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified Him.”*

“We had hoped that He was the one who was going to redeem Israel. But there’s more: some of our women went to the tomb early this morning but didn’t find His body. They told us that they had seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.” Then He said to them, *“How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter His glory?”*

Then Jesus explained to them what was said in the Scripture concerning the Messiah. As they approached the village, the travelers urged the stranger to stay with them for dinner. When Jesus sat at the table with them, He gave thanks, broke bread, and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him, and He disappeared from their sight. They got up immediately and returned at once to Jerusalem. They found the disciples and told them about what had happened.

Scene Three: The Upper Room

While they were still talking about what happened on the Road to Emmaus, Jesus appeared among them and said, *"Peace be with you."* They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, *"Why are you troubled, and why do doubts trouble your minds? Look at My hands and My feet. It's Me – touch and see; a ghost doesn't have flesh and bones, as you can clearly see I have."* When He said this, He showed them His hands and feet. And while they still did not believe, it was because of joy and amazement.

So, He said to them, *"This is what I told you while I was still with you: everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms."* Then, He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, *"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 nations, beginning in Jerusalem. You have been witnesses to these things."*

Thomas, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus appeared to them. So when the others told him that they had seen the Lord, he did not believe them. *"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."*

A week later, the disciples were in the house again, and this time, Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus appeared standing among them and said, *"Peace be with you!"* Then He said to Thomas, *"Put your finger here; see My hands. Reach out your hand and put it in My side. Stop doubting and believe."* Thomas said to him, *"My Lord and my God!"* Then Jesus told him, *"Because you have seen, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

Scene Four: Restoration

Sometime later, Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John, and two other disciples were all together. *"I'm going to fish,"* Peter told them. They all decided to go with him, so they went out in the boat and fished all night, but they caught nothing.

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Him. He called out to them, *"Friends, did you catch anything?"*

"No," they answered. He said, *"Throw your net on the other side of the boat, and you will find some."* When they did, they caught such a large number of fish that they were unable to haul in the net.

After this, John said to Peter, *"It is the Lord!"* As soon as Peter heard him say this, he jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish. When they landed on shore, they saw a fire burning and Jesus preparing a meal. He said to them, *"Bring some of the fish you have just caught and come have some breakfast."* At this point, they all recognized Him.

Then Jesus took bread, broke it, and gave it to them. He did the same with the fish. When they finished eating, Jesus said to Peter, *"Simon, do you love Me more than these?"* "Yes, Lord," he said, *"you know that I love you."* Jesus said, *"Feed My lambs."* Again, Jesus said, *"Simon, do you love Me?"* He answered, *"Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."* Jesus said, *"Take care of My sheep."* The third time, He said to him, *"Simon, do you love Me?"* Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him a third time. He said, *"Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."* Jesus said, *"Feed My sheep."*

"I tell you the truth, when you were younger, you dressed yourself and went where you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you don't want to go," Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death Peter would have which would glorify God. Then He said to him, *"Follow me!"*

Retell the Story

- Who took Jesus' body? Where did they take him?
- What were the religious officials concerned about?
- What did Pilate do to appease them?
- Who came to the tomb after the Sabbath? What happened?
- How did Peter and John find Jesus' tomb?
- What happened between Mary Magdalene & 'the gardener'?
- What happened on the road to Emmaus?
- What did Jesus say when He appeared to the disciples?
- Who didn't believe? How did he come to believe?
- What happened when Jesus appeared to His disciples on the Sea of Galilee?
- What was the disciples' last interaction with Jesus like?

Discuss the Story

- What is your first reaction to this story? How did this story make you feel?
- What stood out to you from this story? What did you notice for the first time?
- What from this story made you wonder?
- How is Jesus being raised from the dead significant? What does it show us about Him?
- Why do you think Jesus has to explain the scriptures to the men on the road to Emmaus and His own disciples?
- Do you think there is any significance in Mary Magdalene mistaking Jesus for a gardener? If so, what is the connection?
- What task did Jesus specifically call His disciples to do before He ascended?
- What does it mean for us today that Jesus is still alive?
- Did you hear anything that reminded you of *other* stories?

- From this story, what did you notice about humans?
- From this story, what do you notice about God’s character or His qualities?

Join the Story

1) PETER - RESTORED THREE TIMES

The risen Jesus met the disciples while they were out fishing. How did Peter respond when he realized it was Jesus? What did Jesus do to restore Peter and set him back on track? At the end of His interaction with Peter, Jesus said, “Follow me!” the same words He first said to Peter when He met him. Share how Jesus has called you to follow Him and one way you are seeking to live out this calling.

2) THOMAS

Thomas was not willing to believe Jesus was alive until he saw him with his own eyes. Do you think Thomas gets a bad rap by being called “doubting Thomas”? Would you have doubted the reports? Why or why not? When Jesus did reveal Himself to Thomas, how did He seek to meet Thomas right where he was and help him move toward faith? Share how God has met you where you were at during a point in your faith journey.

3) UNRECOGNIZABLE

Numerous times in this story, we hear that people do not recognize Jesus. Make a list of who didn’t recognize Him and what took place to help them see who Jesus really was. Do you see any significance in these encounters? Why do you think it was so hard for some of His closest followers to recognize Him? Do you think there are times in our lives when God is at work right in front of us, and we don’t even recognize it? What can we do to make sure we don’t miss what He’s up to?

God,

Today, we celebrate how You did the unthinkable. Not only did You die for us, but You defeated death and rose from the grave. Your resurrection is proof of Your power and the hope for every person. May we live as resurrection people, those who have found new life in You. It is our prayer that the life we live will be an extension and expression of Your resurrection power in the world. Amen.