

## THE SEVEN SIGNS OF EASTER

Matthew 27:62-28:11

### Introduction

1 Corinthians 15:17

#### I. How Do We Know the Resurrection Really Happened?

- A. The Soldiers – Matthew 27:63-66, Matthew 28:11-15
- B. The Seal – Matthew 27:66
- C. The Stone – Matthew 27:59-60, 28:2, John 20:1
- D. The Sepulcher – Matthew 28:5-6, John 20:2
- E. The Shroud – John 20:3-8
- F. The Scars – John 20:26-28
- G. The Sightings – 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

#### II. Why Is the Resurrection Important Today?

- A. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ Is About Our Past – Romans 4:25
- B. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ Is About Our Present – Ephesians 1:19-20
- C. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ Is About Our Future – 1 Peter 1:3-5, Acts 2:22-24

### Conclusion

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

### Getting Started

Leaders: Easter is like Christianity's SUPER BOWL. It is a time to reconnect with the reality of Jesus conquering death. This triumph is the cornerstone upon which we place all our hopes...

1. How did you come to believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior? Describe your transformation process from being someone who did not follow Jesus to becoming one of His followers. **Our conversion story is at the heart of who we are in Christ Jesus. We all have a "before" and "after" conversion story that we *have* experienced and are *still* experiencing.**
2. As you think of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, what are the dominant thoughts that fill your mind? What are you most focused on? What emotions come up when you think of His sacrifice for you and victory over your sin? **We all have different perspectives on this series of events, and it is good to share them. Some will focus on Jesus' death, pain, and suffering. Others will focus on the glory of His resurrection. And there will be many other viewpoints. It is the many impressions of these events that make the dynamic of a small group so rich. Someone will have a perspective that no one else in the group may ever have thought of.**

### Going Deeper

1. Read Matthew 16:21, 17:9, 20:17-19, and John 2:18-22. The Bible boldly proclaims that Jesus died and rose from the dead. Prior to your conversion, what about Christianity seemed bold or even strange? In what way has your relationship with Jesus changed your perspective? **For many, Jesus was just a person from history (and the bold claims of the Bible outlandish) UNTIL they experienced and entered into a relationship with Him - and then everything changed. It is good to go back and revisit this change, or shift, in our spiritual awareness and the impact that the shift has had on our lives.**

2. It can be difficult to admit that we have doubts about faith in God. How do the biblical predictions and proofs bolster your faith in times of doubt? **While our doubts may not be as potent as they were at the beginning of our walk with Jesus, suspicions (like any distraction) can be used to help us *stay connected* to Jesus. Doubts belong inside of a faith community—shared and aired. It is in this time of sharing our misgivings that they are revealed as powerless in the light of the gospel.**
3. Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-57. How does Jesus' death and resurrection change the way Christians can think and feel about dying? **Perishable vs. imperishable; being changed in the twinkling of an eye; mortal vs. immortality. Such sharp contrasts from the way we are *now* to the way we will be *then*. This is one of those forward-thinking, hopeful passages that remind us how brief all of this is, and of all that is to come.**
4. Jesus Himself prophesied about the events leading up to His resurrection. And His predictions were 100% accurate. Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. As a Christian, how does this encourage your faith in both the Bible and Jesus Himself? **The Christian story is not rooted in myth. It is embedded in historical fact. It reminds us that there are real, solid origins to our faith.**

5. Look at 1 Corinthians 15:6 and Acts 1:3. In our evidence-demanding world, what does this say to you about the validity of Jesus' resurrection from the dead? It tells us that God knew we would have skepticism and He did not count our disbelief as insignificant. He met us in our need and provided evidence. This act further shows how much God loves us.

### Applying the Message

1. Jesus gives us both eternal life and daily, abundant life (see John 10:10). What are some specific convictions that you cling to as you persistently place your entire life (now and eternal) in the hands of Jesus? This question will get different responses based on individual life experience. Early on, some people may be focused on the life that they have been given (compared to the life they had). Others may focus on the powerful sense of forgiveness given to them by Jesus' sacrifice. This question is rich with possible answers.
2. If you do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ, what or who might be keeping you from moving toward Him right now? If there are any non-Christians in your group, this is a key time to allow them to share. They may not be at a point where they are ready, but the question is important for them to think about. Don't back down from this. Show up for them with compassion and interest. If you are all believers, you can modify this to ask what is hindering you from moving toward Jesus in your walk of faith right now.