



SESSION 6

The Great Commission

Key takeaways for new believers:

- Jesus proved He was alive again, that God has raised Him from the dead
- Just before Jesus ascended to heaven, He gave His followers an important message - this message is as relevant today, as at any time in history Enjoy learning it and seeing what it means for you.

Part 1

identity

worship

mission

- How did you get on learning the story about 'hearing from God'? Discuss students' experiences of telling the story to others or contemplating it themselves
- Allow participants time to discuss any pastoral / spiritual issues on their minds



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Part 2 (story)

identity

community

mission

Transition from session 5: last time we talked about hearing from God through His word. Today we are going to look at what is recorded as being His last message to us whilst He was on earth.

The Resurrection and Great Commission (John 20: 1, 11-18, 24-29, Acts 1:4, 8-12, Matthew 28:16-18) NLT Translation

The story last time skimmed over what happened the morning Jesus was raised from the dead. Today, we find out more details about what happened that morning and also the last message Jesus gave us before He ascended to heaven.

Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. "Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her. "Because they have taken away my Lord,... and I don't know where they have put him." She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognise him. "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her ... She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

"Mary!" Jesus said. She turned to him and cried out, "*Teacher*" ... Jesus said find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'. Mary Magdalene *went and told the disciples all that had happened and all Jesus had said.*

Jesus appeared to the disciples and talked with them. One of the ... disciples, Thomas was not with the others when Jesus came. They told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he replied, "I won't believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side." Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly ... Jesus was standing among them. "Peace be with you," he said. Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!" "My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed. Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me."

Later He commanded them "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised ... you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit."

...One day the eleven disciples *went* to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him they worshiped him – but some of them doubted. Jesus ... told his disciples, "I have been given all authority on heaven and earthyou will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere – Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria and to the ends of the earth." After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud. While they were watching ... two white-robed men suddenly stood among them "Men of Galilee ... why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!" Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem and waited.

Questions for discussion

1. What do you like about this story?
2. What bothered you about this story?
3. What does this story show you about God?
4. What does this story show you about people?



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Part 3 (practice / takeaways)

identity

worship

mission

5. What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
6. How will you remember this story?
7. Is there anyone you would like to tell this story to?

Prayer to close this session

To take away:

- Jesus told his followers to go into all the world, telling everyone the He paid the penalty for sin and that those who believe in Him can be forgiven and live eternally with God
- The Holy Spirit is given to enable people to live for Christ. By faith we can have the Holy Spirit's presence and power to witness and to serve

Key bible verses for study:

- Mark 14:28
- Matthew 4:19
- Mark 16:1-4
- John 20:11-18
- Luke 24:44-49
- Mt. 28:18-20
- Acts 1:4-11



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Appendix 1

Notes for leaders

As your group practices retelling this story, help them see the different scenes in this story.

The women go to the tomb with spices, wondering who will roll the stone away.

- Mary stands outside the empty tomb, wondering where Jesus' body is. A man whom she thinks is a gardener comes, and she discovers that it is Jesus
- Jesus appears to his followers several times over the next 40 days
- Near the end of Jesus' time on earth he speaks to His followers
- He commissions them to make followers, baptise and teach them
- He tells them to wait in Jerusalem and that he will send God's Spirit to help them
- Jesus goes back into heaven, and two men say that Jesus will come back someday in the same way they saw him leave
- Jesus' followers wait in Jerusalem

Here are some points to consider as you prepare or that may be brought out in discussing this topic:

Someday Jesus is coming back in the same way he left.

- Do you believe that? How does that knowledge affect your daily life?

Jesus gave his followers a commission.

- What part has God asked you to play in this commission? There are so many ways that God can ask you to be a part of His commission – but be assured that you are a part of it! He honours us by asking us to make disciples, and he equips us by being with us and by giving us his Spirit. If you don't know already, ask God what part he wants you to play in his plan.

Was there proof that Jesus came back to life?

- Entire books have been written about this subject. The biblical text gives us some clues that point to the truth of Jesus' resurrection:
 - Jesus appeared to many followers on several different occasions over a 40--day period. 1 Corinthians 15:6 says that He appeared to as many as 500 people! Could that many people have been wrong? Could that many people have been that delusional? Could that many people have lied so well? Would so many people, in the years to come, have willingly given up their lives for such a lie?
 - Matthew 28:11--15 refutes a story that the religious leaders tried to disseminate about Jesus
- Everything fits: the prophecies about the Messiah in the Old Testament (see Isaiah 53) and Jesus' own prophecies about himself. Countless lives, many recorded in the New Testament and many in the ensuing years, have been miraculously transformed. In Acts 5:38-39 an influential Jewish teacher gives some wise advice: "If they are planning and doing these things merely on their own, it will soon be overthrown. But if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even find yourselves fighting against God!" 2000 years later, followers of Jesus are still being transformed, still following, still dying for the cause of Jesus.



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Why did the women want to anoint Jesus' body with burial spices?

- In 1st---century Palestine, spices were not used to mummify the body, but to show respect and offset the odours of decomposition and to attempt to keep the body fresher for longer. John 19:39-40 indicates that Jesus' body was wrapped in spices on Friday when He was buried; either the women were not close enough to see this, or they wanted to show additional respect to the body. "Anointing" may refer to the women wanting to pour oil over the head. In that case, the spices that the women carried would have more likely been in the form of liquid perfume (unlike the more solid spices that would have been used at the time of burial). The spices probably would have consisted of oil mixed with myrrh and aloes. The women probably bought their spices either late Friday before the Sabbath began or in the short time that shops opened up on Saturday evening after the Sabbath day of rest was finished. Purchasing the spices that late would have made it impossible to visit the tomb Saturday evening (the Sabbath ended at 6PM and by that time it would have been getting dark)—so they had to wait until the next morning.

Suggested activity:

(If there's time after the questions or perhaps as a take home to discuss another time.)

Christians all over the world are sharing God's good news that He loves us, sent his son Jesus to redeem and restore us to Himself. A good way to start telling others about Jesus is through storytelling and how Jesus has impacted your life.

Spend 5 minutes thinking about or writing down 'your story'. Tell it to your group. Remember this is your story, it can be simple. Some stories are more dramatic than others, but there is space for everyone's story. What's important is how you got to know Jesus and his impact on you.