

Easter at Faith Fellowship Church

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

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Introduction

A year ago when we made the decision to move to a completely online format for our Easter service because of the COVID-19 pandemic, to use a phrase now a staple in our cultural vocabulary, it was unprecedented. Trapped in our homes in fear of the danger that was outside, our world and our understanding of it turned completely upside down. Perhaps it was strangely the closest we have ever identified with Jesus' disciples on that first Easter.

Well, here we are a year later.

From this pandemic to political upheaval and an increasingly polarized society, we enter this Easter season with a mix of emotions. For some, we are afraid of what will be. For others, we are jaded by what has been. Still, for others, a mingling of confusion, hope, sadness and contentment define our feelings for the unsettled present.

And yet, even though our world has changed, the story in which we live remains the same.

So for this reason and for a time such as this, we will be taking a deep dive into 1 Corinthians 15 this Easter season, exploring what the resurrection of Jesus means for us in the story in which we are living. We will ponder what Jesus Himself accomplished in His own resurrection. We will also see the plan He set in motion and the tangible hope we have as believers both now and forever because of His resurrection.

This is, again, an unprecedented time. That's why we are going to take time to intentionally focus on the ultimate precedent that was set for us in the resurrection of Jesus. I hope this journey through 1 Corinthians 15 this Easter will deepen your affections for Jesus and increase your countenance and hope as we consider His, and your own, resurrection.

Blessings,
Pastor David

Using the Small Group Guide

The Small Group Guides for each week are divided into four sections: interact with the passage, open it up, discussion questions, and next steps for the week. These sections are designed to help us engage each section of 1 Corinthians 15 in personal study and small group discussion. Just a reminder, we will not have Small Group on Easter Sunday.

Before your small group meets, interact with the Scripture for the week according to the H.E.A.R. method of Bible study:

- **Highlight:** Read and observe everything in the passage.
- **Explain:** Based on your reading, discover what the passage means in its context.
- **Apply:** Understand how the meaning of the passage affects your life.
- **Respond in Prayer:** Pray God's word back to him, asking to believe, share, and put the Bible into practice in your life and relationships.

Feel free to interact with the Scripture at any time throughout the week. Some may find it helpful to work through the Scripture in sections—such as two or three blocks of 15 to 20 minutes each, while others may want to study the whole passage in one, hour-long sitting.

Whichever approach you choose to take, be sure to interact with the Scripture and think through the discussion questions before your small group meets. In small groups, we'll discuss what we learned from the Scripture the previous week as well as our answers to the discussion questions together.

To maximize our study of God's Word and the impact it can have on our lives, we encourage everyone to think through all the discussion questions in the Small Group Guide, but small group leaders may choose to focus on some questions more than others. In addition to the weekly sections, we also encourage you and your small group to take full advantage of the following resources on 1 Corinthians 15 and the Resurrection.

Additional Resources

As we study this pivotal chapter, we have provided a list of recommended resources to equip you to go deeper into this rich portion of Scripture. These are available in this guide as well as our website at faithfellowshipfortbend.com/easter.

Bible Reading Plan

There is no substitute for spending regular time reading and reflecting on God's Word, so we're providing a reading plan that follows the story of Easter. If you don't do anything else with this Small Group Guide, we encourage you to at least follow the Bible reading plan. That's the most important thing you could do to participate in the Easter Season. After all, Easter is first and foremost about remembering the story of Scripture. Each week's readings are found at the beginning of the weekly sessions.

Holy Week Texts

One of the most important aspects of preparing our hearts for the Easter season is imagining what the events of the first Holy Week were actually like. Easter is indeed about looking forward to the resurrection that believers will one day experience, however it is also about stepping into the shoes of Peter and imagining what it would have been like in the Garden of Gethsemane, putting ourselves at the foot of the cross with John, or envisioning the stone rolled away early in the morning with those brave women.

So to do that, we are providing a way for you to experience Holy Week in real time through text messages sent to your phone. From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, you can receive updates and messages about the week's events as they would have unfolded 2,000 years ago.

Simply text the word "Easter" to 832-479-4633 to receive real time updates throughout Holy Week.

Ideas for Family Discipleship

The family portions of the guide are written with preschool and elementary-aged children in mind. If you have older children, consider having each person work through the weekly Small Group section and then come together to talk about what you learned.

This section is built around Faith Fellowship's framework for family discipleship: Faith Talks and Faith Walks.

- **Faith Talks** will help you build intentional time into the rhythm of family life for the purpose of thinking about, talking about, and living out the gospel.
- **Faith Walks** are activities or discussions in the course of daily life that turn a child's attention toward the presence and power of God in every part of life.

During this Easter season, consider choosing a specific time during the week to have a family devotional time. As you will see from each of these suggestions and ideas, this really is a simple time and not intimidating. God has not called you as a parent or grandparent to necessarily have a church service with your children, but rather to consistently and intentionally communicate the truth and love of Jesus to them.

For more ideas and resources on leading your family spiritually, check out the Faith@Home Center in the Worship Center Atrium or go to faithfellowshipfortbend.com/faithathome

Resurrection Songs

Songs are like sermons that you don't forget. We have curated a playlist called "Resurrection Songs" that reflect the themes of 1 Corinthians 15. These are also some of the songs that we will be singing during the worship service for this series. We encourage you to listen to these songs for your own edification and better corporate worship. You can find the playlist posted to Spotify (@faith fellowship church) or on our website at faithfellowshipfortbend.com/easter.

Good Friday Service

This Easter Season, we will be having a Good Friday Service at Faith Fellowship on Friday, April 2 at 7pm. This will be a unique and interactive experience where we will participate in an ancient practice called the "*Way of the Cross*" in the sanctuary. The sanctuary will have eight different stations set up for a self-guided experience that will take us on a meaningful journey as we walk through the events of Good Friday.

The Easter season is an incredible opportunity to invite a friend or neighbor to church. People are typically more amenable to attend or try church during this season. However, considering the type of year we have all been through as a society, this is a particular time where people are looking for answers and trying to make sense of the world in which they are now living. Be sure to consider inviting someone to this Good Friday Service!



Primers on the Resurrection

These articles will help you better understand the theological and practical themes of 1 Corinthians 15. We encourage you to take time to walk through these resources to enrich your personal study of this incredibly rich and practical section of Scripture.

Primer

The Resurrection of Jesus: What Actually Happened?

*“We both ran toward the garden, then John ran on ahead,
Found the stone and the empty tomb just the way that Mary said,
But the winding sheet they wrapped Him in was just an empty shell,
Who or where they’d taken Him was more than I could tell...”*

Don Francisco. Not that Don Francisco, the early 80s Contemporary Christian Music pioneer who wrote those lyrics in his signature song *He’s Alive*, Don Francisco. For a genre that (rightfully so) gets a bit of creative criticism from time to time, this acoustic ballad set in Peter’s perspective on that first Easter Sunday holds up quite well in our produced age. The next lines of the song capture what Peter’s thought process might have been as he tried to make sense of what might have happened:

*Oh something strange had happened there but what it was I did not know,
John believed a miracle but I just turned to go,
Circumstance and speculation couldn’t lift me very high,
Because I’d seen them crucify Him and then I saw Him die.*

Peter walked into a cave that by all forms of logics and reason should have had a body but it did not. I think that a lot of us, in a different way, are a lot like Peter. We have questions about our faith that just don’t add up. Maybe, like Peter, you feel like Jesus has disappointed or abandoned you. Or maybe you have disappointed Him. Peter had denied Jesus so many times that he might have felt like there was no hope they could ever put their relationship back together. As in, you’ve messed up so many times, you don’t even know the way back. Again, Don Francisco capture a thought like this well as Peter muses in the song:

*Back inside the house again the guilt and anguish came,
Everything I promised Him just added to my shame,
When at last it came the choices, I denied I knew His name,
Even if He was alive, it wouldn’t be the same.*

So let’s put ourselves in the shoes (sandals) of Peter on that first Easter Sunday. What happened and what could it mean for us? In this article, we are going to consider the evidence regarding the resurrection of Jesus. If it didn’t happen, then its game over for our faith because the foundation for everything we believe is a hoax. However, if Jesus really did rise from the dead, then it changes everything and it’s game on for all things hopeful, joyful and peaceful!

Now, just to shore up some skepticism before we begin, the fact that the tomb was empty that morning is a fairly agreed upon historical fact by both religious and secular scholars. Of course, not everyone believes Jesus rose from the dead, but just about every scholar agrees from historical evidence that a man named Jesus really lived, was executed by the Romans and buried, and three days later the tomb where He was buried was found empty. On those points, there is really no substantial disagreement.

The real debate is how the tomb was emptied. Three options are generally put forth.

Option 1: Someone Stole the Body.

So here is how this one goes: somebody stole Jesus' body and the myth started to grow that He was resurrected. However, then it turns into a detective story because someone had to have done it. (Side note, the 2016 movie *Risen* does a very good job at depicting what it may have been like from a Rome's perspective as they tried to figure out who stole the body.) So for this option, we need suspects but not only that, 50 years of television procedurals on television have taught us we also need a means and motive.

Suspect One: Romans

These suspects would certainly have had the means to steal the body. Pilate, the Roman governor, ordered that the tomb be guarded with a garrison of Roman soldiers (Matthew 27:62-66). A garrison was 16 soldiers and the way it worked was that 4 would stand guard and 12 would sit in a semi-circle around them, changing out guard duty so that 4 soldiers were always fresh and alert.

So maybe they stole him? Like soldiers playing a practical joke?

Not likely. The problem with this explanation is that Pilate had placed a seal on the tomb (Matthew 27:66). Roman law stated that official seal was broken on punishment of death, which the soldiers would obviously have known.¹ So for them to break the seal and steal the body, there had to be a compelling interest that was far greater than execution. There really isn't a compelling motive for why these career soldiers would care about anything other than doing their job, avoiding execution and going home to have a few drinks at the end of the day.

Well, maybe they were bribed? Again, not likely. It would have to have been a pretty big amount of cash for them to risk abandoning their post and facing execution! But, for arguments sake, let's say that they were bribed. If Jethro Leroy Gibbs has taught us anything in 20 years of NCIS, it's that we follow the case where it leads. So if they were bribed, who would have done it? Our next suspect...

Suspect Two: The Jewish Leaders

Perhaps the Jewish Leaders had a part in this. They would not have had any means to do this apart from the Roman soldiers guarding the tomb, so what would their motive have been? The only thing that historians have been able to come up with in regard to motive for the Jewish leaders, would have been to preempt the disciples stealing the body.

The thinking goes like this: *"If we steal the body first. When Jesus' disciples say that He has resurrected, we'll produce the body and say 'Gotcha!' and the movement will dissipate."* Which it obviously would have if they could have produced the body. However, no body was ever produced so it's not likely the Jewish leaders did it. So if we can cross off the Roman soldiers and the Jewish leaders from our suspect list, that leaves one group of suspects left: Jesus' disciples.

Suspect Three: The Disciples.

There are two pretty big problem with the disciples as suspects however.

¹ Legendary New Testament scholar A.T. Robertson writes that the method of sealing the stone at Jesus' tomb was "probably a cord stretched across the stone and sealed at each end as in Daniel 6:17 [when Daniel was sealed in the lion's den]. The sealing was done in the presence of the Roman guards who were left in charge to protect this stamp of Roman authority and power." (Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 239).

One, how did they sneak past the garrison of 16, highly trained and motivated Roman soldiers? Interestingly, *the winding sheet they wrapped Him in that was just an empty shell* that Don Francisco sings about, is a reference to John 20:7 where the disciple John relates his eyewitness account that the linen was folded up neatly. Something that is fairly obvious is that thieves don't take the time to fold the bedsheets in a house when they are doing a job. Thieves don't usually put a lot of thought into the tidiness of the place they are robbing.

Two, stealing Jesus' body really would not have helped their cause. Think about it. In a religious hoax, the leaders always gain some tangible asset. As Creed Bratton would say about being in a cult: "*You have more fun as a follower but you make more money as a leader.*" Whether its power, money or sex, the leaders of a new cult always gain something tangibly. What did the news that Jesus was resurrected gain for the disciples?

No power. They were all under the thumb of either local Jewish or international Roman officials for their entire lives. Further, every single disciple to a man was tortured or killed because of this news they kept proclaiming

No money. The disciples were poor and the book of Acts tells us that any money they had was given away to the poor.

No sex. The disciples taught that sex was to be enjoyed and experienced between two people in a monogamous marriage.

So there is no way that their motive would have been for sex, money or power like every other religious hoax. Would they have taught these things, and more importantly lived this way, if they knew the resurrection was a hoax and they had stolen the body? Probably not.

So the theory that someone stole the body just doesn't hold up.

Option Two: Jesus Didn't Really Die.

This theory says that maybe Jesus didn't really die on the cross. It's called the Swoon Theory and it postulates that Jesus just passed out and when they put Him in the tomb, He recovered from His injuries. After that, He snuck out of the tomb and appeared to a few of his disciples. Finally, after convincing them that He had actually resurrected from the dead, He headed off to France where he began the Medici family with Mary Magdalene, living quietly until Tom Hanks broke his code back in 2006.

Problem One: The Romans were Experts at Crucifixion

One of the problems with this theory is that the Roman Empire were experts at crucifixion as a form of execution. They knew when somebody had died because they did it so much. In fact, Roman law said that if they pulled a man down before he died, those who took him down could be killed in the same way. In fact, just to make sure, the Roman soldiers assigned to the crucifixion pierced Jesus' side with a spear. When that happened, Scripture tells us that blood and water came out (John 19:34). This is a pretty significant medical detail. Perhaps John didn't know what that meant medically when he wrote his Gospel. However, we now know that after someone has died, in that area of the body, the blood begins to clot so that the blood separates from the watery serum. To have seen "blood and water" would indicate that Jesus was dead prior to the spear in the side. Again, there's no way that John could have medically known that at the time and yet he adds it as a detail that would verify that Jesus had indeed died.

Problem Two: The Torture that Led Up to the Crucifixion

The other problem is that Jesus had been severely beaten prior to his crucifixion. Ancient historians tell us that most people were not beaten prior to being crucified because Roman beatings often led to death. In fact, the ancient

Roman poet Cicero confirmed that Roman beatings often ended in death for the person being beaten. He related that there was extreme losses of blood, sometimes disembowelment, and in some cases ribs flew off a person's body. This is probably why Jesus died before the other two men he was crucified. The point here is that if anyone were to survive a crucifixion, it wouldn't have been someone who had been whipped that brutally and lost that much blood.

Let's be honest, when what we believe as Christians is said out loud, it sounds pretty crazy. A virgin gave birth in a feeding trough to a man who lived perfectly. He did things like turn water into wine and multiply bread and fish and control the weather and was ultimately killed. However, He rose from dead and appeared to a lot of people proving that it happened. These same people watched Him float up into heaven. Oh and one day, we believe He's coming back to get us on a white horse. We believe that. So if someone asks a Christian, "*Hey do you believe all that?*" The answer would be, "*Yeah. Yeah that's what I believe.*" But compare that to people saying Jesus didn't really die? After Jesus was brutally beaten and scourged, carried a heavy wooden cross on His back, had spikes driven through His feet and hands, and was pierced deep into His side by a spear, He didn't die.² In the words of Cris Carter, "*Come on man.*"

On top of that, if Jesus had somehow survived, one would have to explain how He slipped past that garrison of 16 highly trained and motivated Roman soldiers and convinced His disciples that in His battered and weakened condition He was indeed the Lord of all the earth and held the keys to eternity.

So the theory that Jesus didn't really die just doesn't hold up either.

Option Three: Jesus Really Did Rise From the Dead.

This is by far the simplest explanation and seems to be the most compelling. This is what Christians have historically believed: Jesus was resurrected from the dead, appeared to His disciples, and commissioned them to go into the world testifying to His resurrection. So if this option is the simplest and seemingly the most compelling, why would people not accept it?

The German philosopher Wolfhart Pannenburg gives us a pretty good answer. For the record, Pannenburg rejected biblical inherency and was anything but a touchy-feely, Evangelical type of guy. He wrote, "*The evidence for Jesus' resurrection is so strong that nobody would question it except for two things: First, it is a very unusual event. And second, if you believe it happened, you have to change the way you live.*"

First, Pannenburg says this was an unusual event. Yes indeed professor. But honestly, some people just may not want to consider a supernatural explanation because it is unusual. Ironically, if you watch a Discovery or History Channel documentary about Jesus' resurrection, most people giving commentary or thought about how it couldn't possibly have happened are speaking in the name of good history and science, as if taking those disciplines seriously means refusing even to consider miraculous evidence. However, closing yourself off to certain types of explanations in the name of science or critical history, no matter how compelling they are, is the definition of closed-mindedness!

Second, Pannenburg makes the greater point that if it was true, one has to change the way that they live. Because if Jesus rose from the dead, that means that He is Lord over about all creation, salvation, and history. Let me ask you this question as we walk into 1 Corinthians 15 together these next few weeks: Have you ever considered the evidence for Jesus' resurrection on its own terms?

² Speaking of the physical and emotional horror of the crucifixion, the ancient Roman poet Cicero said that, "Even the mere word, cross, must remain far not only Fromm the lips of the citizens of Rome, but also from their thoughts, their eyes, their ears." (Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Pro Rabirio*, V, 16)

I want to challenge you these next few weeks to be open-minded enough to consider the evidence on its own terms. To walk with Peter into that empty tomb and really think about what happened. And consider that it may have actually been something like this:

*Suddenly the air was filled with strange and sweet perfume
Light that came from everywhere drove shadows from the room
Jesus stood before me with His arms held open wide
And I fell down on my knees and just clung to Him and cried*

*He raised me to my feet and as I looked into His eyes
Love was shining out from Him like sunlight from the skies
Guilt and my confusion disappeared in sweet release
And every fear I'd ever had just melted into peace*

Primer

A Short Biblical Theology of Resurrection

As the closing words of the Nicene Creed remind us, Christianity has always affirmed that believers should, “*Look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and to life in the world to come.*” The two clauses in this ancient creed contain two critical and related ideas of our Christian hope: resurrection and life in the world to come.

This hope of our own resurrection leading to life in the world to come has been secured “*through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*” (1 Peter 1:3). Indeed, as we will see in 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul notes that the resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of believers are inextricably linked (1 Corinthians 15:12-28). Accordingly, this is important to understand: what Christians ultimately hope for is not an ethereal existence in an extraterrestrial place called heaven, but resurrection life in a renewed creation.

The Hope of Resurrection in the Old Testament

The Old Testament does not have too much to say about the hope of resurrection, but God is clearly presented as sovereign over both life and death. Consider these verses that attest to this:

- In the song of Moses, where God says, “*See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive.*” (Deuteronomy 32:39)
- In the song of Hannah, she acknowledges that “*the LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.*” (1 Samuel 2:6).

Both of these verses and their usage of the phrase “kill and make alive/bring to life” suggest that God’s power to raise the dead is what is being discussed. Granted, neither Moses nor Hannah is claiming that they have actually seen God raise the dead. Instead, they are simply praising Him that He has the sovereign power to do it. However, a few books to the right when the Old Testament gets to the life of Elijah and Elisha, the potential of God’s resurrection power is activated in a very real sense when Elijah raises the widow at Zarephath’s son and Elisha raises the Shunammite’s son from the dead (1 Kings 17:17-24 and 2 Kings 4:18-37).

More explicit resurrection language is expressed in subsequent Old Testament prophetic books like Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.

- Isaiah 25:7-9 tells us that God will “*swallow up death forever.*” Contrary to popular sayings, in biblical thought death is not a welcome friend. Instead, to quote Andrew Peterson in his song *His Heart Beats*, “*The last enemy to be destroyed is death.*” Even though death has already been conquered by Jesus through His resurrection, it still awaits its final defeat when it is “swallowed up forever.” The fact that Isaiah uses the verb “swallow” here, as Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 15, makes the story of resurrection all the more felt and authentic experience. The act of swallowing, instead of destroying, connotes that something becomes a part of a person. In this verse, it is as if the terrible experience of death does not go away, but rather becomes a part of the story and makes the sweetness of the end all the better. Think of what Samwise Gamgee asked Gandalf in *The Return of the King*: “*Is everything sad going to come untrue?*” That sad things “come untrue” or

death is “swallowed” does not mean we forget about them altogether. Rather, God takes the painful things with devastating effects and reweaves them for a good purpose so that we experience the good things of resurrection all the more.

- In Ezekiel 37, the famous dry bones portray Israel’s physical restoration from their metaphorical death in exile. However, there is no way that Ezekiel uses this imagery if the concept of resurrection was not familiar in Israel.
- Daniel 12 might be the most clear and key Old Testament text regarding the resurrection however. Daniel writes that people who were physically dead are “awakened”, resurrection has eternal consequences, and the faithful are gloriously transformed (Daniel 12:2-3).

While these key Old Testament texts may not contain all of the pieces for a full understanding of the resurrection, they do form the foundation for believers to “*look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and to life in the world to come.*”

The Anticipation of the Resurrection in the New Testament

In the stories related in the four Gospels, it seems that belief in a future resurrection of the dead was widely embraced within first century Judaism. Of course there were some exceptions, like the Sadducees, who disagreed with the idea of resurrection (Mark 12:18-27; Acts 23:8) because they claimed to find no support for resurrection in the Law of Moses. Apparently, they weren’t reading Deuteronomy 32:39 like we were!

Resurrection was also a dominant theme in the life and ministry of Jesus. In addition to teaching a spiritual resurrection for his followers (John 11:25) and a physical resurrection for himself (Luke 9:21-22), Jesus clearly spoke of a future resurrection of the dead (Luke 11:31-32; John 5:28-29; 6:39-58). More than simply discussing the prospect of resurrection however, He displayed its possibility in His miracles when He raised Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:35-43), the widow of Nain’s son (Luke 7:11-17), and Lazarus (John 11:1-44). Though these people who were brought back to life died again, like those in the Old Testament they were a part of a miraculous work that anticipated the future reality of resurrection.

The Reality of Resurrection in the New Testament

For New Testament authors, Jesus’ resurrection is both a model and a guarantee of the future resurrection of believers (Acts 26:23; 1 Corinthians 15:20; 2 Corinthians 4:14). According to our “already but not yet” theological construction, Christians do experience the future now while the complete and amazing reality awaits the last day, when “the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:52). Specifically 1 Corinthians 15 as well as other New Testament passages (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Philippians 3:20-21; Revelation 20:11-15) clearly link the future resurrection of the dead with the return of Christ. It might be helpful to think of this reality like a thunderstorm rolling in across the flat, Texas plain. Before the storm arrives, one can see the lighting, feel the wind shift and the air get cooler. There might even be some rain droplets or mist that have blown in before the deluge. This is how we are to think about about experiencing what is to come already but still waiting for the full reality to come upon us.

This brings up some questions about timelines then. Does the future resurrection that the authors of the New Testament proclaim happen to believer immediately after death or is there a time of waiting for resurrection after death. From the texts previously noted, and especially 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, it would seem that there are two separate events that take place for a believer after death: being away from the body in death means to be at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6) and yet there is a time of waiting for our final, resurrected state (2 Corinthians 5:1-5). While being with the Lord immediately after death allows Paul to somewhat reluctantly welcome death, his full and ultimate hope, as well as our own, is to come with the resurrection.

Accordingly, we might think of the current heaven as a layover in an airport while waiting for a plane. Now granted, it's a pretty incredible layover totally unmatched by anything that frequent flyer status in Delta and American Airlines could offer. After all, believers are with God Himself. And yet, there is coming a day when the model of Jesus' resurrection will come to fruition as the guarantee of our own. Even more than that however, to quote N.T. Wright, "*One day God is going to do with the entire cosmos what he had already done with the resurrected Jesus.*" We have not concept of how a glorified Grand Canyon will look or a glorified NY Strip will taste. It's probably pretty great though.

The Nature of the Resurrection Body

So if Jesus' resurrection is in essence the trailer to the blockbuster that is our own resurrection to come, specifically what can we expect it to be like? Paul reflects on the nature of the resurrection body in Corinthians 15:35-57. While he notes that there is some degree of similarity with the natural body, Paul's emphasis here is clearly on the distinction between the mortal body inherited from the first Adam and the immortal body secured through Jesus, the second Adam. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 15 he notes the differences between the natural and the spiritual body in vv. 42-49:

- The body is buried as perishable, but raised imperishable.
- The body is buried in dishonor, but is raised in glory.
- The body is buried in weakness, but is raised in power.

What it comes down to is that our resurrection bodies will be like Jesus' resurrection body (1 Corinthians 15:49). Which is pretty amazing when we consider what Jesus did in post-resurrection appearances: He had a physical body that people could touch (Luke 24:39) and He did physical activities like eating fish (John 24:15). However, in His resurrection body, Jesus is also able to do miraculous things like walk through walls and teleport. Perhaps these sort of abilities will come in handy in the new heavens when we want to explore the furthest stars and planets in our newly glorified universe.

Accordingly, the apostle Paul is not suggesting that our resurrection will be ethereal and non-physical, but rather that our mortal bodies inherited from Adam just won't do for an eternal inheritance (1 Corinthians 15:50). This is why everyone must undergo this bodily, perishable to imperishable change. Because we need to be outfitted for their eternal inheritance. Until that time however, we continue to eagerly wait as we look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and to life in the world to come.



Small Group Weekly Sessions

Small groups at Faith Fellowship are designed to provide the context and resources to help every person at Faith Fellowship take their next step as disciples of Jesus, even if their first step is their next step. Consider these questions and ideas to help you take your next step as a disciple.

March 21

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Small groups at Faith Fellowship are designed to provide the context and resources to help every person at Faith Fellowship take their next step as disciples of Jesus, even if their first step is their next step. Consider these questions and ideas to help you take your next step as a disciple.

Bible Reading Plan

There is no substitute for spending regular time reading and reflecting on God's Word. In addition to your primary study in 1 Corinthians this week, read these passages that will take you on a journey through the story of Easter.

Monday: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Tuesday: Matthew 20:17-19; John 11:1-12:11

Wednesday: Luke 19:28-44

Thursday: Luke 19:45-20

Friday: John 12:27-50

Saturday: Luke 22:1-23; John 13:1-30

Sunday: John 13:31-14:31

Interact with the Passage

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 this week by using the H.E.A.R. method before Sunday, March 21. Engaging the text in this way will help you better understand and discuss the Scripture with your small group.

- **Highlight:** Read and observe everything in the passage.
- **Explain:** Based on your reading, discover what the passage means in its context.
- **Apply:** Understand how the meaning of the passage affects your life.
- **Respond in Prayer:** Pray God's word back to him, asking to believe, share, and put the Bible into practice in your life and relationships.

Feel free to interact with the Scripture at your own pace throughout the week. Remember to interact with the Scripture and think through the discussion questions before you're small group meets. In small groups, we'll discuss what we learned from the Scripture the previous week as well as our answers to the discussion questions together.

Open It Up

- What's something you're excited about that's coming in the next year? What are you doing to prepare? How do you feel while you wait? As Christians, we have a lot to look forward to. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul reminds the church about the hope of the resurrection and why its reality is the foundation of our faith. For the next few weeks, we'll unpack what the resurrection means for our future as well as how the resurrection should affect our lives in the present.

Discussion Questions

- Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 utilizing the H.E.A.R. method. What stood out to you in your interactions with the Scripture this week?
- What is your understanding of Jesus's resurrection? Have you thought of it as a big deal? Or is it something you don't pay much attention to?
- Paul uses chapter 15 to take the Corinthians back to the basics of their faith. He needed to remind them of their roots in the midst of all the issues they were facing. What does Paul say is the most important part of the gospel story in verses 3–14?
- Paul cites several sources of authority for the truth of Jesus' bodily resurrection. What are those sources?
- If Paul taught the Corinthians about Jesus' death and resurrection "in accordance with the Scriptures," then he is talking about the Old Testament. What are some Old Testament texts that reflect or teach the truth of Christ's resurrection, or resurrection in general (see page 14)?
- How does Paul's personal story of conversion legitimize the reality of the resurrection? What does his contrast of "in vain/not in vain" (15:2, 10) contribute to his story?
- What eyewitness evidence did Paul cite as proof of Christ's resurrection? Why are the eye-witness accounts of Jesus's resurrection important to our faith? How do these eye-witness accounts impact the way you think about the resurrection?
- How does the certainty of Christ's resurrection give you hope and strength today?

Next Steps for the Week

- **Pray:** When you pray this week, thank God for raising Jesus from the dead. Pray for His Spirit to show you what it means to live a life that reflects the power and certainty of His resurrection as you study 1 Corinthians 15.
- **Read:** Read the primer *The Resurrection of Jesus: What Actually Happened* on page 9 of this guide.
- **Listen:** Listen to the song "His Heart Beats" from the Faith Fellowship Spotify playlist or your preferred music provider. Consider and meditate on the visceral lyrics describing the resurrection of Jesus in the song.
- **Text:** Be sure to text the word "Easter" to 832-479-4633 this week. By doing this, you will experience Holy Week in real time through text messages sent to your phone.
- **Look Ahead:** Use the H.E.A.R. method to interact with 1 Corinthians 15:12-34 this week.

March 28

1 Corinthians 15:12-49

Small groups at Faith Fellowship are designed to provide the context and resources to help every person at Faith Fellowship take their next step as disciples of Jesus, even if their first step is their next step. Consider these questions and ideas to help you take your next step as a disciple.

Bible Reading Plan

There is no substitute for spending regular time reading and reflecting on God's Word. In addition to your primary study in 1 Corinthians this week, read these passages that will take you on a journey through the story of Easter.

Monday: John 17

Tuesday: Matthew 26:36-56

Wednesday: Luke 22:54-65; Matthew 26:57-68

Thursday: Luke 23:1-25; John 18:28-19:16

Friday: Matthew 27:45-56; Luke 23:44-49; John 19:28-37

Saturday: Psalm 22; Isaiah 52:13-15, 53; John 15:9-17

Sunday: Mark 15: 42-47; Matthew 27:62-66; Matthew 16:13-27

Interact with the Passage

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-49 this week by using the H.E.A.R. method before Sunday, March 28. Engaging the text in this way will help you better understand and discuss the Scripture with your small group.

- **Highlight:** Read and observe everything in the passage.
- **Explain:** Based on your reading, discover what the passage means in its context.
- **Apply:** Understand how the meaning of the passage affects your life.
- **Respond in Prayer:** Pray God's word back to him, asking to believe, share, and put the Bible into practice in your life and relationships.

Feel free to interact with the Scripture at your own pace throughout the week. Remember to interact with the Scripture and think through the discussion questions before you're small group meets. In small groups, we'll discuss what we learned from the Scripture the previous week as well as our answers to the discussion questions together.

Open It Up

- We live in a world of cause and effect. Something happens which produces a result. Sometimes it is good and happy events that produce good outcomes and yet we also can see that seemingly sad and tragic events can produce good outcomes. What events or things can you think of in history that resulted in the advent of something good?

Discussion Questions

- Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-34. What stood out to you in your interactions with the Scripture this week or with the sermon.
- Paul continues to explain the impact of the resurrection in verses 12–22. Why is Jesus’s resurrection important? How does it relate to our future resurrection?
- Some of the Corinthians apparently didn’t believe Christians would rise again. What were the Corinthians denying, by way of denying a future resurrection? How does Paul explain this issue in verses 12–19?
- Jesus died for our sins, but His resurrection is what gives us life and solidifies our eternity with him. What would it mean for us if Jesus were still dead? How does knowing about the importance of the resurrection impact your understanding of Christ’s death?
- Read 1 Corinthians 15:35–58. Paul spends this half of chapter 15 talking about what eternity will be like. What’s your understanding of eternity? What questions do you have?
- Paul talks extensively about our resurrection bodies. He calls them “heavenly” bodies. Paul describes our resurrection bodies as spiritual, or *pneumatikos*. While *pneumatikos* often refers to something being the opposite of physical—spirit, intangible, immaterial—we shouldn’t jump to the idea that our resurrected bodies will not be physical. Rather, Paul uses this word to talk about the difference between our fallen, mortal bodies and our renewed, sinless bodies that we’ll carry into eternity. Those very physical bodies will be free from sin and death entirely. Reread verses 42–44. What type of contrast does Paul make about the old body and the raised body?
- What words does Paul use to describe our resurrected bodies in 1 Corinthians 15:35–44?
- Imagine having a body that’s never been worn down, bruised, or damaged. What gets you most excited about having that kind of body in the future? How does it impact your view of your life in eternity with Christ?

Next Steps for the Week

- **Pray:** Each day this week, set aside some time to specifically ask that God would open your eyes to areas of your life that need to change to better display His gospel to the world.
- **Read:** Read the primer *A Short Biblical Theology of Resurrection* on page 14 of this guide.
- **Listen:** Listen to the song “Remember Me” from the Faith Fellowship Spotify playlist or your preferred music provider. Consider and meditate especially on the final verses describing the return of Jesus.
- **Look Ahead:** Use the H.E.A.R. method to interact with 1 Corinthians 15:5-58 for April 11. Remember that we will not have Small Groups on Easter Sunday.

April 11

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Small groups at Faith Fellowship are designed to provide the context and resources to help every person at Faith Fellowship take their next step as disciples of Jesus, even if their first step is their next step. Consider these questions and ideas to help you take your next step as a disciple.

Bible Reading Plan

There is no substitute for spending regular time reading and reflecting on God's Word. In addition to your primary study in 1 Corinthians this week, read these passages that will take you on a journey through the story of Easter.

Monday: Matthew 28:1-10

Tuesday: Luke 24:13-49; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

Wednesday: John 20:19-31

Thursday: John 21

Friday: Mark 16:14-20; Acts 1:1-11

Saturday: Romans 5:1-6:14

Sunday: Romans 8:1-17; Galatians 3:26-4:7

Interact with the Passage

Remember that we will not have Small Group on April 4 as it is Easter Sunday. So read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 this week by using the H.E.A.R. method before Sunday, April 11. Engaging the text in this way will help you better understand and discuss the Scripture with your small group.

- **Highlight:** Read and observe everything in the passage.
- **Explain:** Based on your reading, discover what the passage means in its context.
- **Apply:** Understand how the meaning of the passage affects your life.
- **Respond in Prayer:** Pray God's word back to him, asking to believe, share, and put the Bible into practice in your life and relationships.

Feel free to interact with the Scripture at your own pace throughout the week. Remember to interact with the Scripture and think through the discussion questions before you're small group meets. In small groups, we'll discuss what we learned from the Scripture the previous week as well as our answers to the discussion questions together.

Open It Up

- If you polled your neighbors, up and down your street, regarding their views of the afterlife, what sort of opinions do you think you'd uncover?

Discussion Questions

- Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58. What stood out to you in your interactions with the Scripture this week or with the sermon.
- How is the resurrection of the dead described in verses 50–54? What stands out most to you about the entire process?
- Paul says that flesh and blood cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Why is our transformation from corruptible to incorruptible so important? How does our transformation during the resurrection play into our ability to enter into the kingdom of God?
- There were many eyewitness accounts of Jesus’s resurrection that are important to our understanding of what happened. While each group responded differently, we can learn a lot from their stories.
 - Read Matthew 28:1–15. The guards knew the same truth as the women who showed up at the tomb—Jesus was alive. But the two groups had very different responses. The guards show us that knowing the resurrection happened isn’t enough—you have to act on it. In what ways are you living as if you believe in Jesus’s resurrection? How should believing in the resurrection of Christ influence our daily decisions?
 - Read Luke 24:36–49. Jesus explains to the disciples that he appeared to them so they could be a witness to his resurrection and understand his need to fulfill Scripture. What do Jesus’s words in verses 44–49 show us about the importance of his appearance to the disciples? If Jesus had not appeared to anyone after his resurrection, what are some issues that could have come up? Why is Jesus being resurrected in flesh, rather than as a spirit, important for the disciples to witness?
 - How does Jesus’s appearance tie into our understanding of our own future resurrected bodies?
- Talking about the resurrection can be difficult because we have to acknowledge the pain and fear of death. Since we have a guaranteed eternal life to spend with Jesus, how does the resurrection shape the way you think about dying? What fears do you have? How does the truth of eternal life impact those fears?
- Paul explains that the resurrection is also a display of Christ’s victory over death. Why is Christ’s victory over death important? How would death have an effect on our future eternity with Christ?

Next Steps for the Week

- **Pray:** As you reflect on the resurrection, thank God for his written word and the ability to read about his resurrection and victory over death. Thank him for the promise of eternity.
- **Consider:** How has this study of 1 Corinthians and the resurrection impacted you? What could you do this week to remind yourself of the hope we have in eternity with God?
- **Listen:** Listen to the song “*Christ Our Hope in Life and Death*” from the Faith Fellowship Spotify playlist or your preferred music provider. Consider and meditate especially on the final verses describing the return of Jesus.
- **Look Ahead:** Use the H.E.A.R. method to interact with Deuteronomy 6:1-9 this week.



Family Discipleship Ideas

Throughout Church history, families have joined together to commemorate and celebrate the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. No season is more central to our faith or more important to emphasize with the next generation. The following pages provide your family with easy-to-implement ideas for each day from Palm Sunday to Easter. Try one or more to help your family focus on the true meaning Easter of this Holy Week together.

Palm Sunday

These family discipleship portions are built around Faith Fellowship's framework for family discipleship: Faith Talks and Faith Walks.

- **Faith Talks** will help you build intentional time into the rhythm of family life for the purpose of thinking about, talking about, and living out the gospel.
- **Faith Walks** are activities or discussions in the course of daily life that turn a child's attention toward the presence and power of God in every part of life.

During this Easter season, consider choosing a specific time during the week to have a family devotional time. As you will see from each of these suggestions and ideas, this really is a simple time and not intimidating. God has not called you as a parent to necessarily have a church service with your children, but rather to consistently and intentionally communicate the truth and love of Jesus to them.

On the Sunday before Easter, take a few minutes after breakfast, lunch, or dinner to celebrate Jesus' arrival in to Jerusalem. Consider the following steps and activities for use with your kids and grandkids.

Faith Talk: Read John 12:12-15 with your kids and pose these questions to better understand the reading:

Question: What did the people shout as Jesus entered the city riding a donkey?

Answer: *They shouted "Hosanna!" which means "Save us!"*

Question: Why do you think the people were so excited about Jesus' arrival?

Answer: *They had great hopes because they had seen Him do many miracles, including raising a man from the dead! (John 11:38-44)*

Question: Do you think the people realized Jesus would need to die on a cross in order to bring them salvation?

Answer: *No. In fact, Jesus had to explain it to his closest followers. (John 12:20-33)*

Faith Walk: A parent stands at the top of stairs and tells the children he/she wants them to join him/her upstairs in "heaven." But the kids can't touch the stairs or the railing. Let them mull over the dilemma. If they can't figure out the solution, coach them to ask the parent to come downstairs and carry the kids up on his/her back. Explain that Jesus came down to us to make a way because we could not do it ourselves.

Pray: Turn the excited anticipation of the Palm Sunday crowd into your family's prayer by reading aloud the following: Dear Lord, we know that you are the One who came to bring us salvation. We know that You are the true King of our lives. We praise You this day for coming down to us so that we could spend eternity with You. We look forward to this Holy Week and focusing on what You did for us. Amen

Monday-Friday

Take a few minutes at breakfast, dinner, or bedtime to focus the family on key events from the final week of Jesus' earthly ministry. For more details and further explanations, check out faithfellowshipfortbend.com/easter.

Monday: Read John 13:1-17. In ancient households, the lowest job of all was to wash the feet of guests. Usually this task was only carried out by servants. Discuss the many ways Jesus humbled Himself while on earth. Take turns washing one another's feet and then read Philippians 2:5-8 before praying, "Lord Jesus, thank You for humbling Yourself for us. Help us to do the same with one another. Amen."

Tuesday: Read John 17:20-23. Jesus actually prayed for those of us who would believe in Him in the future. He asked His Father to help us show unity by loving each other. Discuss how your family can show love to each other in a way that pictures God's love. Pray, "Lord Jesus, help our family to reflect the kind of selfless love you prayed for us. Amen."

Wednesday: Read Luke 22:47-54. Even while Jesus is being wrongfully arrested, He shows love and compassion for the arresting soldiers. Pray, "Lord Jesus, help us to show compassion and to love one another even when others treat us wrongly. Amen."

Thursday: Read Luke 23:13-34. Pilate condemned Jesus because he feared a riot among the people. These were many of the same people who shouted "Hosanna" just a few days earlier as Jesus arrived in Jerusalem. Later, while on the cross, Jesus prayed for Pilate, the soldiers, and the crowd when He said "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Pray, "Lord Jesus, thank You for being willing to forgive us even when we do the most terrible things. Give us the grace to also forgive one another. Amen."

Good Friday: Help your children understand the meaning of Jesus' death on the cross with one of these simple activities depending on age and maturity..

Younger Kids: Have kids nail two boards together in the shape of a cross. Then read Romans 3:23 together. Now have each person in the family write their name on a piece of paper along with the word "Sins." Invite each person to list the sinful things he or she has done (i.e., losing temper, saying bad words, gossiping). Very young children can simply draw mean faces. Then, one at a time, allow each person to nail his or her list to the cross as a symbol of Jesus taking our sins with Him and paying the penalty for our wrongdoing. Conclude by reading Romans 5:8 and Romans 6:23 together before praying "Lord Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross to pay for our sins. Amen."

Older Kids: Watch one of the following films that feature Jesus' trial, scourging and death depending on age and maturity of your kids. Talk about the film and then pray together, "Lord Jesus, thank You for the sacrifice You made on our behalf. Amen."

Risen: A 2016 film rated PG-13 that depicts a Roman tribune tasked with finding the body of the resurrected Jesus.

The Passion of the Christ: A 2004 film rated R for violent intensity during the scourging of Jesus. It is a powerful reminder of Christ's sacrifice, for viewing by adults and older teens.

Holy Saturday

Take a few minutes at breakfast, dinner, or bedtime to reflect on what it was like for Jesus' followers after they lay Him in the tomb.

Faith Talk: Read Matthew 27:57-66 with your kids and pose these questions to better understand the reading:

Discuss: Have each member of the family name one person who knew Jesus and describe what they must have been thinking/feeling on the day before His resurrection. (i.e., Peter felt guilty for denying Jesus, Mary felt grief over losing her beloved son, Pilate felt nervous for condemning an innocent man.)

Pray: "Lord Jesus, thank you for going into the grave so that we could overcome death! Amen."

Faith Walk: Before going to bed, spend time together making "Resurrection Cookies" by following these directions.

Ingredients: 1 cup whole pecans, 1 tsp vinegar, 3 egg whites, Pinch salt, 1 cup sugar, Zippered baggie, Wooden spoon, Tape, Bible

Step 1: Preheat oven to 300 degrees. This is important for the dish so don't wait until you're half done with the recipe!

Step 2: Place pecans in zipper baggie and let children beat them with the wooden spoon to break into small pieces. Explain that after Jesus was arrested, He was beaten by the Roman soldiers.

Read John 19:1-3: *"Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip. The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him. "Hail! King of the Jews!" they mocked, as they slapped him across the face."*

Step 3: Let each child smell the vinegar. Put 1 tsp vinegar into mixing bowl. Explain that when Jesus was thirsty on the cross, He was given vinegar to drink.

Read John 19:28-30: *"Jesus knew that His mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture He said, "I am thirsty." A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to His lips. When Jesus had tasted it, He said, "It is finished!" Then He bowed His head and gave up His Spirit."*

Step 4: Add egg whites to vinegar. Eggs represent life. Explain that Jesus gave His life to give us life.

Read John 10:10-11. *"The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep."*

Step 5: Sprinkle a little salt into each child's hand. Let them taste it and brush the rest into the bowl. Explain that this represents the salty tears shed by Jesus' followers, and the bitterness of our own sin.

Read Luke 23:27: *"A large crowd trailed behind, including many grief-stricken women."*

Step 6: So far, the ingredients for Resurrection Cookies are not very appetizing. Add 1 cup sugar. Explain that the sweetest part of the story is that Jesus died because He loves us. He wants us to know and belong to Him.

Read Psalm 34:8: *"Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in Him!"*

Read John 3:16: *"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."*

Step 7: Beat with a mixer on high speed for 12 to 15 minutes until stiff peaks are formed. Explain that the color white represents the purity in God's eyes of those whose sins have been cleansed by Jesus.

Read Isaiah 1:18: *"Come now, let's settle this," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool."*

John 3:1-3: *"There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. "Rabbi," he said, "we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you." Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again,[a] you cannot see the Kingdom of God."*

Step 8: Fold in broken nuts. Drop by teaspoons onto waxed paper covered cookie sheet. Explain that each mound represents the rocky tomb where Jesus' body was laid.

Read Matthew 27:57-60: *"As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea who had become a follower of Jesus, went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth. He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left."*

Step 9: Put the Resurrection cookies in the oven, close the door and turn the oven OFF. Give each child a piece of tape and seal the oven door. Explain that Jesus' tomb was sealed.

Read Matthew 27:65-66: *"Pilate replied, "Take guards and secure it the best you can." So they sealed the tomb and posted guards to protect it."*

Step 10: Go to bed. Explain that they may feel sad to leave the Resurrection cookies in the oven overnight. Jesus' followers were in despair when the tomb was sealed.

Read John 16:20-22: *"I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy. It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world. So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy."*

Step 10: On Easter morning, open the oven and Resurrection cookies to everyone. Notice the cracked surface and take a bite. The cookies are hollow! On the first Easter, Jesus' followers were amazed to find the tomb open and empty.

Read Matthew 28:1-9: *"Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb. Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint. Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as He said would happen. Come, see where His body was lying. And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that He has risen from the dead, and He is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see Him there. Remember what I have told you." The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angel's message. 9 And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they ran to Him, grasped his feet, and worshiped Him."*

Easter Sunday

Purchase a "Resurrection Eggs" kit (go to christianbook.com or Mardel to order) or create your own with empty plastic eggs numbered 1-12. Each egg should contain a symbol that prompts re-telling part of the Easter week story as follows:

Egg #1: A small leaf as a "palm branch" symbolizing the scene described in Matthew 21:1-11

Egg #2: A small cloth with perfume on it to symbolize the scene in John 12:2-8

Egg #3: A piece of cereal to illustrate the Last Supper described in Matthew 26:17-19

Egg #4: 3 dimes to symbolize Judas betraying of Christ as described in Matthew 27:3

Egg #5: Toothpicks glued in the shape of a cross to reflect Jesus carrying His cross as described in John 19:17

Egg #6: A small thorny branch or a single thorn to show Jesus' crown as described in John 19:2

Egg #7: Small dice to show soldiers gambled for Jesus clothes as explained in John 19:23-24

Egg #8: A tiny nail or straight pin to illustrate nailing Jesus to the cross from John 19:18, 37 & 20:25-29

Egg #9: A small bit of sponge to illustrate Matthew 27:34

Egg #10: Several whole cloves or other spices to reflect Jesus' burial as described in John 19:40

Egg #11: A small rock to illustrate the tomb covering of John 20:1 Empty to show "He is risen!" per John 20:6-7

Egg #12: Empty to show "He is risen!" per John 20:6-7

After this activity, store the eggs in a carton and then allow the children to have chocolate eggs or some other goodies to celebrate the joy of Jesus' resurrection from the dead! Then encourage them to share the story with family, friends and others throughout the day.

Recommended Resources

As we study this pivotal chapter of Scripture, we have provided this list of recommended resources to equip you to go deeper into the themes of 1 Corinthians 15. Consider the following list of resources:

Recommended Books

The Case for Easter by Lee Strobel

How credible is the evidence for, and against, the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Focusing his award-winning skills as a legal journalist on history's most compelling enigma, Lee Strobel retraces the startling findings that led him from atheism to belief in the biblical New Testament story.

More than a Carpenter by Josh McDowell

"Why don't the names of Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius offend people? The reason is that these others didn't claim to be God, but Jesus did." By addressing questions about scientific and historical evidence, the validity of the Bible, and proofs of the resurrection, McDowell helps the reader come to an informed and intelligent decision about whether Jesus was a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord.

Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church by N.T. Wright

Wright attempts to do three things in this book. First, he exposes current Christianity's muddled views of the afterlife by taking us through the historical evidence for and the theological explanation of Jesus' resurrection. Second, he answers questions regarding eschatology that necessarily arise from his Resurrection theology – showing how his eschatological framework best fits the New Testament witness. Third, he shows how the Christian's future hope of resurrection forms the foundation for current social action, evangelism, and spirituality.

Heaven: A Comprehensive Guide to Everything the Bible Says About Our Eternal Home by Randy Alcorn

Like a textbook, this might be the most comprehensive and definitive book on Heaven to date. Alcorn invites his readers to picture Heaven the way Scripture describes it—a bright, vibrant, and physical New Earth, free from sin, suffering, and death, and brimming with Christ's presence, wondrous natural beauty, and the richness of human culture as God intended it.

Recommended Music

Resurrection Letters: Volume One by Andrew Peterson

The Life of Christ Quintology by Keith and Kristyn Getty