



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?

If Jesus didn't rise, Paul says, then your faith is futile. There's no soft version of Christianity that survives the loss of the empty tomb. This week we sat with 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 and the witnesses Paul named – most of whom were still alive when he wrote, and easy to ask.

01 ICEBREAKER

What's something you believe is true that you've never personally verified – the moon landing, the existence of atoms, that Antarctica is real? What makes you trust the witnesses?

02 READ TOGETHER

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11 (ESV)

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 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, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

03 DISCUSSION

- 01** What stood out to you in James's Easter message? Was there an angle on the resurrection you hadn't considered before?
- 02** Paul lists witnesses to the risen Jesus and emphasizes that 'most of whom are still alive' – go and ask them. Why does Paul name witnesses by name and number? What is he assuming about how truth claims get tested?
- 03** 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** 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?
- 05** Paul's pattern is 'received... pass on.' What have you received about Jesus that you'd most want to pass on? Who's next on your list to pass it to?

04 **PRAY**

Thank God for the witnesses who passed the resurrection on to you – by name if you can. Then pray for one person you'd like to pass it on to, and ask the Father to open a door this week.

05 **LEADER NOTES**

Easter sermons sometimes get treated as a celebration without examination. James's angle was historicity – so meet the historical claim with historical questions, even if some feel uncomfortable. If anyone in the group is wrestling with doubt, this is the week to make doubt safe to name. Question 4 specifically opens that door – don't slam it shut with a tidy answer.

CHRISTCHURCH MIAMI

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