

### Taking It Home:

- All of us have sinned and fallen short of God's standard. This reality keeps us from God (Rom. 6:23). What are the ways in which you know these things to be true of you? See Rom. 3:23 and Psalm 14:3.
  
- Because we have fallen short of God's standard, we need help. Knowing this, God sent his son Jesus to die on a cross to pay the penalty for our sin, purchasing our passage from shame and fear and regret to honor and peace and forgiveness (see John 3:16 and Rom. 5:8). What might this mean for you?
  
- By dying on a cross Jesus paid in full the penalty of our sin. By rising from the dead he demonstrates victory over sin and death and the devil, and proves that anyone who calls on him in faith can also have that victory. What are the implications of this for your life?
  
- The Bible says, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9). It also teaches us that "Everyone who believes in Jesus will not be put to shame" (Rom. 10:11). If you have not already done so, is there anything keeping you today from calling on Jesus for salvation? If not, talk to him right now: *Lord Jesus, I understand that you died to set me free from the power of sin and hopelessness, and that you rose from the dead to ensure I can have new life forever with God. I am a sinner wanting that hope to define my life, and so I confess trust in you and ask you to forgive me and make me new. Amen.*

Dr. Matthew R. St. John  
Bethel Church  
March 31, 2013

If Jesus Did Not Rise...  
Matthew 28:1-10

## If Jesus Did Not Rise...

Notes:

For a restatement of Pastor Matthew's sermon points, visit [pastormatthew.net](http://pastormatthew.net) and click on the "Write This Down" tab.

For more information about Growth Groups, Growth Group homework, and a podcast of sermons with homework, visit [www.bethelhc.com](http://www.bethelhc.com).

# Growth Group Homework

For the week of March 31, 2013

Matthew 28:1-10

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**Quick Review:** For 1,980 years men and women all over the world have celebrated Jesus' resurrection from the dead. The implications of his awakening, as it were, from the dead are monumental, having a profound bearing on our own individual destiny. But the implications of his not rising from the dead are equally significant, and merit some thoughtful consideration if we are to stand confidently in our understanding of who Jesus Christ is and why he is God's provision for our salvation.

## My Story:

- That Jesus rose from the dead means that we who trust him are delivered from death and darkness. There is hope . . . *life* . . . beyond the grave, and his resurrection ensures complete victory over forces of evil and shame. In what ways has this truth been meaningful in your life?
- Consider and perhaps share about experiences you have had when the hope secured at the resurrection has propelled you through a dark and daunting time.

## Growing Deeper:

- Ever since those painful moments in the Garden of Eden there has been hope that "eternal life" may be had. Indeed, on the heels of Adam and Eve's rebellion God says in Genesis 3:22, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever. . . ." The idea that there is hope beyond the grave is as ancient as the story of the Bible itself. Take some time and look up other places in the Bible that underline this hope. Carefully consider the following passages and talk about some of them with your friends: Gen. 5:24; Deut. 33:26-27; 2 Sam. 12:22-23; Job 19:24-27; Psalm 23:1-6, 33:18-19, 73:26, 109:31, 118:14-18; Isaiah 55:3; Zech. 13:1, 14:1-21; Malachi 4:1-3.
- John 20:11-18 tells the story of Mary Magdalene who, upon discovering the empty tomb, is unsure of what has happened and is clearly panicked by the idea that the Lord has been "taken away" (John 20:13). First she must deal with Jesus' death, and now the possibility that someone has stolen his body, perhaps as some cheap stunt. Whatever hope she had placed in Jesus seems to be vanishing, her tears telling a story of despair. Are the times when you feel that way too? You have placed confidence in Jesus only to feel like he is unavailable to you or just . . . gone? Talk about such times as openly with your friends as you possibly can.
- Pastor Matthew shared several problems that exist if Jesus did not, in fact, rise from the dead. For instance, he shared that if Jesus did not rise from the dead then Jesus is a liar. After all, in Matthew 17:22-23 and 20:17-19 Jesus tells of his pending resurrection. When looking at the totality of Jesus' life, even non-religious folks affirm that Jesus must have been a "good" person. But can someone be so "good," talking about, for instance, the Golden Rule (cp. Matthew 7:12), and lie about something as pivotal as rising from the dead? What do you think?
- Read again Matthew 17:22-23 and 20:17-19. Read also John 11:17-27, especially verse 25. Jesus makes it very clear that he will rise from the dead. According to the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3 and following hundreds upon hundreds of people saw him alive *after* he had died. The overwhelming testimony of the ages is that he rose from the dead. This being so, Jesus is clearly someone to be reckoned with, especially as we think about his claims relating to authority and power and hope (cp. Matt. 28:18; Mark 8:34-38; John 14:1-6). With that in mind, explain in what way you personally relate to Jesus. What are the moment-by-moment implications of how you relate to him? How about the long-term (*eternal?*) implications of how you relate to him?