

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

GROUP GUIDE: WEEK 32

CONVERSATION STARTER

When was the last time you made an exciting or unexpected discovery?

THE THIRD DAY

Three days Jesus stayed in the tomb. Not three days as we would count them, as in three 24-hour periods, but three days according to the Jewish calendar (where any part of a day would be considered a whole day). Friday evening, Saturday, Sunday morning. Three days where all hope seemed lost. But on the third day, something unexpected happened.

The Third Day is a common pattern in the Old Testament. You may remember the story of Jonah, who was swallowed up by a whale only to emerge again on the third day. In the Creation story, life emerges for the first time in God's new world on the third day. And when God's people reach Mt. Sinai after leaving Egypt, God tells them to be prepared for the third day, when God would reveal Himself to them and call them to be His covenant partners.

With all of these stories, and the many more that follow this pattern, the Third Day became a way for the Biblical authors to talk about how God brings new life from unexpected circumstances or in surprising ways, and then establishes a new relationship with that new life.

It's this pattern John wants us to recognize in the story of Jesus' resurrection. Where there once was death, God brings new life in a surprising way! Through Jesus' resurrection, God creates a new covenant family that will partner with God in the restoration of the world. It's a powerful reminder that God never gives up on His desire to be with us. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God is inviting us to participate in His new creation, to partner with God in bringing about the redemption and restoration of the whole world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stuck out to you about the reading from this week? Was there a verse or idea that was particularly meaningful or challenging for you?
2. Do you find it difficult to believe that Jesus really came back to life? Why or why not?

3. Jesus died and rose again so that, we too, could rise. As much as you feel comfortable, briefly share your own story of resurrection with your group.
4. Read Romans 6:1-11 together. What does this passage say about how we are called to live in light of Jesus' resurrection?

WEEKLY PRACTICE

Easter is an invitation into a kind of death, burial, and resurrection of our own. It's a call to step out of darkness and walk further into the light of Jesus Christ. Take a moment this week to respond to all that we've experienced during Lent and Easter Sunday, asking God to continue transforming you through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus.

*Eternal God, you raised from the dead our Lord Jesus
and by your Holy Spirit brought to life your Church.
Breathe upon us again with your spirit and give new life to your people,
through the same Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.*