

# The death and resurrection of Jesus

session  
**handout**

Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?

Luke 24:26

Jesus tells his disciples that his death and resurrection are at the heart of his ministry.

## The meaning of the cross

God made the world and loves the world, yet the world is full of chaos and suffering.

God calls us to a close relationship with him. But we have turned away from God. Our hearts are restless. We are cut off by the walls of pride and guilt and fear of change. We deserve to die.

God sent Jesus to save us from our sins and their effects (the name Jesus means 'Saviour'). Jesus died in our place so that we can enjoy a new relationship with God.

The Bible speaks of the meaning of Jesus' death in the great images of salvation.

- *On the cross Jesus identified with our human predicament and took our place.*
- *As a friend betrayed, Jesus deals with all that destroys relationships and offers restoration.*
- *In his death, Jesus makes a new covenant between God and his people.*
- *In his death, Jesus pays the penalty for sin.*
- *Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*
- *In the cross, Jesus triumphs over all the powers of sin and evil.*
- *In the cross, Jesus identifies with all the pain and suffering in the world.*
- *On the cross, Jesus sets an example of perfect love.*



## The evidence for the resurrection

### The empty tomb

Jesus' tomb was empty on Easter Day, despite the guard on the grave.

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, where did his body go?

If the authorities had taken it (and why should they?) they would have produced it when claims about the resurrection were made later. The disciples were as surprised as anyone by the resurrection. Most of them were killed because of their faith in the resurrection of Jesus. It is impossible to believe that they took the body and told lies.

## The witnesses

More than 500 people claimed to see Jesus alive.

Their encounter with the risen Jesus changed their lives and they were prepared to die for their belief.

The witnesses not only saw him, they talked with him, walked with him, learned from him, ate with him and touched him.

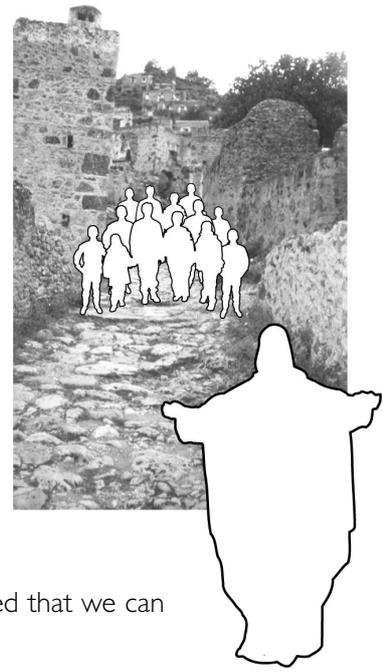
## The Church began

After the cross, the disciples were demoralized and defeated. They were afraid of the Jews and denied that they had ever known Jesus.

Only a few days later they were risking their lives to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. Their witness was to turn the world upside down. What event (other than the resurrection) could have so transformed the disciples?

## The testimony of Christians

For nearly 2,000 years, in every culture, men and women have claimed that we can know the risen Christ for ourselves, today. (1 Corinthians 15.3-6)



## The meaning of the resurrection

The resurrection gives us a completely new view of Jesus, of death and of life.

### Jesus

- *Jesus really is God's Son.*
- *Jesus was crucified for our sins and rose again.*
- *Jesus is alive today.*
- *We can know him for ourselves.*

### Death

- *Death is no longer something to be afraid of. Death has been conquered.*
- *Jesus has gone before to prepare a place for us (John 14.3).*
- *We shall all be raised to life with Christ.*

### Life

- *Eternal life begins now, not when we die.*
- *Jesus gave his life for us. We give our lives back to him in love and service.*
- *Like the disciples, we are called to be witnesses to the power of the resurrection.*

## For reflection

Reflect this week on the meaning of the cross and the resurrection.

Continue the Bible reading through Luke's Gospel.

