



COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY • WEEK 1

Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?

A guided conversation from the April 12, 2026 sermon by Pastor James Drake • 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

SUMMARY

Easter was a week ago. The candles are gone, the flowers have wilted, and the news cycle has moved on. So Pastor James Drake opened **1 Corinthians 15:1-11** with a sharper question: *did it actually happen?*

James walked us through what Paul wrote barely twenty years after the empty tomb — to a real church, naming real witnesses by the hundreds, most of whom were still alive when he wrote. Go and ask them. The first Christians weren't asking people to take a leap of feeling. They were saying *here is what we saw, here is who saw it, and our claim rises or falls on whether it's true.*

And then Paul drives the knife: *if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.* There's no soft version of Christianity that survives the loss of the empty tomb. Either the resurrection happened and changes everything, or it didn't and Christianity is one more wreck of a sincere movement.

James' point: don't settle that question on a feeling. Settle it on what is settled — in history, in the witnesses, in the Scriptures Daniel was already pointing toward when he wrote of the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven.

PRAYER

OPENING PRAYER

Father, we come to You as a faith family that has just walked through Holy Week. Don't let the news of resurrection settle into background noise. Sharpen our hearing this week. Where doubt is real, give us the courage to name it. Where faith is real, give us the language to share it. Open Your Word to us in a fresh way. In the name of Jesus, who walked out of the tomb on the third day, amen.

START

ICE BREAKER

Who first told you about Jesus rising from the dead — by name, if you can remember? What do you remember about how they said it?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11 • ESV

"Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you... For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive..."

DANIEL 7:13-14 • ESV

"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days... And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away."

JOHN 20:24-29 • ESV

Thomas, refusing to believe until he can put his finger in the wounds — and Jesus, eight days later, inviting him to do exactly that.

01 WHAT STOOD OUT

What part of James' message has stuck with you this week? Was there an angle on the resurrection you hadn't considered before?

02 WITNESSES BY NAME

Paul names witnesses to the risen Jesus and emphasizes that **most of whom are still alive** — go and ask them. Why does he name them by number and category? What is he assuming about how truth claims get tested?

03 FAITH IS FUTILE

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 together. Paul says if Christ has not been raised, faith is **in vain**. Does that strike you as overstatement — or does the whole gospel actually hinge on this one event? Why?

04 ALREADY IN DANIEL

When Jesus stood before the high priest at His trial, He didn't quote a Psalm or a proverb. He quoted Daniel 7. **I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven**. What does it tell you that Jesus reached for THIS verse to defend Himself?

05 WHEN FAITH FEELS THINNER

Most of us have moments when faith feels thinner than usual. What role can the historical claim of the resurrection play in those moments — versus the experiential claim of feeling close to God?

06 THOMAS IN THE ROOM

Thomas refused to believe until he could touch the wounds. Jesus didn't shame him for it; He came back a week later and let him. Where do you see your own Thomas-questions? Where does Jesus' patience with Thomas land for you?

07 RECEIVED... PASS ON

Paul's pattern in 1 Corinthians 15 is **received... pass on**. Who passed the resurrection on to you, by name? And who in your life is still waiting for someone to pass it on to them?

08 EASTER ON A TUESDAY

Easter was a week ago Sunday. What does it look like – practically, in your life – to live as if the resurrection actually happened, on a Tuesday afternoon, in May?

APPLY LIFE APPLICATION

This week, treat the resurrection as a historical claim, not a feeling – and let it shape one Tuesday-afternoon decision.

- 1 Read it.** 1 Corinthians 15:1-22 in one sitting. Slow. Out loud if you can.
- 2 Name your 'if'.** If Jesus didn't rise, what changes about your week? Write the answer down.
- 3 Tell someone.** One person – what you believe and why. No script. Just honest.
- 4 Bring it back.** Come ready to share what shifted at the next group meeting.

The resurrection isn't background noise to your week. It's the load-bearing fact under your standing before God – settle your heart on what is settled in history.

REMEMBER KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ Christianity is not a feel-good ethic that mentions Jesus. It is a historical claim – that on a specific weekend in a specific city, a specific man came back from the dead.
- ▶ Paul names witnesses by category and count and tells the church to go ask them. The resurrection invites examination, not blind belief.
- ▶ Daniel 7 was the Scripture Jesus quoted to defend Himself at His trial. The resurrection vindicates that claim.
- ▶ If Christ has not been raised, Paul says, faith is futile. There is no soft version of Christianity that survives the loss of the empty tomb.
- ▶ Doubt is welcome at the table. Jesus didn't shame Thomas; He came back a week later and met him in the wound. He'll do the same with you.

Settle your heart on what is settled in history.

PRAYER CLOSING PRAYER

Risen Lord Jesus, You walked out of the tomb. You showed Your wounds to Thomas, You ate fish with Your disciples on a beach, You let five hundred people see You at one time. Don't let any of us in this room treat that lightly. Where doubt has crept in, meet us in it the way You met Thomas. Where faith has dimmed, sharpen it on the historical truth that You are alive. Make us a faith family that holds the resurrection both intellectually and pastorally – examined, settled, and shared. In Your strong, living name, amen.

CHRISTCHURCH MIAMI

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