

Reading Tracks

TRACK ONE

Follow along with basics of the story in a short selection of readings this week..

Monday: John 20:1-10

Tuesday: John 20:11-22

Wednesday: John 20:23-31

Thursday: John 1:1-14

Friday: Galatians 6:11-18

Saturday: 2 Corinthians 11:22-33

TRACK TWO

Get a little bigger perspective by reading assigned sections from *The Story* © 2011 by Zondervan.

Read pages 381-388 this week.

TRACK THREE

Get the whole story by reading through most of the Bible in longer sections.

In your Bible, read John 20-21 this week.

This Week's Scripture Memory Verse

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."
John 20:29 NIV

Next Week in Worship

Next Week's Message: *A New Community*

Next Week's Readings: Acts 2:1-47; Acts 4:32-37

The Resurrection of Jesus is the climax of *The Big God Story*, the point to which everything before looked forward and the point from which our own stories with God find their beginning. When *The Big God Story* continues next week we will read about the newly formed, Spirit-filled community of the first Christians and learn how the joy and power of their lives can still fill us today.



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Group Discussion

Connect

What's your most interesting scar story?

Learn

Read John 20:24-29. Jesus had already appeared after His resurrection to Mary Magdalene and to a group of his other disciples, but Thomas wasn't with that group. They told him that they had seen Jesus, but he refused to believe them until he saw Jesus' scars.

- Do you find yourself more sympathetic to Thomas or critical of him? Why?
- Does your own faith journey have anything in common with Thomas? Have you heard other people talk about their faith but had your own experience with Him later?

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet believe," but Thomas is not the only one who saw Jesus before he believed. Read the stories in **John 20:1-23** (especially verses 8, 14, 18, and 20). What do you think Jesus meant by this statement? How do you think the first audience of John's Gospel would have heard this?

- Many people think of faith as what you try to believe even when the evidence says otherwise. It would be the opposite of reason. Although a full picture of Biblical faith needs more than just this one passage, what would you say about Christian faith based on this story?
 - At the end of the story, Thomas said to Jesus, "My Lord and My God." He is the first person ever to call Jesus "God." In John's artfully written Gospel this climactic scene finally closes the loop from John 1:1 where we were told "the Word was God." What do you think it means that this piece of Jesus' identity isn't fully revealed until now?
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Apply

Read Galatians 6:17. Paul said he had the marks of Jesus, probably meaning the scars of his own persecution (2 Corinthians 11:24-28). He implies that suffering is not evidence that God has abandoned us. It is evidence that we are walking with and like Jesus in this world.

- Have you ever suffered any loss because of your faith? Can you imagine that experience becoming a part of your Christian witness?
 - What do you think God could do with your wounds to help someone else and perhaps even to strengthen their faith in Jesus?
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Pray

Easter is a time when many people think about Jesus who otherwise rarely do. Pray for the people in your lives who still need to know the hope of the Resurrection of Christ.