

WordOne Bible Study

Up From Death

by Paul Heinlein

Text: Mark 16:1-8 for Easter Day, Lectionary Series B

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

1. Have a greater sense of the mystery and power of Jesus' resurrection.
2. Identify ideas and earthly realities that make the resurrection seem unreal.

PREPARATION

If there is an adult leader who will be overseeing the group discussion he or she may want to ask a pastor or trained church worker why Mark 16:9-10 is not included in the text. The answer may help the leader and participants think on the roles of the Holy Spirit and early Christians in putting together the canon (those writings which we call biblical).

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bibles

GROUP GUIDELINES

1. Divide into small groups of 6-8 persons.
2. The leader of the group will be the participant who has been in the greatest number of states in this country. The leader will be responsible for making sure that everyone who wishes to talk has the opportunity to do so.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

As each participant lists the states he or she has visited, have him/her tell a story about one vacation (particularly one that took him/her out of state); use this opportunity to learn something about the lives of others in the group.

Special note for adult leader: Be sensitive to someone who may have recently lost a loved one or who has a family member who is terminally ill.

1. If you have had a close friend, schoolmate or relative die, what do you remember about that experience?
2. Share what you remember about your feelings.
3. Did you ever go to a funeral or, especially, see the body in a casket during the viewing period? If yes, what emotions did you experience?
4. Do funerals freak you out? Why or why not?
5. Did you want to look at the body in the casket? Why or why not?

LOOKING AT GOD'S WORD

1. Have different people in the group read, verse by verse, Mark 16:1-8.
2. The Marys and Salome left the tomb "trembling...astonished...afraid."
 - a. Was that a good "Christian" reaction?
 - b. What would be your reaction if someone told you that one of the people whose funeral you had attended was no longer dead?

- c. What if they asked you to be at the mall later that day to see the person who died? Would you go? Would you take the news seriously? Why or why not?
 - d. What if you, like the women in the text, had an angel announce that your friend or relative was alive? Would it change your reaction?
3. Undoubtedly, many people would feel "astonished...afraid" if they saw a dead person alive.
 - a. Why/How does your knowledge of biology make resurrection seem unreal?
 - b. Why/How does your experience killing flies or mosquitoes make it seem impossible? (Did a bug you killed ever come back to life?)
 - c. What is it that makes coming back from the dead seem so unreal?
 4. What do you think of when the creed says, "I believe in the resurrection of the body?" How about when Jesus says that He is "the resurrection and the life"?

REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

1. Does Thomas' response to the Easter news (John 20:24-25) seem strange?
2. How did Jesus answer Thomas' doubts (John 20:26-29)?
3. Discuss what you think Thomas felt or thought when Jesus' resurrection finally sunk in. Have you changed your thoughts or feelings concerning Easter?

CLOSING

For the closing prayer, read this first stanza of "Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands" (LSB 458):

Christ Jesus lay in death's strong bands

For our offenses given;

But now at God's right hand He stands

And brings us life from heaven.

Therefore let us joyful be

And sing to God right thankfully

Loud songs of alleluia! Alleluia!

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