

## **Faithful Friends**

*Leader's Guide*

### **Sunday school lesson**

We just came out of the Lent and Easter season. Last week we celebrated Resurrection Sunday, Easter, together. We spent a lot of time talking about the events leading up to Christ's crucifixion and resurrection.

Now I want us to think about what happens after Easter. Specifically, and, this might seem like an odd question: What's the point of Easter? Why does Easter make a difference? (take answers)

First, it's important because Jesus was the first person (and only person) in history to be resurrected and then never die again. Can you think of some people the Bible tells us were miraculously resurrected? (A widow's son was brought back to life by Elijah in 1 Kings 17, an unnamed woman's son was brought back to life by Elisha in 2 Kings 4, a dead man who was thrown into Elisha's grave was brought back to life in 2 Kings 13, the first person Jesus resurrected was a widow's son in Luke 7, Jesus resurrected Jairus' daughter in Luke 8, Lazarus in John 11, Peter resurrected Tabitha in Acts 9, Paul resurrected Eutychus after he fell out of a window in Acts 20, after Jesus died the Bible says many saints came out of their graves.)

No other religious leader has ever predicted his own death and resurrection and then kept that promise. Buddah, Mohammed...all dead. You can visit their graves. But NOT Jesus. His tomb is empty!

In Revelation 1:18 Jesus says, "I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades."

Jesus holds the keys of death and Hades. If I give you the keys to this building, what does that mean? (You are authorized to use the building, you have the authority to use the building.)

So what does it mean that Jesus holds the keys to death and Hades? (He has authority over death.)

Let's read 2 Timothy 1:9-10. "He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Jesus conquered death. He destroyed it. But...

Did He destroy death just for Himself?

John 3:16 says, For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life."

The good news of the gospel--that Jesus came to save us--is rooted in the resurrection. Without the resurrection, there is no hope.

1 Corinthians 15:17 says if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

But Christ has been raised! The fact that Christ has victory over death means His followers also will have victory over death.

Romans 8:37 says No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

And 1 Corinthians 15:20 says "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."

That means Jesus' resurrection is the first of many. Believers who have "fallen asleep" will also be raised. Jesus promised His followers, "Because I live, you also will live" (John 14:19).

I think we all understand and look forward to that day when we will be in heaven with Jesus, but what about today? What about in the meantime? What does Easter mean for my life here on earth?

If Jesus conquered death, can He help you conquer fear? If Jesus conquered death, can He help you conquer depression? What's your biggest struggle right now? Don't you think if Jesus can defeat death He has the power to help you live victoriously?

Let's see what the Bible says:

1 Corinthians 15:57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 John 4:4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

"The one who is in you..." When Jesus left earth and ascended into heaven (40 days after the resurrection), He left us with a special gift--the Holy Spirit...part of the holy trinity that lives in us and helps us to have faith and obey God's laws.

I'm going to read a quote to you from Lee Strobel. Lee Strobel is a journalist who used to be an atheist. He set out to prove that Christianity was false. In the process, he saw the overwhelming evidence that Jesus was a real person who really did live, die, and rise again. And that changed everything for him.

Here's what he said:

"The Resurrection is the supreme vindication of Jesus' divine identity and his inspired teaching. It's the proof of his triumph over sin and death. It's the foreshadowing of the resurrection of his followers. It's the basis of Christian hope. It's the miracle of all miracles."

Let's end today by saying the Apostles Creed together:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hell. On the third day He rose again.

He ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.



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**2 Timothy 1:9-10** He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

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*He ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*