



Big Idea: Your story in the story (Mark 16:9-13, Luke 24:17-21; 30-35)

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Wouldn't it be great if we knew ahead of time when something bad was going to happen to us? We may agree with that statement, but in reality, pain is still pain, defeat is still defeat, betrayal is still betrayal... and it still hurts. In the Easter story Jesus clearly told the disciples what was going to happen. They knew in advance! But they were caught up in the moment. The disciples walked with him for 3 years watching him heal the sick, walk on water, feed the 5,000. They saw everything he did and now he was dead. Their hero was tried as a criminal, found guilty and crucified.

Friday is a day of **pain**. For the disciples and those who loved and followed Jesus Friday was very painful. Each one of us will experience pain and many times we believe the lie that no one understand what we're going through. Jesus understands your pain. He knows physical pain, and he knows emotional pain. Jesus died on a Friday so you wouldn't have to stay stuck in a Friday.

Saturday is a day **without hope**. Pain has the ability to make us near sighted and leaves us hopeless. The most common question we ask when we're hopeless is, "Why even try?" When it's hard to trust God we must remember that he's doing something we don't see. God's silence does not equal His inactivity.

Sunday is a day of **freedom**. No matter how dark your Fridays are, no matter how hopeless your Saturday's may be, Sunday is always a day of freedom. Easter reminds us that we don't have to go back. Jesus paid for it – once and for all. No matter how far you've run... Grace paid the bill. Jesus is inviting us into Sunday.

Discussion Questions

- Would it make a difference if we knew in advance that pain, betrayal, or disappointment were coming?
- What Friday-like pain and loss has you believing that it's "too good to be true" that God loves you and has already paid your penalty in full?
- Saturday was a day without hope for Jesus' disciples as He laid in a grave, dead. Has God seemed dead to you, silent to you, or upset at you so that you've given up hope?
- How did the disciples react to those who saw Jesus resurrected and alive in Mark 16:9-13 and Luke 24:17-21?
- Easter Sunday was and is a day of freedom. What has Jesus set you free from?

Prayer Focus

Thank God for the incredible gift of His Spirit and resurrection power living inside of you. Thank Him for the sacrifice that paid your debt on the cross, and thank Him for being a risen King. Bring your pain before God, and ask Him to show you the redemptive purpose in it. Ask Him to give you peace as you wait on Him. And thank Him in advance for the victory to come.

Next Steps

If you are in a season of pain or hopelessness, remind yourself daily that Jesus understands what you are going through and that He can put redemptive purpose in your pain. Look for ways in which God may be using your painful experience to minister to others. Draw near to God. Worship daily. Get in His presence, and trust Him to bring calm to your confusion..

Leader Tip

Encourage the individual pursuit of God by sharing your personal testimony. Be sure to include the ways your life has been changed through your intimate relationship with Jesus.