



awake to Jesus! sunday school resources

6: Jesus the Victor

Sunday school lesson 6: Luke 21-24

Teacher's notes / Devotional for teachers

Even though Jesus had foretold his resurrection, nobody was really expecting it to happen the way it did. The prominent Jewish belief about the resurrection was that there would be a large scale resurrection at the end of the current human era when every righteous person whether dead or alive would be raised to a new life.

No one, however, was expecting the solitary, newly embodied resurrection of one person, particularly one who had been executed as a criminal in such public manner.

That is why there is such surprise and astonishment around Luke's resurrection stories. Jesus has caught everyone by surprise and leaves them reeling from the reality of what was unfolding before their very eyes.

At first it is the women who are left disturbed by the course of events. They report subsequently to Peter who runs to the tomb and leaves perplexed at what he sees, or closer to the truth, who he doesn't see there.

Easter Sunday was a surprise for the first followers of Jesus and so it should remain for us today. We should not take the resurrection of Jesus for granted, nor should we miss its implications for us.

The resurrection of Jesus is the centrepiece of the whole Christian faith. Without it, the whole edifice crumbles and is found out to be an elaborate hoax. For when God raised Jesus from the dead with his new resurrection body, it was his vindication of all that Jesus had said and done. If Jesus were still dead then all we believe today would be nonsense, foolish, and indeed dangerous.

That is why Paul could write in 1 Corinthians 15: 'If Christ has not been raised then our preaching is useless and so is your faith....your faith is futile, you are still in your sins. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all others.'

Jesus' resurrection means that His work on the cross is complete, our sins are forgiven, and we have been reconciled to God.

But there is still more. The resurrection was necessary so that Jesus could eventually ascend to God the Father and so fulfil his promise to send the Holy Spirit. The presence now of the Spirit in our lives means that we too can begin to live now out of the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit.

The good news is not just that Jesus died for our sins so that we can have eternal life at some point in the future, but also so that we can experience that eternal life with real and effective power now, right at this very moment. This truth means that everything we do (and that means everything) has the possibility within it to be suffused with the presence and power of Jesus. The Gospel means that real change and transformation is always a possibility for any Christian who

lives according to the Spirit.

But there is one last thing to notice about the resurrection that is vitally important to grasp. So many Christians have a false perspective on what the resurrection of Jesus means for the future. Too many Christians have been influenced in this regard more by Greek philosophers like Plato than by biblical truth. The Greeks believed that when we die we will be released from our evil bodies and become disembodied spirits existing in the ether. This is the polar opposite of what the Bible teaches. The hope of the Gospel is that all of God's people will one day, like Jesus, experience the resurrection. We will all receive new resurrection **bodies** just as Jesus did. That is why the resurrection appearances of Jesus are so important. Jesus was not a resurrected spirit, like a ghost, but rather a fully embodied soul, recognizable to his followers. Jesus' new body was at home both in this world and heaven. And that is the body we will receive. For the Bible teaches that we will inherit the earth, the renewed earth, or the resurrected creation. That is why Paul talks in Romans 8 about the creation itself waiting for the sons of God to be revealed. It is awaiting with groans our resurrection, so that it too will be fully restored to newness of life. Heaven will come down to this renewed earth and at last heaven and earth will be reunited. Our resurrected bodies will allow us to exist with God forever.

That is the hope of Easter. What a great and awesome God we love and serve. He is in the resurrection business and that should fill us with unending praise. And perhaps this is a fitting place to end our series-with God. For the great glory of the resurrection is surely this. When all is restored and we look forward to an eternal future of joy and peace and love, the centre of it all will be our great and loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the One who has saved us and raised us up. We will at last see His face and be with the One for whom we were originally created, and we will serve Him with abandon for ever and forever.

This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, this is the power of Easter and you now have the privilege of sharing this same message with your children. I encourage you to do it with passion and joy.

- Explanation of lesson
 - This is the sixth and final lesson in this series looking at the Easter Sunday story and the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. We have looked at Jesus life through these 6 lessons, thinking through some of the characteristics that shaped His life and ministry – the Saviour, Healer, Pray-er, Story teller, People person and now Victor.

- You may want to take some time, if you have done the whole series, to look back and think over some of the things that Jesus has done on His way to this point of Victory.
- This lesson is to remind children that the story did not end with Jesus' death but that on Easter Sunday we celebrate Jesus resurrection and the life and relationship with Him that this event brings us.
- Aims of lesson
 - To remind children about the celebration of Easter Sunday.
 - To help to understand that the women at the tomb and Jesus disciples had to learn what Jesus' death and resurrection meant, just like we do.
 - To see that Jesus' resurrection is something to be celebrated every day.
- Equipment needed
 - Hot cross buns on a plate.

- Paper strips to make chains.
- Bible passage (printed at end of lesson).

Introduction

Have enough hot cross buns for everyone to have a taste, butter and on a plate.

Explain to the children that today you are going to think about and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus that we celebrate on Easter Sunday.

Take just a few minutes though to remember that Good Friday is all about Jesus' death – the prequel to the resurrection.

Hold up a hot cross bun and ask the group if they know why we and lots of people around the world eat hot cross buns at Easter? They are to remind us how Jesus suffered on the cross for all the wrong things we had done.

Explain what the ingredients represent on the bun:

- Yeast: needed to make the bun rise and reminds us that Jesus did not die but rose again.
- Dried fruit: added to mixture and remind us of the good things that come from Jesus' death.
- Cross on the top: reminds us of how Jesus died.

Pass round the buns and allow the children to choose some to eat. Encourage the children to think of thank you prayers to Jesus for what He has done for us that we remember on Good Friday.

Part 2

Read the passage with the children about the women going to the tomb on the very first Easter Sunday morning. The passage is printed at the end of the lesson.

Discuss with the children these questions:

1. How do you think the women were feeling as they walked to the tomb? What would they have been thinking?
2. What do you think they said to each other when they saw the stone was rolled away?
3. What would they have thought they would find when they went into the tomb?
4. What would it be like to meet an angel and have them proclaim Jesus' resurrection?
5. How do you think they felt going back to the city and going to tell the disciples?
6. Why do you think Peter went to the tomb?

Explain to the children that the woman would have been going to put spices and oil on Jesus body because that was the custom/tradition in those days. They could not go on the Saturday because that was their holy day. The tomb was sealed with a heavy rock so that no one could get in easily and the women probably were wondering how they were going to move the stone to get the tomb open.

The angel would have scared them and been unexpected, but he told the women the most important piece of news they would ever hear and it was their job then to go back and tell the disciples what they had heard and seen.

The disciples and Jesus' followers had not understood Jesus teaching about His death but I am sure they slowly began to piece together the things that they had heard and been taught and saw that this had been God's plan for salvation for His people all along.

Part 3

Have the children in your group sit in a circle. Remind them that as soon as the women in the story heard the news about Jesus they went to tell their friends. Take turns around the circle to tell the next child one thing about the story that they remember.

Now ask them to imagine there's someone next to them they will meet in the next few days, e.g. a friend, teacher, family member, neighbour. Ask the children to suggest what they might say to them about today's story.

Then pray together:

'Dear Lord, thank you for all the people we will meet this week at school, at home and when we are playing. We would especially like to pray for *(the children name the person in their heads or out loud)*. Help us to tell them about Jesus being alive.'

Part 4

Explain to the children that although Good Friday is a day to be quiet and think about what Jesus did for us by dying on the Cross and that it is a sombre day, Easter Sunday is about celebrating the fact that He rose again and made sure that we could be in relationship with God by defeating death and the devil.

Explain that by talking about the story together and thinking about what Jesus has done, we can each celebrate that Jesus has risen.

Give out paper strips and suggest the children write on them or decorate them to celebrate that Jesus is alive.

When everyone has several strips ready, say that it is great to rejoice on our own but even better to celebrate together. Make the strips into a paper chain.

Attach the chain to the wall and each end and have it to decorate the room like for a party. Hang your paper chain where everyone in the church can see it and rejoice with you that Jesus is alive. Remind the children to celebrate every day the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, an event we particularly celebrate on Easter Sunday but which is a reason to celebrate every day.

Bible Readings

Luke 24:1-12