

GROWTH GROUPS
WEEK 7
WEEK OF APRIL 16TH

AT THE FOOT
OF THE CROSS
Lenten Sermon Series 2017

GROWTH GROUP LENT 2017 – AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS
WEEK 7 – APRIL 16, 2017 - LUKE 23:55-24:12

GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

1) What's your favorite Easter tradition?

SETTING THE CONTEXT

The gospel of Luke introduces us to a number of people by talking about their faithfulness. Luke makes sure to let us know Joseph of Arimathea, Simeon, Zechariah and Elizabeth were all faithful and upright people. He continues this by talking about how the women who followed Jesus were faithful in keeping the Sabbath and obeying God's commands. Luke emphasizes that the proper response to a relationship with God is ethical behavior.

Some have speculated that the reason the women found an empty tomb was because they went to the wrong tomb, but this does not seem possible since the women had already been to the tomb previously. When they saw how Jesus' body had been prepared, they went home and prepared more spices to give Jesus a proper burial. Interestingly, the activities for preparing the dead for burial were not prohibited on the Sabbath, even though most other activities were forbidden.

The story of the women going to the tomb is the first story in every gospel resurrection account. After having observed the initial burial, the women bring the spices to the tomb that they had prepared. Instead of finding the body of Jesus, they find an empty tomb. This is not what they expected.

The women are surprised by the presence of angels who tell them that Jesus is no longer dead. Though Luke says they were frightened the language used here probably has more to do with a response of reverent awe. After the angels remind the women of what Jesus had said about his death and resurrection they remember his words. Yet it is obvious that no one expected the resurrection to happen. The women were surprised. The disciples doubted.

Apart from the story of the ascension, all of the resurrection accounts in Luke occur on the same day and they are all located in or around Jerusalem.



Luke makes it clear that the disciples were having a hard time believing. Luke may have been trying to make the point that the disciples had their doubts and it was only when they “saw” the risen Christ that they believed. It was only an unmistakable encounter with Jesus -post resurrection - that would help them overcome their doubts and send them out to share the message of hope and joy that Jesus had preached. Peter runs to the tomb to try and sort it all out, but he will also need to “see” Jesus before he is ready to take on the mission that Jesus had entrusted to him.

EXPLORING THE TEXT

Read Luke 23:55-24:12

⁵⁵ The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. ⁵⁶ Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment. ^{24:1} On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ” ⁸ Then they remembered his words. ⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

- 2) Why do you think the women followed Joseph and watched Jesus’ body be laid in the tomb?
- 3) For the women, it took angels to remind them of what Jesus had said. As you think about your own faith, what helps you remember the things that Jesus has said?
- 4) Are you quick to tell others about your excitement for what Jesus has done in your life? If so, what inspires you to share these stories? How have people responded to you telling these stories? Or, do you find it difficult to share with others what Jesus has done in your life?
- 5) Jesus had told the disciples what was going to happen to him numerous times. Even though they had believed in Him enough to dedicate their lives to following Him, why do you think they were so surprised?
- 6) The disciples had the advantage of having seen Jesus. Do you struggle with talking about Jesus since we can no longer see him or witness him walking around on earth?
- 7) Share about a time when you have had your own doubts about God or about your faith? Was there something or someone who helped you get through that time?

BRINGING IT HOME

- 8) How can the story of Easter and the resurrection help to shape your life this week?