Acts 1:3 – “To these He also presented himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, to them over a period of forty days and speaking of things concerning the kingdom of God.”

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a foundational doctrine of the Christian faith. Through His death and resurrection we have victory over death and the grave and the promise of eternal life. In this final lesson of the series “Prove It”, we will discuss the proofs of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12–18 (NLT)

Question: Take a moment to discuss Paul’s statement “and if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless.”

Seven Proofs of the Resurrection:

1. The Empty Tomb
   The Jews and Romans had no motive to steal the body of Jesus. Even those who were closest to Jesus fled at the presence of the Roman guards at Jesus’ arrest. The women and disciples, who had watched Jesus’ body being laid away, knew where the correct tomb was. Even if they had gone to the wrong tomb, the Sanhedrin could have produced the body from the right tomb to stop the resurrection stories. The burial cloths of Jesus were found neatly folded inside the tomb, hardly the act of hurried grave robbers.

Question: Why do you believe that people even today doubt the resurrection of Christ?

2. The Women Eyewitnesses
   If the accounts of Jesus’ resurrection had been made up, no ancient author would have used women for witnesses to the event. Women were second-class citizens in Biblical times; their testimony would not have been allowed even in court. Yet the Bible records that the risen Christ first appeared to Mary Magdalene and other women. Even the Apostles did not believe Mary when she told them the tomb was empty.
3. The Apostles New-Found Courage
   After the crucifixion, Jesus’ apostles hid behind locked doors, terrified they would be executed next. But something changed them from cowards to bold preachers. Anyone who understands human character knows people do not change that much without some major influence. That influence was seeing their Master raised from the dead! After seeing Jesus alive Peter and the others left the locked room and preached the risen Christ unafraid of what would happen to them.

   **Question:** Does the reality of Jesus raised from the dead embolden your faith? In what way?

4. The Changed Lives of James and Others
   James, the brother of Jesus, was openly skeptical that Jesus was the Messiah. Later James became a courageous leader of the Jerusalem church, even being stoned to death for his faith. Why? The Bible says the risen Christ appeared to him. James and the other apostles were effective missionaries because people could tell these men had touched and seen the risen Christ.

5. Large Crowd of Eyewitnesses
   A large crowd of more than 500 eyewitnesses saw the risen Jesus Christ at one time. The Apostle Paul records this event in 1 Corinthians 15:6. He states that most of these men and women were alive when he wrote this letter about 55 AD. Undoubtedly they told others about this miracle. Today, psychologists say it would be impossible for a large group of people to have had the same hallucination at once.

6. Conversion of Paul
   The conversion of Paul records the most drastic changed life in the Bible. As Saul of Tarsus, he was an aggressive prosecutor of the early church. When the risen Christ appeared to Paul on the Damascus Road, Paul became Christianity’s most determined missionary. He endured five floggings, three beatings, three shipwrecks, a stoning, poverty, and years of ridicule. Finally the Roman emperor Nero had Paul beheaded because the apostle refused to deny his faith in Jesus. What could make a person willingly accept—even welcome—such hardships? Christians believe the conversion of Paul came about because he encountered Jesus Christ who had risen from the dead.
7. They Died For Jesus

Countless people have died for Jesus, absolutely certain that the resurrection of Christ is an historical fact. Tradition says that ten of the original apostles died as martyrs for Christ, as did the apostle Paul. Down through the centuries thousands more have died for Jesus because they believed the resurrection is true. Even today, people suffer persecution because they have faith that Christ rose from the dead. An isolated group may give up their lives for a cult leader, but Christian martyrs have died in many lands, for nearly 2,000 years, believing Jesus conquered death to give them eternal life.

Take a moment and pray for the group to be bold witnesses for Christ. Remind any who are not water baptized about water baptism next Sunday after the 11:00 service at all campuses.