

Read: Acts 17:1-12

God's People Share the Way

Acts 17:2-5a

As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah," he said. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women. But other Jews were jealous.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It was the day after Easter. Derek was already a bummed-out zombie when he heard, "Jesus is still dead and in the grave." His jaw hit the ground, especially when he realized the voice behind those words was his Nana's. Nana was the most Christian person Derek knew. She was always sending him Bible passages. Her walls were decorated with crosses. She was "really old" and still teaching Sunday School. She sang in the choir. Her brother was a Lutheran pastor. "What gives, Nana?"

"Well, with the way you are walking around all mopey, all day long, I figured something horrible must have happened. The only thing I could think of that could be that bad to make such a long face is that Jesus must still be dead."

"I'm just bummed because we are all cooped up in the house and so many people are losing their jobs."

"True. That is sad. But, let's never forget—Christ is risen!"

It's natural to experience moments of sadness. That's why Jesus' resurrection is so important to remember in those moments. When you feel everything is going wrong, the joy of knowing, "Christ is risen!" reminds us what is going right and will never change! It puts a smile on our hearts that no sadness can overcome. It puts an encouraging message on our lips that cannot be silenced.

Jesus' resurrection was a message the early Christians were excited to share. The apostle Paul went from town to town and synagogue to synagogue with one message: Jesus, the promised Messiah, has risen from the dead! It proves that our guilt is paid for, that our death is dead, and that our accuser, Satan, has no more claim on us.

This good news puts us on the way to heaven. This good news gives us reason to thank Jesus. Finally, this good news is our hope to share. Like Paul and the early Christians, we can tell our friends, family, and neighbors about Jesus Christ—the Way, the Truth and the Life—with the same joy he has given us!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- What was making Derek sad?
- How did Derek's Nana cheer him up?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What would you say are the main teachings of the Bible?
- Why could a Christian argue that the resurrection of Jesus is the most important message of the Bible?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- What are some things Paul might have said from Scripture to "prove" that the Messiah (Jesus) had to suffer and die?
- Sadly, not everyone believed the good news Paul shared. It says that some were "jealous" and others even worked to have Paul arrested or booted out of town. Give several, loving ways you can respond to a person who reacts to the good news of the gospel with rejection or skepticism.

Closing Prayer:

Gracious Savior, fill our hearts with the joy of the gospel so that our lips overflow with your praise as we share the way with others in our life. Amen.

Hymn: CW 422:1,4 – Jesus, Lead Us On

Jesus, lead us on
Till our rest is won;
And although the way be cheerless,
We will follow, calm and fearless.
Guide us by your hand
To our fatherland.

Jesus, still lead on
Till our rest is won.
Heav'nly Leader, still direct us;
Still support, console, protect us
Till we safely stand
In our fatherland.