

Amazing Easter News 1-02-C

Throughout the world newspapers call people's attention to the news and special events. The activities or events that affect more people are given more attention, both by those who write and read the newspapers. Today's lesson is about news that affected the entire world and continues to be the best news anyone could read even now.

Jesus spent three years of His life teaching crowds and spending even more time with a group of twelve men, His disciples. These followers along with many others had seen Jesus publicly do many miracles and they had heard Him teach the principles of God's kingdom. Now one follower, Judas, had agreed to betray Jesus to the religious rulers that wanted to do away with Him. After a special dinner, Jesus and His disciples were praying in the garden when Judas led the temple guards directly to Him. Jesus was arrested and led away even though He was innocent, and His followers fled.

As the false accusations mounted against Jesus, one disciple tried to watch from a safe distance. Out in the courtyard, Peter was trying to remain loyal, but he denied even knowing Jesus when asked by others. Jesus faced the insults and false testimony alone. After hours of illegal questioning, mockery, and torture, Jesus was finally sentenced to die.

Jesus, an innocent man, died a painful and humiliating death by crucifixion, a death reserved for those who deserved public punishment for crimes against the people. Jesus came to find and save the lost. He came to bring love, healing, and hope to people, and now He would be executed in a public way to appease these people. The long and cruel death sentence fell upon Jesus, not because He was helpless, but because He allowed these things to happen to fulfill His plan. Jesus knew that He would have to die, without sin, to pay for the sin of all people. He would bring new life out of His death.

A follower placed Jesus' body in a tomb, or large cave, and soldiers were sent to seal and protect the grave. The soldiers were to be careful no one stole the body. The leaders remembered that Jesus had promised to come back to life, and they were sure that someone would try to steal His body to trick people into believing Jesus was alive.

On the third day, the earth shook, the stone rolled away, and Jesus was shown to be alive again. The soldiers fainted in amazement, and later were payed so they would not admit that Jesus was alive. Jesus let His followers see Him and believe in His new life, the resurrection. They had all seen His terrible death on the cross. They had all seen His body sealed in a tomb. Jesus told them again how God had planned every part to happen just like it did. He wanted followers to understand how He had paid for the sin of anyone who believed on Him. For forty days Jesus reminded them to go and tell the whole world this good news. Then Jesus went up to heaven in a cloud, while His followers were watching.

These events were big news. Every promise that Jesus made came true. Most news stories become old and unimportant after awhile, but this good news is still important for today.

Teacher's Notes

- I. **Jesus' trial and conviction.**
 - A. Betrayed, denied, and falsely accused.
 - B. Sentenced to die.
- II. **Jesus' death and burial.**
 - A. The cruel crucifixion.
 - B. Sealed in a tomb.
- III. **Jesus' resurrection.**
 - A. He's seen by many.
 - B. His ascension.
- IV. **Jesus' promises.**
 - A. Power for believers.
 - B. Return one day.

Activity

Think about something in your area that best represents new life. Sometimes it is the starting of a new season, or the new grass beginning to grow. You may wish to plant some seeds for students to watch the miracle of growth from a seed that looks dead. Some people like to teach about the beginning of new life with the birth of living creatures. You may be able to see baby chicks that have come from an egg or some other living animals that represent new life. Just as God took a dead body in the grave and brought it to life, so He wants to take a life in sin and make it new.

Teacher Growth

Since today's lesson talks about the new life God wants to give every sinner, it requires a response from your students. This holiday can often be a time when people are first introduced to the full work of Christ. Many hear of the baby born and celebrated at Christmas, but some have still never heard of this Jesus that died and rose again for their sin. You will need to prayerfully prepare for the lesson's conclusion to encourage unsaved listeners to respond.

Scripture passages:

Luke 22-24

Memory Verse:

Luke 24:46 *"This is what was written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."*

After Jesus finished His prayer at the Passover meal, He left with His disciples and walked to a special garden in an olive grove on the eastern side of Jerusalem. Jesus often went there with His disciples to pray. That evening Jesus prayed a difficult prayer, accepting the plan God had for Him even though He knew the agony that was ahead. He asked His disciples to pray with Him, but they fell asleep that evening.

Suddenly, a large group of soldiers and some of the religious officials arrived in the garden. They approached Jesus, carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons. The group was led by Judas. Once Judas stepped forward and greeted Jesus with a kiss, the soldiers arrested Jesus. Peter drew the sword he had with him and hastily swung it at these men. He cut off the right ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus told Peter to put the sword away, and Jesus healed the servant's ear. Jesus knew the time had come to complete His Father's plan.

A series of illegal trials followed. The soldiers led Jesus, bound as a prisoner, to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the former high priest. The trial was not legal, for Jesus was questioned by a man who already saw Him as guilty, without proper witnesses. Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas, the current high priest, who earlier had said Jesus should be killed. Again, a mockery of a trial heaped insults upon Jesus.

Finally, Jesus was led to the Roman governor where the Jewish leaders asked Pilate to sentence Jesus to death. Pilate asked Jesus many questions and then said he could find no fault in Him. The religious leaders continued to push Pilate, so Jesus was stripped and whipped. He was beaten with a leather whip which had sharp objects to tear open His back. The soldiers pushed a crown of thorn branches down on His head, placed a purple robe on Him, and mocked Him. They hit Him and spit upon Him as they jeered Him, "Hail, king of the Jews!"

Pilate brought Jesus out to the people along with Barabbas, a rebel and murderer. Under law he could release one prisoner during Passover, and Pilate wanted to avoid killing the innocent Jesus. But the religious leaders caused the crowd to cry out for the crucifixion of Jesus. Pilate condemned Jesus to die.

Jesus was not weak or unable to save Himself from death, but He willingly followed the plan that would provide the payment for mankind's sin. Jesus was the Lamb that had to be sacrificed during that special Passover celebration. Every year the lamb that was killed represented what was God's future plan to rescue all people. Finally His Son, Jesus, was the last Lamb that would ever have to die for the rescue of God's people.

Jesus was nailed to the cross on a hill called Golgotha outside the city. Criminals were crucified on each side of Jesus, and the people read the sign over His head that called Him the King of the Jews. The soldiers divided up His clothes and gambled for His undergarment. Even in death Jesus cared for His mother and His disciples. He asked God, the Father, to forgive the very ones who were crucifying Him and gave a criminal acceptance into heaven as the guilty man believed from the cross. Then the cry came from Jesus' lips, "It is finished." Jesus was dead. God's perfect Son paid for the sins of the world.

Teacher's Notes

- I. **Garden events.**
 - A. Jesus prayed.
 - B. Jesus betrayed.
- II. **The trials.**
 - A. The high priest.
 - B. The Roman governor.
- III. **A choice was proposed.**
 - A. The crowd's response.
 - B. The sentence given.
- IV. **Christ crucified.**
 - A. Death on the cross.
 - B. A borrowed tomb.

Activity

Provide a simple nail and a piece of red ribbon, yarn, or string for each student. Have them tie the ribbon to the nail and discuss how this can be used to explain the plan of salvation to others. Simply hang the nail from a tree near your class or the student's home. The red ribbon stands for the blood Jesus shed when He was nailed to the tree formed into a cross on Calvary. Sometimes a simple symbol can create an open door for sharing our faith.

Teacher Growth

The trials of Jesus were filled with false information that caused many people to misjudge the Son of God. A teacher may misjudge a student and underestimate God's plan. Don't allow incomplete information, gossip, or a quick judgment form a negative opinion in your heart and mind about a student. God has chosen each of us with a specific plan. As a teacher, He may be using you to shape part of that plan in each of your students' lives. Prayerfully teach every student God gives you without judgment and with His great love.

Scripture passages:

John 18-19

Memory Verse:

John 1:29 "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'"

After Jesus' death on the cross, Joseph of Arimathea, a good man who believed in Jesus, came and took Jesus' body. Joseph wrapped the body in cloth and spices and placed it in a new tomb that he had planned to use himself. The women from Galilee who had come with Jesus saw exactly how Joseph had placed Jesus' body in the tomb. They hurried to prepare more spices to lay around the body but rested in obedience to the Sabbath law before taking them to the tomb.

Early in the morning, on the first day of the week, these women took spices to the tomb. The large stone that had been over the entrance and sealed by Roman soldiers, was rolled away. They looked inside and discovered the body was gone. Suddenly two men whose clothes shone like lightning stood beside them. The women were so afraid they bowed to the ground. The angels said, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; He has risen! Remember how He told you, while He was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then the women remembered Jesus' words.

The women hurried back with this unusual report to the place where the other eleven disciples were. The men did not believe them. They had seen Jesus die on the cross. Peter and John got up and ran to the tomb. John arrived first and just looked at the open entrance, but Peter arrived and went right inside. When they saw the strips of linen cloth that had been wrapped around the body, they left with great wonder.

That same day two of the followers of Jesus began walking to a village called Emmaus. They talked sadly about the events that had just happened. Then a stranger joined them and asked them questions. Cleopas was amazed that this man had not heard about Jesus' death. He explained the events of the crucifixion and the puzzling empty tomb. The stranger used the words of the prophets to explain God's plan.

As they neared the village, the followers convinced the stranger to stop and enjoy dinner. At the table the stranger took the bread, gave thanks, and broke it for them. Suddenly they realized that this was Jesus. They understood why they had felt a burning in their hearts as they had listened to His words. Immediately, they hurried back to tell the others.

Early that first morning, while still dark, Mary Magdalene had gone to the tomb to mourn. She had returned to stand outside the tomb and weep. As she cried, a man came near that Mary thought was a gardener. She asked if the man had seen who had taken away the Lord's body. Then, Jesus spoke Mary's name, and Mary realized it was Jesus. Jesus sent her to tell the others that He had risen just as He said He would.

Most of the disciples were together when Jesus suddenly appeared in the room. He reassured them that He was alive. One disciple, Thomas, was not there. He later heard the news of Jesus' visit and yet he doubted it was true. Thomas said he would only believe if he could place his hand in the wounds in Jesus' hands, feet, and side. Then Jesus came into the room and went right to Thomas. Thomas bowed before Jesus and worshiped Him.

Teacher's Notes

- I. **The tomb found empty.**
 - A. Women discover loss.
 - B. Angels explain.
- II. **The story is checked.**
 - A. A race to the tomb.
 - B. A true report.
- III. **On the road.**
 - A. Two had an encounter.
 - B. The stranger revealed.
- IV. **He continued to appear.**
 - A. To Mary and Thomas.
 - B. To many others.

Activity

Give each student a lump of clay and several pieces of chenille wire or wire. Have them make a small tomb and a stone to be rolled over the front. Then use the wires to create the characters from today's lesson. The students can also make small paper figures, cut out and attached to twigs if wire is not available. Place their "resurrection scene" on a small piece of old cardboard for a base.

Teacher Growth

Clay is a medium that students enjoy working with. Some places may have inexpensive clay for classroom use, or you may need to make your own. There are a number of recipes for making your own clay. Here is one: Place in large saucepan 2 c. flour, 1 c. salt, 4 tsp. cream of tartar, 2 c. water. 2 Tbs. vegetable oil, 1 package unsweetened Koolaid or 1/2 tsp. food coloring. Cook mixture over low heat, stirring constantly until non-sticky ball forms. Store in air-tight container.

Scripture passages:

Luke 23:50-24:12, John 20:1-18

Memory Verse:

Luke 24:6-7 *"He is not here; He has risen! Remember how He told you, while He was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'"*

The night before Jesus was crucified, the disciples had gathered with Him for the feast of the Passover, what we call communion today. At the table Jesus again told them of the terrible things that would be happening and even the fact that one disciple would betray Him. Jesus gave Peter a special warning that the enemy would sift Peter like wheat and once he turned back, Peter was to strengthen the other believers. (To sift like wheat was like being tested in a strong way.) Peter was quick to tell Jesus, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." Peter was sure that he was brave and loyal and that nothing would cause him to turn away from Jesus. Jesus knew everything. He told Peter, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know Me." Peter must have thought that surely the Lord was mistaken.

Later that night, Jesus was arrested and the disciples ran. But Peter followed in the shadows as they led Jesus away. The soldiers had a fire out in the cold courtyard. Peter sat near the fire when a servant girl looked at him and said he had been with Jesus. Peter denied it and said he did not even know Jesus. A little later another noticed Peter as a follower of Jesus. Again Peter told the man he was not a disciple of Jesus. In the dark, with the painful sounds of Jesus' trial, mockery, and flogging, Peter became afraid that he might be arrested as well. Finally, another man told the crowd in the courtyard that surely Peter was a follower of Jesus. Peter became angry and denied even knowing Jesus. While he was speaking, the rooster crowed and Jesus turned to look straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said. Peter ran out of the courtyard and wept bitterly. How sad Peter was to know that he had failed Jesus.

Jesus was then killed on a cross, and placed in a borrowed tomb. Jesus came back to life, or was resurrected, and the tomb was empty. The disciples had seen Jesus alive and now they were learning why Jesus had died and been raised again to pay for our sins as the perfect sacrifice. Jesus still needed to teach His disciples more lessons before He went to heaven.

One day a group of the disciples went fishing like they used to do before they were Jesus' followers. They fished all night and caught nothing. Early the next morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples didn't know it was Him. Jesus called out, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When the disciples did this, their nets were so full they could not pull them into the boat. Then John knew it was the Lord who had done this miracle. Peter wrapped his coat around himself and jumped in the water while the others began to row quickly toward shore, towing the net full of fish behind them. When they landed, they saw a fire on the shore with fish cooking and bread for them to eat. Jesus told them to bring some of the fish they had just caught. Peter pulled 153 fish out of the net, and even with that many, the net had not broken. It was a great miracle.

When they had finished eating, Jesus asked Peter three times if he really loved Him. Peter answered, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said to Peter, "Follow me!" How wonderful that the Lord would speak so personally to the very disciple who had failed Him.

Teacher's Notes

- I. **Disowned by a follower.**
 - A. Jesus foretold.
 - B. Peter failed.
- II. **Fruitless night.**
 - A. Fished all night.
 - B. Jesus questioned them.
- III. **He changed the outcome.**
 - A. New instructions.
 - B. Breakfast ready.
- IV. **A follower forgiven.**
 - A. A challenge repeated.
 - B. A plan for everyone.

Activity

Today's story is well suited for drama. The story has several parts, each being another "act" in the play you put together. You do not need costumes or props, but your students will enjoy acting out the various stages of the lesson. 1) The Lord's supper where He predicts the denial. 2) The scene by the fire with the accusations and denial followed by the rooster's crow. 3) The tired fishermen and the great catch of fish. 4) The forgiveness and challenge for Peter by the breakfast fire. Drama can help students put life into the words they hear or read from the Bible. They will remember the lesson and the key points far longer when they have become involved in the story.

Teacher Growth

At times, you may get weary of the task of preparing and presenting lessons for your class. Maybe you have even failed tests that have come your way. Today you need to be reminded that the Lord lovingly forgives our shortcomings and will always ask us again to follow Him. What an honor it is to care for His sheep. Even with the youngest students, remember you are feeding His lambs.

Scripture passages:

Luke 22:54-62, John 13:31-38; 21:1-22

Memory Verse:

Galatians 5:13b "Serve one another in love."

A Home In Heaven 1-20-B

Before Jesus was taken to the cross, He began to prepare His disciples for what would happen. He comforted them by telling them, "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas then asked the Lord how to get to that place. Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Many times Jesus taught His followers that they would have to follow Him and believe in Him to have eternal life.

After Jesus was killed on the cross, buried and resurrected, He appeared to His followers over a period of forty days. During these visits, He reminded them of all that He had taught them during His three years of ministry on earth. Jesus proved to them over and over that He really was alive. Then one day, as they were eating, Jesus gave them a special command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." The disciples asked Jesus if He was now going to set up His kingdom on earth. Jesus explained, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Just as Jesus finished giving the disciples these final instructions, He was taken up into the clouds before their very eyes. The disciples were staring up into the clouds when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven."

The disciples and other followers went back into Jerusalem, into an upper room, and there they waited until they received the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus had commanded. We also need the Holy Spirit as those first disciples did, to be His witnesses as we await His return. Jesus told us there was a wonderful place called heaven where He is preparing a place for us.

The Book of Revelation, the last book in the Bible, tells us what will happen in the future. We can read about the wonderful place that God has for us for all of eternity. What will heaven be like? Revelation tells us that it will be very large with walls of jasper and a city made of gold as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls will be of every kind of precious stone with huge gates, each made from a single perfect pearl. The streets will be made of pure gold, and there will be bright light, not from the sun or lamps, but from the glow of God's glory. Heaven will have no sin, nothing impure, no death or pain, no crying, no sadness, but only perfect joy. Revelation, Chapter 22, gives us some word pictures about the river of the water of life, the tree of life, and the beautiful things God will provide there. At the end of the Bible, there is a warning. No one is to ever add or take things out of the Bible. God's Word is perfect, true, and complete. We need to read it, study it, and obey it.

Teacher's Notes

- I. **Jesus comforted His disciples.**
 - A. A home prepared.
 - B. The way to the Father.
- II. **Jesus ascended into heaven.**
 - A. He promised power.
 - B. Angels promised His return.
- III. **The New Jerusalem.**
 - A. A city description.
 - B. God's glory revealed.
- IV. **Jesus is coming soon.**
 - A. The water of life.
 - B. As it is written.

Activity

Place a large sheet of paper along the floor or against a wall. This can be simple butcher paper or newsprint paper. If that is not available, tape a number of sheets of paper together to create a long mural sheet of paper. Now encourage the entire class to get involved in drawing, and painting or coloring the way they picture heaven. Today's lesson has given them some clues to include, but they will also enjoy adding all the things they think will make heaven a wonderful place.

Teacher Growth

A special blessing is promised for those who will read and share the contents of the book of Revelation. Some books of the Bible are much more difficult to teach than others, and yet it is important that we study and learn from all of the Bible, Genesis to Revelation. As you study the whole Bible personally, you will become better equipped to lead your students into a full appreciation for all of God's Word. We must remember the caution from Revelation 22 to never add or take away from the Bible's content. He has given us all that we need to live for Him until He returns.

Scripture passages:

John 14:1-6, Acts 1:1-11, Revelation 21-22

Memory Verse:

John 14:3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."