

Purpose

- To learn what happens after Jesus died on the cross
- To learn the GREAT COMMISSION
- To learn about Eastertide
- To learn about Pentecost

Materials

- Bibles

Background Information

On Friday in the evening a rich, Joseph of Arimathea, and prominent member of council went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already dead. Usually it took two or three days for someone to die on the cross. Pilate agreed so Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen and placed it in a tomb cut out of the rock. A large rock was rolled in front of the entrance. Mary Magdalene and Mary, Jesus' mother saw where he had been laid. Because Pilate and the Pharisees had heard Jesus claim that he would rise again in three day they needed to protect the tomb. They placed a guard at the tomb and put a seal on the stone so that no one could steal the body and claim that he had risen. This all happened on Friday. Great haste was taken to get Jesus off the cross and into the tomb (cave) before the Sabbath began. It was Jewish tradition that nothing (no labor) was done on the Sabbath.

When the Sabbath was over (early on Sunday), Mary Magdalene, Mary (Jesus' mother) and Salome bought spices so that they might anoint Jesus' body and give him a proper burial. This would be like taking flowers to the cemetery today. As they approached the tomb they noticed that the stone had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb they saw a young man all dressed in a white robe sitting at the side inside the tomb. Naturally they became frightened but the young man assured them that he meant them no harm. He reported to them that Jesus had risen and was not there. He also instructed the three ladies to go tell the disciples and Peter that they should go ahead into Galilee and Jesus would see them there.

As Simon Peter and one other disciple (probably John) were on their way to the tomb and ran into Mary Magdalene and she told them that someone had taken the body out of the tomb. The two ran to the tomb to witness for themselves that what Mary had said was true. When they confirmed that it was true they went back to their homes. Mary stayed at the tomb and wept. As she looked into the tomb she saw two angels in white seated where Jesus' body had been. As she talked to the angels Mary turned and saw Jesus standing there, but

she didn't recognize him. Mary thought he was the gardener so she began to question him. Jesus called her "Mary" and she replied Rabboni (Teacher). Jesus instructed Mary not to touch him because he had not yet ascended into heaven. She was to go tell the disciples that he would be returning to his home in Heaven. Mary did as he requested.

This is the beginning of what we call Eastertide. This is a period of 40 days when Jesus walked the earth before he permanently ascended to heaven.

On the road to Emmaus Jesus appeared to two men. The men reported it to the disciples but they did not believe them.

That Sunday evening the disciples were hiding in the upper room behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jews. Jesus suddenly appeared before them and said, "Peace, be with you!" Jesus proceeded to show them his hands and side so that they would believe him. He told them he would send them out just as God had sent him. At this point he breathed on them and told them to receive the Holy Spirit. When the ten disciples reported to Thomas that they had seen Jesus, he did not believe them. He stated that unless he saw the nail marks in his hands, and put his hand in Jesus' side he would not believe.

A week later the eleven disciples were hiding in the upper room again and Jesus appeared to them. Because Thomas had expressed doubt before Jesus instructed him to put his hands in the nail print and the pierce wound in his side. Thomas dropped to his knees and acknowledged Jesus. Jesus answered "Because you have seen me, you have believed: blessed are those who have not seen and yet have still believed."

Later the disciples were all by the Sea of Tiberius fishing. Simon Peter announced that he was going fishing and the other agreed to go with him. They went out into the boat, but caught nothing. This was the third time Jesus appeared to the disciples since he was raised from the dead. Early in the morning Jesus stood on the shore among them but they did not recognize him. When they told Jesus that they had caught nothing he instructed them to throw their nets out on the right side of the boat and they would find fish. When they did as he asked their nets were so full that they could not haul the net back in. At this point they recognized Jesus. Peter was so excited that he jumped into the water and the others followed in the boat. When the boat landed they saw a fire of burning coals with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus asked them to bring some of their fish. They did and counted 153 fish and yet it had not torn the net.

The eleven disciples went to Galilee upon the mountain as Jesus had instructed them. As they were eating Jesus appeared to them and scolded them for their lack of faith and stubborn refusal to believe that others had seen him. He instructed them to go into all of the world and preach the gospel to all men. The ones that believed would be saved but if they did not believe they would be condemned. They were to make disciples of men, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. They were also to instruct everyone to obey God. He then promised he would be with them always, even to the end of the age. The disciples did as he commanded. This is what we call THE GREAT COMMISSION.

It is also reported that on one occasion Jesus appeared to more than five hundred. He also appeared to James.

At the end of the forty (40) day Jesus appeared to the disciples at the Mount of Olives. Here he lifted up his hands and blessed them. As he was blessing them he slowly was ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God. They instantly praised and worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Only one other time is it recorded that Jesus physically appeared here on earth. Several years later he appeared to Saul. Saul had persecuted Jesus and his followers. Saul was converted and Jesus renamed him Paul. This is the Paul that we learn so much about in the New Testament..

After Jesus died on the cross and was risen from the grave he did not go directly up to Heaven. For the next 40 days he stayed here on earth and appeared on several occasions (6 of them) to his disciples and followers. He appeared to Mary Magdalene, Salome and Mary (Jesus 'mother) . They brought spices to anoint Jesus' body. Instead Jesus in a white robe appeared to them on the path to the cave. Another time he appeared to two men on the road to Emmaus. As the disciples were holed up in the upper room Jesus suddenly appeared to them on two different occasions. Later by the Sea of Tiberius Jesus appeared to the disciples while they were fishing and not having much luck. But doing as Jesus directed they gathered 153 fish in their nets. He appeared to James and on another occasion he appeared to five hundred.

At the end of forty days Jesus instructed the disciples to go to the Mount of Olives. They met and here Jesus blessed them and instructed them to go into the entire world and preach to all about God and his love.

Pentecost was one of the major annual feasts for the Jews. They called it Feast of the Weeks and it was held 50 after Passover. That was also 40 days after Jesus' resurrection. Jews of many nations had gathered in Jerusalem for the Festival. A big crowd gathered but the disciples were the center of at what the disciples tention. At this time the Spirit of God suddenly like the blowing of a violent wind filled the room with light and win, and everyone got excited! This was the fulfillment of the words spoken by John the Baptist. The people began to speak in various languages. Fire came down and came to rest on each of them and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. People who didn't speak the same language were understood in their own languages what the disciples were saying. Peter stood up and started to speak. With the help of God's spirit, Peter told the story of what God was doing in Jesus. God had taken bad news, the terrible death of an innocent person and made it good news, the new life that Jesus Christ offers everybody who believes!! That day about three thousand were added to their list of new converts o Christianity.

The believers continued to gather. They sold their possessions and food and gave to ones who needed them. They met every day in the temple courts. They ate together and continue to praise God and teach others. The Lord added to their number daily. This was known as Pentecost.