

beyond^{the}weekend

For the sermon on April 19-20, 2014
"Doubt"



Welcome to *Beyond the Weekend*! The experiences below are designed to connect with the weekend message and fit a variety of learning styles. They provide additional readings from other sections of Scripture such as the Old Testament, Psalms, Gospels, and Epistles (letters). Take 20-30 minutes each day and enjoy your pursuit of God!



Prefer e-mail? ***Beyond the Weekend*** is also available via daily e-mails, which include links to the Scripture and the sermon video. To sign up for the daily e-mails, go to adabible.org/btw.

Day 1 Matthew 28.1-10 | He is Risen

Jesus repeatedly predicted his own death: "...the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12.40); "He must... suffer many things... be killed and on the third day be raised to life" (Matthew 16.21); "... the hands of men... will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised" (Matthew 17.22-23). Notice that while Jesus prepares his disciples for his imminent death, he also promises he will be raised from the dead.

This week Christians celebrate Jesus' fulfilled promise. Jesus rose to life, just as he said he would, as death could not hold him (Acts 2.24-28)! This day was, in the same moment, wonderful yet terrifying. Even Jesus' closest friends, stunned by fear, were stirred with profound awe and wonder at the tangible truth of this miracle. The women who came to the tomb were filled with great delight and worshipped at the feet of their faithful and trustworthy Savior.

Jesus' resurrection is illuminated in the Gospels, affirmed in the Epistles, and confessed in the ancient creeds. The certainty of this day in history has become the focal point of Christian faith. If Jesus did not rise from the dead in reality, nothing else we claim is any good. To learn more about the historical resurrection of Jesus, in the context of 1st Century Judaism, search youtube.com for N.T. Wright's video, "Did the Resurrection Happen?"

Day 2 1 Corinthians 15.29-58 | Our Resurrection

Those who believe in Jesus believe "[he] died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day" (1 Corinthians 15.3-4). Paul calls this the "gospel" or the good news and he says "by this gospel you are saved" (1 Corinthians 15.2). The good news of salvation is rooted in the certainty of Christ's resurrection from the dead. Without it, death would signal a final halt to individual human existence. With it, death is only temporary.

Christians celebrate an empty tomb and believers cling to a promise of their own resurrection. While death lost its legal foothold at the cross (Hebrews 2.14, 2 Timothy 1.10), it awaits its final elimination at Christ's return (1 Corinthians 15.23-26). God, through the work of Jesus, invites us to spiritual and physical resurrection.

Notice the contrast in today's reading: "If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die,'" (1 Corinthians 15.32) versus "when the perishable is clothed with imperishable, then... 'Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where O death, is your victory? Where O death is your sting?'" (1 Corinthians 15.54-55). Believing in Christ's resurrection and being clothed with his immortality gives us incredible hope for our own resurrection! In view of eternity, death's sting lasts only a moment. Today, contemplate what the power of Jesus' resurrection means for you while you view a classic piece of art online: <http://www.turnbacktogod.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Jesus-Resurrection-Pictures-03.jpg>.

Day 3 John 20.24-29 | Doubt

When life is difficult, questions and doubts arise effortlessly—especially when circumstances lack plausible explanations. This was true for one disciple in today's reading. Thomas, only days before, witnessed his trusted teacher and friend's death on a Roman cross. Now, his fellow disciples tell him that Jesus is alive. To question their claim seems reasonable. However, looking back, Jesus gave Thomas numerous promises of resurrection and proved the certainty of his character over and over again. If only Thomas had remembered the trustworthiness of Jesus.

What is remarkable in this passage is that Jesus invites Thomas to move through his doubt. Jesus doesn't harshly rebuke Thomas for doubting—he simply reveals his wounds and calls Thomas to believe. Maybe you, like Thomas, have doubts about the Christian faith. Today, make a list of your questions, but don't stop there. Begin to move through your doubt by asking God to reveal himself and then talk with a trusted leader at Ada Bible Church. Contact Jeff Clark, Director of Adult Ministries, at jclark@adabible.org.

Day 4 Luke 24.13-35 | Faith

When Jesus walks with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, he doesn't reveal his identity right away. Instead, in a conversation about their present concerns he points out their lack of faith, "How foolish you are and how slow to believe. . ." (Luke 24.25). In another instance after the resurrection, he appears to Thomas and says, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20.29).

Like these disciples, we struggle with shortsightedness and can't open our own eyes. Only God can do that. Though we don't see Jesus with our physical eyes as the disciples did, we can pray that the eyes of our hearts "may be enlightened" (Ephesians 1.18). When Jesus opened the Scriptures with the men on the road to Emmaus, they experienced a burning in their hearts (Luke 24.32). Take a few minutes today and pray for God to open the eyes of your heart as you reflect on the lyrics of "Give Me Faith" by Elevation Worship ([search youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)).

Day 5 1 Peter 1.3-9 | Love of God

Peter writes, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1.3) because Jesus voluntarily offered to live as a human, resisted every temptation, and became a sufficient sacrifice to pay the death sentence for our sin. Because of his divine love for his Son and for his creation, God the Father was pleased that his Son would give himself up so that Jesus' righteousness could be credited to sinners like us. This "God – in who [we] believe [is] the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that [do not exist]" (Romans 4.17). What a profound love! God desires to impart righteousness to us on account of Jesus' obedience.

When we accept this gift of extravagant mercy, how can we keep from loving the one in whom we have received new life and living hope? Even though we can't see him, we receive his love and "we [can] love [him] because he first loved us" (1 John 4.19). Allow your heart to be filled with inexpressible joy as you meditate on and memorize 1 Peter 1.8-9.

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