

Victoria Fellowship Church International & Interdenominational

Bible Study Worksheet – April 17, 2022

Theme: James: Faith in Action **Topic:** The Cross, The Resurrection and The Mission

Main Texts: Mark 16:1-20

Key verse: Mark 16:6 – “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him (NIV)

INTRODUCTION: The combined forces of Rome, Jewish religious leadership, and the crowds in Jerusalem all conspired to send Jesus to a brutal death on a cross. Crucifixion on a cross was a form of capital punishment reserved for murderers and rebels against Rome. It did not bring death swiftly but instead prolonged the suffering and shame of the one being executed. On the other hand, for the Jews, the worst death for a man is to die on a cross. This is because of what God said in Deuteronomy 21:23b, “... anyone who is hung is cursed in the sight of God.” This might explain why Philippians 2:8 describes Jesus’ humility by saying, “And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!” Indeed, as R.C. Sproul said, the cross is the obscenest symbol in human history; yet in its ugliness it remains the most eloquent testimony to human dignity. That being the case, “Life is wasted if we do not grasp the glory of the cross...”

1. Read Isaiah 53:4-5; Galatians 3:13; Colossians 1:20; 2:14-15 (a) How do these passages help your appreciation of the Cross and why it was vital for the Messiah to die on the cross and not any other way? (b) What does the cross of Jesus mean to you personally? (c) How do these help you explain why Christians celebrate Good Friday?

So, Jesus was crucified on the Cross, and was buried. But that was not the end; Jesus’ death did not mark the end of Jesus the Messiah. And the chief priests and Pharisees knew that. So, the day after the crucifixion, all the religious leaders gathered again and went to Pilate to request that Jesus’ tomb be sealed and guards posted. Their reason was that “while He was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.... Otherwise, His disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that He has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.’” (Matthew 27:62-64 NIV). And Pilate told them, “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.” So, they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.’ (Matthew 27:65-66 NIV).

2. (a) In Mark 15:39, even the Roman officer acknowledged that Jesus is the Son of God. How significant is His resurrection to the fact that He is the Son of God? (b) What other significance of the resurrection do you see in Romans 4:25; 5:21? (c) How will you explain the notion that the death and resurrection of Jesus are the central pillars of the Christian faith?

Without the resurrection, Jesus’ death would have been nothing more than the tragic death of a good man in the hands of wicked men. The religious leaders knew this and so, they tried to prevent it. They probably had forgotten or waved aside Jesus’ declaration in John 10:18 that He had power to lay down His life and to take it up again. The significance would explain why Jesus rebuked His disciples for their reluctance to believe the news of His resurrection (Mark 16:14). God raised Jesus from the dead to emphatically announce the victory of love over all darkness and sin. The women must have got a glimpse of the import of it all, which might explain why, though they were afraid, yet they were filled with joy (Matthew 28:8). It was such a welcome news that the Angel sends the first heralds of the resurrection, the women who found the tomb empty, to go and announce, first to His disciples (Mark 16:7). Jesus Christ is eager for anyone who has come to comprehend the significance of His death and resurrection to spread the word. It is so critical to Him that He commits to go with any who would go and tell (Matthew 28:20).

3. Read Mark 16:6-18; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; (a) What is the Good News believers are to preach to everyone? (b) Reflect on Jesus’ response to the reluctance of the disciples to believe the resurrection? How do you think God feels about those who continue to doubt the resurrection today? (c) From this study, why do you think evangelism is such an important part of our confession as believers in Christ? How will you advise a believer who is reluctant to tell others the good news about Jesus Christ or who thinks that evangelism is optional?

Prayer: LORD, thank You for sending Your only begotten Son to die for all of us on the cross of calvary, for raising Him from the dead and for commissioning me to evangelism. Help me to preach Jesus when it is convenient and when it is not convenient in both words and deeds, in Jesus’ name, Amen.