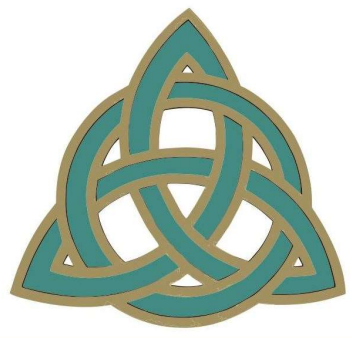


Revised Common Lectionary – Year B

Week 1
Sun 31 March 2024

SMALL GROUP AND SUNDAY SERMON SERIES

EASTER TO TRINITY SUNDAY

JOURNEY WITH US FROM EASTER TO TRINITY SUNDAY
31 March 2024 - 26 May 2024

EASTER SUNDAY - THE EMPTY TOMB

Week 1 – Sunday 31 March – Easter Sunday – The Empty Tomb.

Week 2 – Sunday 7 April – Jesus appears to people.

Week 3 – Sunday 14 April – Jesus appears to the disciples.

Week 4 – Sunday 21 April – The good Shepherd.

Week 5 – Sunday 28 April – The vine and the branches.

Week 6 – Sunday 5 May – The Great Commandment.

Ascension Day – 9 May

Week 7 – Sunday 12 May – Jesus prays for his disciples.

Week 8 – Sunday 19 May – **Pentecost** – The work of the Holy Spirit.

Week 9 – Sunday 26 May - **Trinity Sunday** – Jesus teaches Nicodemus.

WEEK 1:

Sunday 31 March – Easter Sunday – The Empty Tomb.

Bring God into the meeting by Prayer / Lighting a candle / Listening to a worship song...

WORSHIP SONG: "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" - The Village Chapel Worship

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jAgVXtmN2Y>

Ponder, picture, and personalise god's word.

First reading	Acts 10:34-43
Psalm	118:1-2
Second reading	1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Gospel	John 20:1-18



John 20:1-18 New International Version

The Empty Tomb

20 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ²So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know

where they have put him!" ³ So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷ as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. ⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹ (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene ¹¹ Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ¹³ 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." ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). ¹⁷ Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

Written by: REV BOITUMELO MAKGAMATHE

The entire Christian faith rests on one historically provable point: the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:17, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins." Everything in the Christian faith rests on the historical truth that Jesus was raised from the dead. Jesus had told the disciples on numerous occasions that He would be crucified and then rise again on the third day.

The main character in John 20:1-18 is a woman named Mary Magdalene, who shows up in the Gospels only to support Jesus' ministry and to witness his death and resurrection. She comes to the tomb while it's still dark, sees that the stone was taken away, and runs to tell Peter and the beloved disciple. Having returned to the tomb with the disciples, she waits there, weeping, after they leave, sees two angels at either side of the sepulchral bench, converses with the angels and with Jesus, and returns to the disciples to announce what she saw and what he said.



Mary Magdalene discovered the empty tomb on the first day of the week. Therefore, the first day of the week, Sunday is recognized by Christians as the Lord's Day, or Resurrection Day. The other Gospels record that the enemies took extreme measures to assure that Jesus' body could not be removed from the tomb. But now, with the tomb found empty and the enemy unable to reveal the presence of Jesus, the only logical conclusion is that He has risen.

The resurrection of Christ is viewed as the supreme display of divine power of God. It is the act by which the ceaseless round of death and corruption in human life has been checked. God has provided a way out of death into life. The resurrection is the essential part of God's plan for the redemption of mankind. The resurrection expresses God's satisfaction with what Christ has done. The exaltation of the person is the vindication of his mission. If Christ had not been raised from the dead, there would have been no certainty that his death had affected anything.

The challenge for us this Easter season is to Spend time dwelling on Jesus' resurrection and sift through our lives, asking this question, how has Christ's resurrection influenced the way I live?

LIFE APPLICATION

Relying on the power of Jesus’ resurrection gives us freedom from our sins, confidence in his word, and assurance of our resurrection. When we believe in the risen Christ, the Resurrection Factor empowers us to live with a vital faith, a God-centered purpose, a life-giving community, and a tangible sense of well-being.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. If you are experiencing a time of waiting or discouragement like the disciples on the Friday and Saturday before the resurrection, how does the knowledge of the resurrection restore your resolve in seeking His purpose for your life?
2. How can we, as the people of God, live into the present reality of resurrection in our lives?
3. How do you love and serve the world differently because of Christ’s resurrection? In other words, how do you practice the resurrection?
4. Why is it important to affirm that our faith rests on the objectively true, historical fact of Jesus’ resurrection, not on subjective feelings?



DAILY MEMORY VERSE AND PRAYER:

I have never met a mature, fruitful, strong, spiritual discerning Christian who is not full of scripture, devoted to regular meditation on Scripture, and given to storing it in the heart through Bible memorization – John Piper.

Prayer is the way you walk by the Spirit. Prayer is the way you walk by faith. In other words, it’s the breath of the Christian life all day long – John Piper.

DAY	VERSES	MEMORY VERSE	PRAYER
MONDAY	Psalm 118: 16-17	<i>“The LORD’s right hand is lifted high; the LORD’s right hand has done mighty things! I will not die but live and will proclaim what the LORD has done.”</i>	Lord, we thank you for the power of resurrection. Death has no power over us, and we celebrate this victory. Amen
TUESDAY	1 Cor 15: 54-55	<i>“When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: Death has been swallowed up in victory.”</i>	We give you glory o God for the victory that comes through the resurrection of Christ. In Jesus name we pray. Amen
WEDNESDAY	Mark 16:7	<i>“But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you”</i>	Lord, I pray for a resurrection encounter with you, I pray for my own Galilee encounter. In Jesus name I pray, Amen .
THURSDAY	Psalm 133:1	<i>“It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.”</i>	Dear God, pour out your blessings upon us so we can be true witnesses of your resurrection power. Amen
FRIDAY	Acts 2:33	<i>“With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all”</i>	Thank you, God, for raising Jesus from the dead, help me to trust this truth, testify it and embrace it in my life. Amen
SATURDAY	John 12: 46	<i>“I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.”</i>	Light of the world, continue to shine your light in my life. Help me to stay in your light of salvation. Amen

FAMILY

Time
BY JENNY BLAKE – CHILDREN'S PASTOR
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Week 1

Scripture: Reading: John 20:1-18 (NIV):

Welcome your family and start with a brief prayer, inviting God's presence into your time together.

Reading: John 20:1-18 (NIV):

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance...

Read the entire passage, allowing the words to sink in. After reading, take a moment for reflection.

Reflection:

The scene is set early on that first Easter morning – still dark, symbolizing the darkness of grief, confusion, and despair. Mary Magdalene, a loyal follower of Jesus, approaches the tomb only to find the stone rolled away.

Questions for discussion:

- What emotions do you think Mary Magdalene might have been feeling when she saw the stone rolled away?
- How do you think the disciples felt in the days following Jesus' crucifixion?

The Encounter: Verse 11-16 (NIV): *"Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb..."*

Mary encounters two angels inside the tomb and then turns around to see Jesus standing there. However, she doesn't recognize him immediately.



Discussion:

- Why do you think Mary didn't recognize Jesus at first?
- How do you feel when you think about encountering Jesus in unexpected ways?

The Revelation: Verses 17-18 (NIV):

Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news..."

Jesus reveals himself to Mary, and she is given a mission – to share the good news of His resurrection with the disciples.

Discussion:

- Why do you think Jesus told Mary not to hold on to Him?
- What do you think it means to share the good news of Jesus with others?

Application:

As a family, discuss ways you can bring the light of Christ into your lives and the lives of those around you. Consider practical actions, such as showing love, kindness, and forgiveness.

Closing Prayer:

Conclude your family devotion with a prayer, thanking God for the hope we have in Christ's resurrection. Pray for each family member to experience the transformative power of the risen Christ in their lives.