

## IT'S A GOOD THING HE'S GONE!

Acts 1:1-11

### What To Do After Easter:

Acts 1:1-5

Hurry up and wait.

### The Difference An Empty Tomb Makes:

Acts 1:8-9

- ▶ The empty tomb means a living Jesus.  
John 11:25, Matthew 16:21, John 2:19, Acts 26:22-23
- ▶ The empty tomb gives us a huge advantage.  
John 16:5-11, 2 Corinthians 5:17-18, Ephesians 3:16-19
- ▶ The empty tomb gives us His power.  
Acts 1:8, John 14:9-14, Galatians 4:6
- ▶ The empty tomb makes the Christian life possible.  
Galatians 2:20, 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, Romans 12:1-2, Romans 6:11-13

### What Does It All Mean?

Romans 5:8-10

## **Growth Group Homework**

For the week of April 23, 2006

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**QUICK REVIEW:** What did you find most helpful, challenging or interesting from this week's message?

### **MY STORY**

1. Has there ever been a time in your life when you had to "hurry up and wait?"

How about a time when you sensed the Lord telling you to wait?

2. This weekend we heard about how important it is to rely on God's power to live the Christian life. Can you think of any specific circumstances or situations when we tend to rely on our own power and not God's?

### **DIGGING DEEPER**

1. The Apostle Paul emphasized the importance of the resurrection to Christians when he wrote "if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17). Suppose a friend or co-worker informed you that they attended church this Easter for the first time in quite a while. They enjoyed the experience and their curiosity was sparked. But "come on," they say, "how do you know Jesus is alive?" How could the following verses help you respond to them?

#### **Matthew 27:62-65**

The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. [63] "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' [64] So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first."

[65] "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." [NIV]

#### **1 Corinthians 15:2-8**

By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

[3] For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, [5]

and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. [6] After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. [7] Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, [8] and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. [NIV]

#### **Matthew 28:11-15**

While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. [12] When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, [13] telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' [14] If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." [15] So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day. [NIV]

2. Chris stated that too often Christians try to live the Christian life on their own power rather than relying on God's power. What do the following verses teach us about relying on God's strength rather than our own?

#### **Judges 7:1-8**

Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. [2] The Lord said to Gideon, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, [3] announce now to the people, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.' " So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained. [4] But the Lord said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go."

[5] So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the Lord told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink." [6] Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

[7] The Lord said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place." [8] So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.

Now the camp of Midian lay below him in the valley. [NIV]

#### **2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. [8] Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. [9] But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. [10] That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. [NIV]

#### **Zechariah 4:6**

So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty. [NIV]

Can you think of any reasons why God is so concerned about people relying on His power and not their own?

Relying on God's power does not mean we give up personal responsibility to make good choices to live the Christian life. How do you balance relying on God's power while still maintaining personal responsibility?

3. After Jesus departed, the disciples experienced firsthand the power of the Spirit for living the Christian life and ministering to others. Today we still need to experience this same power. How does the following passage help you understand what it means to live by the Spirit?

**Galatians 5:16-26**

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. [17] For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. [18] But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

[19] The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; [20] idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions [21] and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

[22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. [24] Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. [25] Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. [26] Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. [NIV]

What do you find most challenging about living by the Spirit?

**TAKING IT HOME**

1. Is there any area of your life in which you'd like to experience more of the Holy Spirit's power or be more aware of how He's guiding you?