

**Life Group Guide Matt 28:1–4, 11–15; John 20:1–29 “Reactions to the Empty Tomb” For the Sermon Preached on Sun Apr 2 and For Use in Life Groups through Sun Apr 9**

**Icebreaker Question**

What chore bothered you the most when you were younger?

**Pastor Richard’s Sermon Outline**

- I. The Reaction of the Guards (Matt. 28:1-4; 11-15)**
  - a. Fear (Matt. 28:1-4)
  - b. Greed (Matt. 28:11-15)
- II. The Reaction of Mary Magdalene (Matt. 28:1, 5-6; John 20:2)**
  - a. Fear (v. 5)
  - b. Doubt (vv. 5-6; John 20:2)
  - c. Unbelief (John 20:11-18)
- III. The Reaction of Peter (John 20:2-10)**
  - a. Disbelief (vv. 4-6)
  - b. Confusion (vv. 6-7)
  - c. Ignorance (v. 9)
- IV. The Reaction of John (John 20:3-10)**
  - a. Amazement (v. 5)
  - b. Belief (v. 8)
  - c. Indifference (v. 10)

**Matthew 28:1–4, 11–15**

**Read Matthew 28:1–4, 11–15: Observation**

1. In vs. 1-4, how do the guards respond to the appearance of the Angel of the Lord?
2. In vs. 11-15 how do the Jewish religious leaders respond to the news of Jesus’ resurrection? How do the guards respond?

**Interpretation**

3. Why do you think Matthew takes the time to describe the reaction of Jesus’ enemies to the resurrection of Jesus? What can we learn from this as followers of Jesus?

**Application**

4. What are some of the common claims people make in our day to explain away the resurrection of Jesus? How might you answer those objections?

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**John 20:1–29**

**Read John 20:1–18: Observation**

5. In vs. 11-15, after discovering the empty tomb, how does Mary Magdalene respond? How does her response change when she realizes that Jesus has risen from the dead?

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6. In vs. 17-18, Jesus gives Mary a mission. What is it?

**Interpretation**

7. What language does Jesus use in vs. 16-18 to describe his disciples? Do you find that language surprising given the fact that all of them doubted and most ran away and abandoned him after his arrest?

**Application**

8. How might you use the John 20, especially vs. 16-18 to encourage a Christian who is struggling with their faith? How might you use these verses to encourage a non-Christian who doesn't know how much God loves them?

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**Read John 20:19–29: Observation**

9. In v. 19, what were the disciples doing? Why?

10. In v. 20, what does Jesus do to prove he has risen from the dead?

11. In v. 21, Jesus sends his disciples on a mission. In v. 23 what does he say their mission is ultimately about?

12. In vs. 24-25, how does Thomas respond to the news that Jesus has risen from the dead?

13. How does Jesus treat Thomas in vs. 26-27? How does Thomas react in v. 28?

**Interpretation**

14. From what you know of Christian theology and the Gospel of John, what do you think Jesus means when he says, “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld” in v. 23?

15. What can we learn about God, the gospel, and our mission from the way that Jesus treats Thomas?

**Application**

16. Brainstorm with the class who it is in your immediate circle of influence that needs to hear from you about the resurrection of Jesus and the mercy and forgiveness that God is offering to everyone. Pray over that person in class and plan to start a gospel conversation with them.

17. Memorize John 20:29b: “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

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