



**IMAGINE
A WORLD
WITHOUT
EASTER**

3 Bible Studies
For Groups, Individuals & 1:1

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Welcome to “Imagine a World Without Easter”

This series of studies accompanies the teaching series for Easter 2016 at Trinity Mount Barker. The eight churches in the Trinity Network are presenting the good news of Jesus under a common theme, “Imagine a World Without Easter.” The series, aims to consider some of the implications of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

These studies are intended to be done before the sermon on the same passage, although of course, you can do them any way that is helpful to you!

If you’re using these studies in a Bible Study Group, try to make sure you’ve read the passage and done your preparation before you meet. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but also to the other members of your group.

If you’re a Bible Study Group Leader please don’t feel that you need to work your way through each question in every study. With such a wide variety of ages and personalities in our church, we have included a number of different types of questions, including some which reflect on the same points, just from a slightly different perspective. Please choose the questions most appropriate for your group.

If you’re doing these studies individually, why not let someone know you are doing so, and arrange a time to meet with them when you’ve finished (or even before) to let them know how your life is being changed by God’s Word.

Always surround your time looking into God’s Word with prayer, asking God to change your heart and life so that you – with God’s people – might become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

Leaders' Notes

Study 1 :: 1 Peter 1:3 – 7 **Imagine a World Without Hope**

1 Peter was written by Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, around 62 AD. Peter wants to encourage followers of Jesus scattered around the Roman empire (in what is now Turkey) to persevere in their faith despite persecution. A great theme of the letter is that those who trust in Jesus can be full of hope whatever the circumstances.

1:3 The opening phrase, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" is reminiscent of common Old Testament language (Genesis 24:27, Psalm 41:13, etc) but with the explicit connection of the covenant God of the OT to Jesus.

1:4 Jesus' resurrection from the dead assures us of a glorious, eternal inheritance. Our inheritance is our share in God's new creation and the blessings that flow to us from it.

1:6 The many blessings that are ours (Peter lists, I think, eleven reasons for praising God!) allow us to see the outcome of our sufferings and trials.

1:7 Notice the supremely high value Peter places on the faith of his readers. It is not something to be considered lightly!

Study 2 :: 1 Corinthians 15:12 – 26 **Imagine a World Where Death Wins**

1 Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul to Christians in Corinth around 53 – 55 AD.

15:12 – 26 is all about the link between Christ's resurrection and ours.

15:12 The problem caused by some in the church saying "there is no resurrection of the dead" does not appear to be

one of the issues they have asked Paul about like he addresses earlier in the letter, rather he has heard that this is what is being taught.

The false teachers in Corinth don't seem to be denying Christ's resurrection, rather they deny the certainty of Christian people's own future resurrection.

15:12 In verses 12 – 19 Paul shows four times that those who deny the resurrection of Christian people, by implication deny Christ's resurrection, even if they still claim Christ was raised.

15:20 In describing Christ as “the firstfruits” Paul insists that Christ's resurrection is the forerunner and guarantee of our own resurrection from the dead. See also Acts 26:23.

15:22 Adam represents the whole human race, those who will die because of sin. Christ represents all who come to him, who will overcome death. The “all” does not imply universalism, but all who are in Christ. The necessity of hearing and believing the gospel is evident throughout chapter 15!

Study 3 :: 2 Corinthians 5:10 - 20 **Imagine a World Without Purpose**

5:10 The word Paul uses for “judgement seat” was used to refer to a stone structure in Corinth, before which Paul was dragged in Acts 18:12 and charges brought against him. Paul uses this cultural reference well known to his readers to state that each person will have to stand before Christ as judge.

5:10 – 14 Notice the 2 motivations for ministry; Paul is aware of the need to give account to God (v 10 – 11) and also he is aware of the great and compelling love of Christ (v 14).

5:12 – 15 Paul responds to criticism of his ministry by saying he cannot do anything but serve Christ with his life

1 Peter 1:3 - 7

Imagine a World Without Hope

- 1.** What are some of the things you have hoped for at different points in your life?

- 2.** Think of people you know. What do they place their hope in?

- 3.** How would you define the difference between “hope” and “having”?

Read 1 Peter 1:3 - 7

- 4.** Jesus' resurrection offers us a new hope (v 3). What does Peter say we can hope for because Jesus defeated death?

- 5.** How is our heavenly inheritance described here?

- 6.** How does Jesus' victory over death give us this hope?

7. Notice however, that the “living hope” isn’t the starting point. God has given us “a new birth into a living hope” (v 3). How is it significant that our hope starts with a new birth?

8. Why does Peter describe the hope we have because of the resurrection of Jesus as “a living hope” (v 3)?

9. How is the hope of an inheritance in heaven reflected in our day to day lives?

10. Which element of the picture here in 1 Peter gives you hope in your current circumstances?

11. If Jesus didn’t rise from the dead, how would our hope of eternity be affected?

12. How is the hope that Peter speaks of here different to much of what we have hoped for at different points in our life?

13. Suffering and trials can sometimes cause us to lose our hope for eternity? How does Peter urge us to respond to suffering?

14. What makes it difficult to respond to suffering in the way this passage urges us to?

15. What do you feel gets in the way of your hope for heaven?

Pray

Give thanks for the assurance of an eternal inheritance secured by Jesus' death and resurrection.

Pray for Christians you know who are suffering. Ask that God will use their sufferings to refine their faith, for his glory.

1 Corinthians 15:12 - 26 Imagine a World Where Death Wins

1. What is the most memorable funeral of which you have been a part?

What makes it stand out in your mind?

2. Shakespeare's Hamlet observes "This fell sergeant, death, is strict in his arrest." Is it only the unavailability of death that makes death such a hated enemy?

3. Why do you think that we hope so strongly that death doesn't win?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12 - 26

4. What is the problem in the Corinthian church that Paul is seeking to address?

5. In what ways is death an "enemy" (v 26)?

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, how serious is the claim that there is no resurrection of the dead?

7. What does Paul say are the consequences if Christ has not been raised from the dead?

8. How does Paul go about establishing the fact and certainty of our future resurrection?

9. Paul uses three images to make his argument for the certainty of our future resurrection. What do we learn about Christ's resurrection and ours through the language of:

- Firstfruits (v 20 & 23)

- Adam (v 22)

- The Kingdom of God (24 - 26)

10. In the light of 1 Corinthians, how do you respond to a friend who says, “It doesn’t really matter whether or not Jesus rose from the dead?”

11. If Christ has not been raised, death wins. Since “Christ has been raised from the dead” (v 12), what do we learn about death?

12. Make a list of all the things we can be confident in because of Jesus’ resurrection?

13. How does the defeat of death shape the way we mourn for people we love who have died?

Pray

Give thanks for Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, which guarantees our future resurrection.

Give thanks to God that death doesn’t win.

Pray for those who mourn, and ask God to comfort them with the hope of the resurrection.

2 Corinthians 5:10 - 20

Imagine a World Without Purpose

1. Do you have a “bucket list” (a list of things to do before you die)? If so, what’s on the list?

2. Can you recall a time when you tried to employ something for a use other than its intended purpose? What was the outcome?

3. What appears to be the motivation or purpose driving the lives of people you know?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:10 - 17

4. What does Paul offer as his motive for evangelism:

- In verses 10 – 11?

- In verse 14?

5. How do these two different motivations fit together?

6. Which of these two motivations do you find most compelling in your efforts to speak of Jesus?

7. How is it that Paul can say “all died” (v 14) in Christ’s death?

8. In verse 15 Paul gives both a positive and negative statement about the purpose of our lives. What does it mean to:

- No longer live for self

- Live for Christ

9. In particular, how is the command to “no longer live for themselves” a statement about sin in our lives?

10. What do you perceive are the dangers in trying to find purpose for our lives in other things?

11. What do you notice about the reach or effect of understanding Christ's love?

12. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, an entirely new type of human life and existence is enabled. What are the markers of this new life noted in this section?

13. Paul's argument here is that he cannot do anything other than serve Christ with his life. What makes that a hard example for us to follow?

14. From 2 Corinthians 5, how would you describe the purpose of your life?

Pray

Give thanks to God for the love of Christ that not only sees us saved, but also compels us to serve.

Ask God to help you continually live for Christ.



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