



Growth Group Questions
April 5, 2026
“It’s a New Day”

CONTEXT

Matthew’s telling of the resurrection story focuses on the witnesses. We read about angels, soldiers, women, and, indirectly, the religious leaders. Matthew not only wants to announce the greatest news ever, but also let his readers in on “how” people responded to Jesus being raised from the dead. He tells the resurrection story in a way that is public and historical and is not just connected to a few people having a private experience.



Daybreak by Diane Dammeyer
Botswana, Africa July 7, 2006

Very early on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to “look” at the tomb. The other gospels tell us they were planning to care for the body, but Matthew does not mention this. They simply went to observe what had happened overnight. As they arrive there is an earthquake, an angel descends and rolls back the stone and then sits on it. This had to have been a remarkable scene, but even more remarkable, Jesus is already gone. The tomb is empty!

Mary and Mary became the first witnesses to the empty tomb as well as the resurrected Jesus. In the days of Jesus, the testimony of women was rarely given legal weight. If the account of Jesus being raised from the dead were being invented, it is unlikely that women would have been chosen as the first witnesses. Yet, we are reminded of how the gospel often surprises and how the role of women in the early church was very important.

The angel makes it clear that Jesus is not simply spiritually present somewhere in the world, but that he has truly been raised from the dead. The empty tomb stands as evidence, and the angel’s words point back to what Jesus had already said would happen. Matthew is moving the story forward toward Galilee, where the risen Christ will meet his followers and send them into ministry.

The women leave the tomb with fear and great joy and as they are on their way Jesus meets them and says hello. They fall down before him and take hold of his feet and worship him. Jesus then repeats the angel’s



message, but with a note of grace. He calls the disciples his brothers. Even after their failure and abandonment, he still claims them, loves them, and calls them back into his mission.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 28:1-10

¹After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. ²There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. ⁵The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.” ⁸So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance^[a]: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas,^[b] and then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Ephesians 2:17-20

¹⁷He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. ¹⁹Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

Revelation 21:3-4

³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’^[a] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

QUESTIONS

1. The story of the women at the tomb can be found in Mark 16:1-8, Matthew 28:1-10 and Luke 24:1-12. As you read these various accounts of the story, what strikes you about these women?
2. Why do you think Jesus first appeared to women rather than to the disciples or other prominent male leaders?
3. Jesus told his disciples on multiple occasions that he would be crucified, buried and on the third day would rise again. Why do you think they weren’t at the tomb on that 3rd day to witness His resurrection?



4. Just like the people who followed Jesus seemed to forget what He had told them about His death and resurrection, we often fail to remember the incredible goodness of our God. Why is that? What can we do to jog our memories, so we do not forget God's promises?
5. Pastor Paul said that all of us, at one time or another, just feel empty. When you find yourself feeling empty, what do you do?
6. In I Corinthians 15:3-4, the Apostle Paul said: “. . . Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. . .” What Old Testament Scriptures might Paul be referencing?
7. Pastor Paul shared with us that in the original language, Jesus' greeting to the two women wasn't a bombastic “GREETINGS,” but a causal “Hi.” What does that say to you?
8. Jesus showed up for the two women at the tomb and for many others before He ascended into Heaven. Pastor Paul told us that Jesus continues to show up today. How does Jesus show up in your life today?

