

One BRMC Small Group Study

Jesus Lives

Leader's Guide

Please note that this study guide accompanies the pulpit sermon on 12 April 2020. The suggestions below are not model answers but to help guide your study.

Scripture Passage:

John 20:19-23

Context:

In the midst of the worries we face, we can place our hope in a God who cares for us and who overcame death. In today's passage, we see how Jesus comforted His disciples after His resurrection and empowered them to do the work He gave them. In the same way, Jesus comforts us in our struggles and empowers us to continue to do the work He has called us to do. May Easter be a time of reflection and remembering how our God was victorious over sin and death, and that we too can be victorious over our circumstances.

Lesson Objectives:

In this lesson, we will attempt to understand the following:

- Jesus' victory over death can give us hope in the challenges we face.
- Jesus has given us His Spirit and His authority to do what He has called us to do, even in challenging circumstances.

Introductory

1. What were the disciples feeling as they huddled together in a locked room?
 - The disciples had just lost their Teacher who had been guiding and teaching them for 3 years.
 - The person they had trumpeted as the Messiah and Saviour had died, and it seemed like the battle was lost.
 - The disciples were afraid – the Pharisees had succeeded in killing Jesus and they would likely come after the disciples next.
 - The disciples were helpless – with Jesus gone, it seemed like whatever they had believed in was a lie. With Jesus gone, what were they to do?

2. What were the first words Jesus said when he appeared to his disciples? Why is that significant?
 - V.19 – Jesus came and stood among his disciples and said, "**Peace be with you!**"

- That words of peace would be the first thing Jesus said to his disciples showed how much he loved them.
- Jesus knew how fearful and helpless the disciples were and wanted to reassure them, showing them that He was truly alive, He was still in control and they had nothing to fear.

3. What else did Jesus say to his disciples? Why is this significant?

- V.21 – Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! **As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.**”
- After addressing their fear, He now addressed their helplessness – He expanded their mandate and gave them new purpose and focus for their lives.
- Just as God sent Jesus to bring salvation to the world, Jesus sent the disciples to go forth and bring the Gospel to the nations so that the people of the world would have salvation.

4. What did Jesus provide to the disciples to help them do what He was asking them to do?

- V. 22-23 – He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”
- He empowered them and equipped them with the Holy Spirit, and the authority from God.

Reflection

5. Have the current world circumstances been making you anxious and afraid?

a) What is one worry you are facing right now?

- While we may not face persecution and threats to our lives as the disciples faced, perhaps we are feeling some forms of fear and helplessness? Maybe our loved ones are struggling against the coronavirus, maybe we are facing a loss of employment or maybe we are facing a sense of isolation in this season.
- This question is meant for your group members to share their honest thoughts and feelings towards the COVID-19 situation and all the changes that have occurred as a result.
- It is also an opportunity for the group to learn more about each other’s perspectives and how best to support one another through prayer and encouragement.

b) CHRIST IS RISEN! Jesus suffered greatly but emerged victorious over death. Does this give you hope for your situation? Why or why not?

- While we face our circumstances, we must remember that the God we worship is someone who has power over our circumstances because He has the power to overcome death.
- Some of your group members may voice out that they still don’t feel hopeful despite knowing Jesus is alive. Take the time to hear their perspectives.

- It is a good time to remind your group members that just as Jesus loved His disciples and desired to comfort and reassure them in their fear, He does the same for us today because He loves us dearly as well.

Application

6. Who are people around you who need Jesus' comfort and assurance? Think about ways in which you can show Christ's love to them in such a time as this.
 - In this season, the inequalities in our communities have been brought to light. People who live from paycheck to paycheck, who struggle to find healthcare or who are unable to buy their groceries. In this time, for those of us who live in comfort, may we use the possessions that we have to give to those who have less in our community.
 - If any fears or concerns are holding us back from reaching out to the community, may we lay these before God in surrender and trust that he will multiply our "five loaves and two fishes."
 - Remember that God has given us His authority and his Holy Spirit to empower us to bring forth His Gospel to the people who are suffering in our community.
 - Wherever God has called us to, be it vocation or ministry, let us work to it diligently and give of our best to glorify the Lord. 'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.' (Colossians 3:23-24)

Prayer

7. Write out a prayer for yourself based on what you have heard and learned from this session.
 - (a) What is in your heart for yourself?
 - Perhaps you are struggling to find hope in your current circumstances:

"Loving Father, I am worried because (voice your worry to God here). I am helpless and there is no one else to turn to except You. I entrust my circumstances into Your hands. Grant me the grace to trust that You are my protector, my provider, my comfort and my strong defender. Just as Christ emerged victorious over death, help me to believe that You will bring me through these circumstances victorious, and may this time strengthen my faith and love for You. In Jesus' name, Amen."
 - (b) What is in your heart for others?
 - Perhaps you feel led to help someone who is affected by the circuit breaker measures but you don't know how:

“Gracious Father, please grant me wisdom to help (*name of person*) during this time. May you give me creativity and ideas as to how to show them Your love for them. May they see how much You love them and glorify You because of what You have done for them. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

- It is always useful to collate these prayers and to refer to them for thanksgiving and sharing next week.