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~ Beyond All Joy ~

You can learn much more about this story by doing these three things:

1. Read Matthew 28:11-15, Luke 24:13-43 and John 20:19-31.
2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.
3. Answer the reflective questions.

1. Read the text of the story.

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Matthew 28:11-15 NASB	Matthew 28:11-15 NLT
<p>¹¹ Now while they were on their way, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. ¹² And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, ¹³ and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' ¹⁴ And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble." ¹⁵ And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.</p>	<p>¹¹ As the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and told the leading priests what had happened. ¹² A meeting with the elders was called, and they decided to give the soldiers a large bribe. ¹³ They told the soldiers, "You must say, 'Jesus' disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and they stole his body.' ¹⁴ If the governor hears about it, we'll stand up for you so you won't get in trouble." ¹⁵ So the guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely among the Jews, and they still tell it today.</p>
Luke 24:13-43 (NASB)	Luke 24:13-43 (NLT)
<p>¹³ And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and <i>began</i> traveling with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. ¹⁷ And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?" ¹⁹ And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. ²¹ But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. ²² But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see." ²⁵ And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He</p>	<p>¹³ That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. ¹⁶ But God kept them from recognizing him.</p> <p>¹⁷ He asked them, "What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?"</p> <p>They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. ¹⁸ Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days."</p> <p>¹⁹ "What things?" Jesus asked.</p> <p>"The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth," they said. "He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. ²⁰ But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago.</p> <p>²² "Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an</p>

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<p>explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.</p> <p>28 And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. 29 But they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is <i>getting</i> toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them. 30 When He had reclined <i>at the table</i> with them, He took the bread and blessed <i>it</i>, and breaking <i>it</i>, He <i>began</i> giving <i>it</i> to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. 32 They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" 33 And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, 34 saying, "The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon." 35 They <i>began</i> to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.</p> <p>36 While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and <i>said</i> to them, "Peace be to you." 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. 38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. 41 While they still could not believe <i>it</i> because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; 43 and He took it and ate <i>it</i> before them.</p>	<p>amazing report. 23 They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! 24 Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said."</p> <p>25 Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. 26 Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?" 27 Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.</p> <p>28 By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, 29 but they begged him, "Stay the night with us, since it is getting late." So he went home with them. 30 As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. 31 Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!</p> <p>32 They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" 33 And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, 34 who said, "The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter."</p> <p>35 Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread. 36 And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. "Peace be with you," he said. 37 But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost!</p> <p>38 "Why are you frightened?" he asked. "Why are your hearts filled with doubt? 39 Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do." 40 As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet.</p> <p>41 Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he ate it as they watched.</p>
John 20 19-31 (NASB)	John 20:19-31 (NLT)
<p>19 So when it was evening on that day, the first <i>day</i> of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and <i>said</i> to them, "Peace <i>be</i> with you." 20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace <i>be</i> with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." 22 And when He</p>	<p>19 That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! "Peace be with you," he said 20 As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! 21 Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." 22 Then he breathed on them and</p>

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<p>had said this, He breathed on them and *said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, <i>their sins</i> have been forgiven them; if you retain the <i>sins</i> of any, they have been retained."</p> <p>²⁴ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."</p> <p>²⁶ After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus *came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace <i>be</i> with you." ²⁷ Then He *said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." ²⁸ Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus *said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed <i>are</i> they who did not see, and <i>yet</i> believed."</p> <p>³⁰ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.</p>	<p>said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."</p> <p>²⁴ One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. ²⁵ They told him, "We have seen the Lord!"</p> <p>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."</p> <p>²⁶ Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. "Peace be with you," he said ²⁷ 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!"</p> <p>²⁸ "My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed.</p> <p>²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me."</p> <p>Purpose of the Book</p> <p>³⁰ The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.</p>
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2. Discover key cultural and historical insights

These insights from Bruce Malina, *A Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*,

1. A first century ordinance, found near Nazareth promoted by the Roman emperor – Malina 382-383

"Ordinance of Caesar: It is my pleasure that graves and tombs – whoever has made them as a pious service for ancestors or children or members of their house – that these remain unmolested in perpetuity. But if any person lay information that another either has destroyed them, or has in any other way cast out the bodies which have been buried there, or with malicious deception has transferred them to other places, to the dishonor of those buried there or has removed the headstones or other stones, in such a case I command that a trial be instituted, protecting the pious services of mortals, just as if they were concerned with the gods. For beyond all else it shall be obligatory to honor those who have been buried. If anyone does so however, it is my will that he shall suffer capital punishment on

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the charge of tomb robbery. (SEG 8:13 Nazareth (?) first-century C.E. trans. B.M. Metzger 1980: 77)

2. Spur-of-the-moment invitations to hospitality are standard fare in Mediterranean culture, but protocol requires that such invitations be considered a formality and declined until repeatedly urged in the strongest terms possible. 323
3. Throughout the Gospel of Luke, as indeed in Mediterranean culture in general, table fellowship is the litmus test of social solidarity. Eating together meant that a bond ran deeply among all the participants. Though the Eucharistic overtones of the meal are obvious, the meal as a key event of social interaction suggests that the risen Messiah and his followers are one. 323

From *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell

1. The punishment for quitting a post was death. This was one of 18 failures punishable by death. 212
2. To fail in a night watch meant one had to run a gauntlet of cudgels. 213
3. The weapons of a Roman guard – the pike, 6 ft. in length with a sharp iron head in a wooden shaft. He could throw it like a javelin or charge with it. A shield – 4 ft. by 2.5 ft. – The sword, 3 ft. in length. 214
4. The Roman guard would come out of a maniple – a subdivision of a legion. Four soldiers would be in the guard with one acting as sentinel while the others would be in repose but ready to spring into action if needed. 214

4. Answer these reflective questions.

Matthew 28:11-15 tells the story of the Roman soldiers and the religious leaders agreeing to lie about the events that happened at the tomb. Why do people lie in the face of truth?

1 Corinthians 15:5 tells us that the resurrection of Jesus revealed himself to Peter. What do you think they talked about? Do you think Peter needed this private time with Jesus because of his denial when Jesus was on trial?

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Luke 24:13-43 tells us the story of two disciples on the road to Emmaus. As they recalled their conversation with Jesus, they said their hearts burned within them. What does this mean? Has your heart ever burned within you as you have heard God's word taught or preached?

Luke 24:36-43 tells us that when Jesus appeared to many disciples, some still doubted. Why did they doubt? Do you believe Jesus eating a piece of fish in front of them was intended to show them he was real?

Many people had seen Jesus yet Thomas still doubted. Why was it so hard for Thomas to believe? How do you think Thomas felt when he saw the risen Lord and was told to put his hands in the wounds?

Jesus said, "Thomas, because you have seen me you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen, yet still believe." How does this relate to your life? Do you believe in Jesus? Are you walking by faith?

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**Read John 20:30-31. Would you say this is a good summary of the resurrection appearances?
How do these verses affect your life?**

How does the resurrection of Jesus show that . . .

- Jesus was telling the truth about himself?**
- Jesus' death on the cross was sufficient to pay for our sin?**
- God is concerned about injustice and suffering in the world?**

Read Romans 8:28-39. What do these verses teach us about what God has done for us in Christ?
