

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

This session is also appropriate to use when the church celebrates Easter

Jesus Dies and Lives Again!
Mark 15:21-41; 16:1-8

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.
2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)
3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to the session:

Gathering Time Leader: Copy the prayer which introduces the Gathering Time. Give it to someone to read as the opening event of the Gathering Time. The Gathering Time Leader has the difficult task of calling people to transition from the conversation and fellowship of the beginning minutes into a worshipful learning situation. Make the opening prayer and song and brief devotional as smooth and impacting as possible.

Bible Study Leader: Ask someone to give a brief testimony of when he/she accepted Christ as Saviour.

Worship Time Leader: Ask the person who is working with the children this Sunday to review John 3:16 and practice saying it together in an effective way. Work with the children to prepare a song such as “Jesus Loves Me” during the worship time.

Copy the Conclusion to the worship time – the words from 1 Corinthians 15 in ***The Message***. Ask two strong readers—youth, if you have youth who will read dramatically—and ask them to prepare the reading for a strong and dramatic ending to the worship time.

Music Sources:

“Why should He love me so?” *Hymns for the Family of God*, #26

“Must Jesus bear the cross alone?” *BH* #475 and many other sources.

“Thine is the Glory” *BH* #163 and many other sources.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***Jesus Dies and Lives Again!*****Focal Text**

Mark 15:21-41; 16:1-8

Background Text

Mark 15:21-16:8

Main Idea

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection show that he was truly God's Son.

Question to Explore

What elements in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection lead to belief in him?

Teaching Aim

To help the class identify elements in Jesus' ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection that show he was truly God's Son and deserves our commitment of life.

Gathering together:

Leader: Begin the worship time together by praying the following prayer:

Dear Lord, We've heard the story of the resurrection again and again. Today we ask that it will speak to us anew. Help us experience the excitement and awe of the women at the tomb. Burn into our hearts and minds the command of the angel to those women—and to us, today: "He is risen!—Go and tell!" Amen

Sing together "**Why should He love me so?**" *Hymns for the Family of God*, #26 or "**Must Jesus bear the cross alone?**" *BH* #475.

First thoughts:**The rest of the Christmas story**

Christmas is a very important day in the Christian calendar. Pageants are performed with angels, shepherds, wise men, a star, barn animals, a Mary and a Joseph.

However, the birth of Jesus would not be a blip in history except for the resurrection. Jesus was born to die for our sins, be buried because he was dead, and be raised in a new life, the promise and hope of all mankind. There would be no Christmas without an Easter! Today we will learn how the crucifixion and resurrection show that Jesus is the Son of God; our Lord and Saviour.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Let's silently thank God for the crucifixion and the resurrection and ask Him to help us learn something new today which will motivate us to share more effectively about the resurrection.

Pray silently for a moment. Then:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

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Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Jesus Dies and Lives Again!

Focal Text

Mark 15:21-41; 16:1-8

Background Text

Mark 15:21-16:8

Main Idea

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Question to Explore

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Teaching Aim

To help the class identify elements in Jesus' ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection that show he was truly God's Son and deserves our commitment of life.

Introduction to your personal study:

To any person who has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, there was a moment in time when who Jesus is truly made sense. I remember well the moment as a child when I finally understood the Bible stories that I had heard and learned about Jesus. I realized that I was a sinner and that Jesus Christ was the Son of God who had died to take away my sin. That is when I trusted him to be the Lord of my life.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you as well.

Mark began his gospel story with, "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). Through his story of Jesus Mark demonstrated that this was who Jesus was. Finally at the cross a Roman centurion, in watching how Jesus died came to the conclusion, "Surely this man is the Son of God." Mark's desire was that everyone who reads this story of Jesus will come to the same conclusion. Not only is Jesus the Son of God who died for our sin, he is the risen Lord who lives today.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Mark 15:21-32

v. 21 – Simon of Cyrene was an innocent bystander when Jesus was led away to be crucified. Apparently a God-fearer or a Jew from Cyrene (on the North African coast), he had come to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. The Roman soldiers **"forced him to carry the cross."** Simon and his two sons, **Alexander and Rufus**, may have later become Christians (cf. Acts 19:33; 1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 4:14; Romans 16:13). As such, Simon became a model of a true disciple who "takes up the cross" (cf. Mark 8:34).

vv. 22-24 – Golgotha (lit. "the skull") was outside the Jerusalem city wall. Someone offered Jesus a drink to dull the pain, but he refused it. He was determined to endure the entire experience with his full senses.

"And they crucified him." Mark was amazingly discreet about the actual crucifixion, for the significance of the event was more important than the gory details. Suffice it to say that crucifixion was a punishment reserved for the worst of criminals and was specifically designed to cause a long, slow, and most painful death. The victim was hung naked on a cross for onlookers to jeer. The pain the victim experienced was so awful a new word had to be invented to describe it, "excruciating" (lit. "from the cross"). While Jesus was suffering for the sins of humanity, the Roman soldiers were at the foot of the cross gambling for Jesus' clothes (cf. Psalm 22:18).

vv. 25-32 –They placed a sign above Jesus that read, **"The King of the Jews."** Meant to be an insult, the sign actually told the truth. Jesus did not die as a criminal, even though he was crucified between two criminals (v. 27). Jesus died as the King!

Passers by, religious leaders, and even the other criminals hurled insults at Jesus and mocked him, reiterating the false charges brought against Jesus at his trial (cf. 14:58). **"He saved others, but he can't save himself!"** They referred to Jesus' healing miracles, and possibly the times when he raised someone from the dead. But if Jesus had come down from the cross to save himself, he would never be able to save others either. He came "to give his life as a ransom for many" (10:45), and only by dying on the cross could he bring salvation. He refused to save himself precisely so that he could save others from their sin.

Mark 15:33-41

v. 33 -- Nature itself responded to Jesus' death with darkness for three hours (12:00-3:00 pm). Darkness probably represented God's judgment on evil and sin (cf. Amos 8:9-10; Exodus 10:21-22).

vv. 34 -- Jesus then cried out in agony, "**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**" Theologians have tried for centuries, but no one can fully explain what happened to Jesus at this moment. He quoted from Psalm 22:1 during the greatest depths of his suffering. Jesus for the first time experienced sin and the sense of separation, desolation, and horror that accompanies sin. He felt this separation so deeply that his communion with his Father was obscured. At this moment God poured out his wrath on his Son, and "laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). He became our sin offering and became a curse for us (2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13).

In a mystery that cannot be described adequately, in some way Jesus was separated from his heavenly Father, and yet in another way God was there all the time (cf. Colossians 2:9; 2 Corinthians 5:19). What we hear in the cry of Jesus is someone who feels forsaken by God on the one hand and yet refuses to let go of him ("My God, my God") on the other. It is at the same time a cry of despair and a prayer of faith. We hear the cry of pain from a child who felt forsaken.

vv. 35-36 -- Some of the bystanders mistook Jesus' cry "*Eloi*" ("My God") for **Elijah**, the prophet who would return (Malachi 3:1; 4:5), and whom they believed would help those in need. Someone brought Jesus some cheap wine to quench his thirst (cf. Psalm 69:21; 22:19; John 19:28) as well as more taunts.

v. 37 – "**With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.**" The usual crucifixion victim grew weaker and weaker and gradually died. But Mark described Jesus' death as sudden and violent. He still had strength at his moment of death. He died with a shout of victory (John 19:30). His life was not taken from him, for he gave it up on his own accord (John 10:17-18). This was not the last gasp of a dying man. It was the victorious shout of a king who had conquered!

v. 38 – A thick veil shielded the Holy of Holies, the most holy place in the temple. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies to commune with God, and only on one day of the year, the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:2). When Jesus died, "**the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.**" It was torn from heaven to earth, by an act of God. Jesus' death made access to God available for all people (Hebrews 6:19-20; 9:8-15; 10:19-22). The temple in Jerusalem, the Old Testament sacrificial system, and the Levitical priesthood were no longer needed for sinners to have fellowship with God. The blood of Jesus has made a relationship with God possible; and the trappings of the old covenant no longer necessary.

v. 39 – The Roman centurion was the officer in charge of the execution. In witnessing how Jesus died, he proclaimed, "**Surely this man is the Son of God.**" As a Gentile he was not allowed access into the inner courts of the temple to commune with God. The cross of Jesus brought a new means for forgiveness of sins and fellowship with God.

The first person to avail himself of this new way to God was a Gentile who had been denied access before. The centurion recognized who Jesus was at the cross. From this point on, any person, Jew or Gentile, who comes to faith in Jesus, will find new life in him.

Vv. 40-41 – Women disciples of Jesus were at his death, his burial (v. 47), and at the empty tomb (16:1-8). These women followed Jesus and ministered to him and his other disciples. Jesus' male disciples forsook him, but these female disciples followed him to the end. Their love would not let them abandon him. Jesus died from the hatred of people, but these women loved Jesus and wanted to serve him to the end.

Mark 16:1-8

Vv. 1-5 – Because Jesus was hurriedly buried before the Sabbath (15:42-47) the women wanted to anoint Jesus' body for burial in a more proper way. Early on Sunday morning they went to Jesus' tomb, concerned mainly for who would roll the stone away from the tomb so they could anoint Jesus' body (cf. 15:46-47). A large, flat stone sealed the tomb from animals and grave robbers. When the women got there the stone had already been rolled away. Looking inside, they saw a "young man" dressed in a long white robe (i.e. an angel, cf. Matthew 28:5) sitting where the body had been. The women were understandably shaken (i.e. "alarmed," "overwhelmed with wonder," "amazed," "dumbfounded," etc.) by the experience. The huge stone had been rolled away, Jesus' body was gone, a young man in a dazzling white robe sat before them; it was all too much for their comprehension.

Vv. 6-7 – ***"Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him."*** The angel explained the empty tomb. Jesus had risen from the dead (cf. Mark 8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:34; 14:28)! These women who had remained near the cross, and had come to the tomb as soon as possible after the Sabbath, were now given the privilege of being the first witnesses of the resurrection. The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out; it was rolled away to let these witnesses in ("See the place where they laid him")!

"But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" The disciples had fled in fear (14:50), and Peter had personally denied Jesus (14:66-72). They had failed, but Jesus had forgiven them and would restore them to fellowship and to their places of leadership.

v. 8 – The women fled the tomb ***"trembling and bewildered"*** from the experience. Most surprisingly, ***"they said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid."*** It seems that they failed in their task just like the other disciples had failed. The mere fact that we have the gospel of Mark today, and a look at the other gospels (e.g. Matthew 28:8; Luke 24:9) shows that the women must have been silent only at first. They eventually collected their wits, and they became bold witnesses thereafter.

The earliest and best manuscripts of the New Testament end the gospel of Mark here and do not include 16:9-20. Most probably Mark's gospel ends with this phrase, "They

said nothing to anyone because they were afraid." Verses 9-20 seem to have been an early Christian attempt to finish the story. Mark may have written more but we have lost it; he may have died before he finished his message, or Mark may have intended under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to finish his gospel here. Regardless, verse 8 is an abrupt and incomplete ending for such a glorious gospel message. This open ending leaves us hanging (i.e. "What happened next?"), and this is probably how Mark wanted it. Mark clearly told us of two things: (1) an empty tomb, and (2) an undelivered message. The rest is unfinished. He wanted his readers to continue the story through their own lives. By stating that the women "said nothing to anyone," Mark challenged us with the responsibility to tell the good news of the resurrection to everyone. We have a risen Saviour, and we are to live and to witness for our Lord Jesus Christ until he comes again. We have unfinished business. As the angel said to the women, "He is risen! Go and tell!"

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

At the crucifixion, a Gentile soldier watched Jesus die and realized that the man hanging there was actually the Son of God. The crowds were oblivious to the fact that the death of Jesus offered the forgiveness of sins and fellowship with God. On the cross Jesus experienced God's wrath for the sins of all humanity, and thereby set us free. Today we have an empty tomb as a constant reminder that Jesus Christ is not only the Son of God, but he is also the risen and victorious Saviour. The tomb is empty. We must go and tell.

For Personal Reflection:

1. **What have I learned from this study?**

2. **What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

3. **What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Jesus Dies and Lives Again!

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc. Children who stay with their parents in the Youth/Adult study should have the material on worship as suggested in **The Children's Corner** at the beginning of this **Unit** of studies. (Ask your leader who downloads the studies for those suggestions).

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Mark 15:21-41; 16:1-8

Background Text

Mark 15:21-16:8

Main Idea

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection show that he was truly God's Son.

Question to Explore

What elements in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection lead to belief in him?

Teaching Aim

To help the class identify elements in Jesus' ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection that show he was truly God's Son and deserves our commitment of life.

Connect with Life:

Prearrange ahead of time for someone who has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ to tell their story briefly of when they came to the realization that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who had died for their sin. Have them give their testimony at this time.

Respond with, "Each person who knows Jesus personally has their own story of when they finally understood who Jesus is and made a personal decision to trust him as Lord."

Explain that today's passage is the climax of Mark's gospel.

Request someone to read Mark 1:1 and show that Mark's intent is to demonstrate that Jesus is indeed the Son of God.

Guide the Study:

Have someone read Mark 15:21-32.

Ask: "What would have happened if Jesus had come down from the cross and saved himself?" (He would not be able to save others. His life was to be given as ***"a ransom for many"*** [10:45]).

Have someone read Mark 15:33-36.

Point out: At this moment Jesus experienced the pain and horror of sin for the very first time. God poured out his wrath on his own Son, and Jesus carried our sins in his own body.

Have someone read Mark 15:36-39.

Ask: "In the middle of the story of Jesus' death, why would Mark tell us about the curtain in the temple?" (Explain from the study notes if necessary)

Point out the significance of the Roman centurion's confession, ***"Surely this man is the Son of God."***

Say, "This man recognized this about Jesus when he saw Jesus die."

Have someone read Mark 15:40-41 and 16:1-8.

Request an answer: "According to these verses, who was faithful to Jesus to the end?" (some of his women disciples)

Get opinions on this question: "When the angel said, 'Go tell his disciples and Peter,' why do you think Peter was mentioned specifically?" (because Peter had denied Jesus earlier)

Promote a brief discussion on this: "How does verse 8 leave the story incomplete? How do you think Mark wants us to complete the story of Jesus?" If necessary, explain that verses 9-20 probably were not in the original text, and the story ends at verse 8.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Have the group remind themselves of the entire story of Jesus from the gospel of Mark.

State, "The Roman centurion came to the conclusion that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (15:39)."

Ask: "What elements in Jesus' ministry, his crucifixion, and resurrection that show that he truly was the Son of God?" (his teaching, healing, power over demons, miracles, death, resurrection, etc.)

Ask: "If Jesus is indeed God's Son who died for our sins and is today the risen Lord, what does he deserve from each of us?" (our complete and life-long commitment to Jesus of every aspect of our lives)

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Jesus Dies and Lives Again! ***Mark 15:21-41; 16:1-8***

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

“Missing the Mark”

One definition of sin which is often used in youth discussions is that of “missing the mark”. (The Greek word used in the New Testament was “hamartia”. It described the Roman soldier archer whose arrow misses the target by falling to the ground short of the target).

Discuss the following:

- 1) How do you think that definition relates to human sin? What is the “mark” or “target” that we have missed?
- 2) Is it a strong enough description of the sense of our sin to justify Jesus’ terrible experience of torture and death from pain and suffocation on the cross?
- 3) How did His resurrection from death overcome our “missing the mark”?

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Jesus Dies and Lives Again!***
Mark 15:21-41; 16:1-8**Beginning the Service:**

If your church has children, then: Plan in advance for the children to quote John 3:16 together and to sing a song. “Jesus Loves Me” is always appropriate, but the children of your group may know others songs they wish to sing.

Sing together “Thine is the Glory” BH #163

Offering:

Pray together: “Lord, the offerings we bring today are small as we think of the offering you gave for us – your very own son to die for our sins. But we bring our offerings gladly and with thanksgiving for bringing salvation from our sins.”

Praying for the World:

The Muslim evening call to prayer sounded clearly, but no one in the room rose to answer it. They already were deeply involved in worship. In fact, at that moment, they were passing the bread--a single slice of stale white bread in a cereal bowl. They prayed silently, and then someone offered a prayer of thanksgiving in remembrance of how their Lord Jesus had broken His body that they might receive salvation and healing. This church in Bangladesh is just one of the many house churches meeting across South Asia. They gather weekly to sing praises, share testimonies, study the Word, share the Lord's Supper, and lift their burdens in prayer. Some are former Muslims; others are from a traditional Christian background. Two among them are seekers. Pray that God will continue to touch the hearts of Muslims and gather new believers into house churches in South Asia.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to

give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

It is finished John 19:30

A pastor told this story to his congregation:

"I live near a professional ball team. A few years ago the team faced a worthy opponent with the experts split on who could win the game. The coach of the local team called a press conference. Before a large contingency of media he said, "You can write it down. We will win the ball game! There is no doubt, we will win!" Every newspaper carried those words in bold print. The opposing team responded indignantly. To their chagrin the prediction came true."

When Jesus spoke of his death, burial, and resurrection, he always spoke of it as a certainty. It is as though he spoke of it in the past tense. Of all the things Jesus did, his death, burial, and resurrection were by far the most important. I want to focus on one of the statements Jesus made from the cross. Mark tells us in 15:37, **"With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last."** John 19:30 tells us what he said in the **"loud cry."** John records, **"Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his life."** To me, **"It is finished"** should have an exclamation mark. It is a defiant cry. The Greek language word is in the perfect tense and could be properly translated **"It is finished, and stands finished forever!"** Jesus never saw the cross as defeat. What did Jesus mean by this cry of victory? What was finished?

I. The perfect sacrifice was finished!

The New Testament book that we call A Letter to Hebrews tells us that the blood of goats was never adequate for God's forgiveness for all sin committed by all people for all history: **"He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption** (Hebrews 9:12)." His sacrifice was perfect as noted by **"Once for all."** In his prayer recorded in John 17:1, Jesus said, **"Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you."**

The Letter to the Philippians, in chapter 2 and verses 5-11, states that the blood of Jesus Christ covers all of my sin and all of your sin. Our sins are covered eternally! William Cowper wrote a great hymn that says: "There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins; and sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains!"

II. The power of sin was also finished.

Sin is terrible. Its grip is strong. The blood of Christ was required to break the bond that each of us has with sin. John 8:36 says, ***"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."*** The sacrifice on the cross accomplishes the work.

Think of how men are held by sin's power. Our world is filled with crime, murder, war, sexual perversion, and on and on the list could go. When Christ enters a person's life, His blood covers sin and breaks the bond.

(Suggestion for the Sharing Time leader: At this point, if time allows and if it is appropriate, share your testimony of how Christ changed your life or ask someone to do so. Emphasize the broken power of sin.)

III. The plan of salvation was finished.

God determined from the foundation of the world that he would save man. God chose the Hebrews to be the channel for the Saviour. In this respect, they were a disappointing group of people. They failed so many times. The miracle of it all was that God provided a perfect sacrifice through imperfect people. Salvation was not their work; it was God's work through Jesus the Christ on the cross. John reminds us that ***"To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God"*** (1:12-13).

A family built a house a few years ago. They started with an idea and then drew it on paper. They hired an architect to draw the design to scale with all that they would need to continue the process. They purchased the land upon which the house would sit. Materials were purchased; people hired to build it, and each step of the building process was scheduled. After months of work, the house was finally completed. They could have said, "It is finished!" That statement would include the entire process until they moved in. When Jesus said, ***"It is finished"***, he included the entire process from the foundation of the world – that is, the very beginning of the world – that provided salvation to all who would believe and receive it.

Call to Commitment:

The perfect sacrifice, the power of sin, and the plan of salvation were finished through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and it stands finished forever. A much loved and often sung hymn says: "Just as I am without one plea; But that thy blood was shed for me!"

Concluding the Service:

Say: Paul talks about the resurrection of Jesus in his first letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 15. Here are some words from that chapter as interpreted in ***The Message***.

Leader: Have the two readers conclude the service by reading this passage as indicated in the instructions in “**Prior to the Session**” on pages 2 and 3.

Friends, let me go over the Message with you one final time- this message that I proclaimed and that you made your own; this Message on which you took your stand and by which your life has been saved.

That the Messiah died for our sins, exactly as Scripture tells it; that he was buried; that he was raised from death on the third day, again exactly as Scripture says; that he presented himself alive to Peter, then to his closest followers, and later to more than five hundred of his followers all at the same time.

If you became believers because you trusted the proclamation that Christ is alive, risen from the dead, how can you let people say that there is no such thing as a resurrection? If there’s no resurrection, there’s no living Christ. But the truth is that Christ has been raised up, the first in a long legacy of those who are going to leave the cemeteries.

*It’s resurrection, resurrection, always resurrection, that undergirds what I do and say, **the way I live.***

Amen and amen!

Provide a copy for each of the two persons who will read this passage at the end of the Worship Time.

Friends, let me go over the Message with you one final time—this message that I proclaimed and that you made your own; this Message on which you took your stand and by which your life has been saved.

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*It's resurrection, resurrection, always resurrection, that undergirds what I do and say – **the way I live.***

Amen and amen!

(from 1 Corinthians 15, and quoted from ***The Message*** by James Peterson)