



## From Good to Better to Best Bible Study Leader's Guide

[Please provide: Bibles, copies of this Bible study for attendees]

In this Bible study we will focus on Jesus' resurrection and on the importance of living and sharing Jesus' Easter victory based on the theme verse 1 Corinthians 15:57: *But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**Opening Prayer:** Dear Holy Trinity, We praise You and thank You for Jesus' resurrection which gives us the victory over sin, death, and the devil. Thank You for giving us the desire and privilege to live and share the Easter victory in our daily lives. Please guide us through this Bible study and help us gain a greater understanding and appreciation of Jesus' death and resurrection. In the Name of Jesus, our risen Savior. Amen.

### Good

Before Jesus could rise on Easter morning, He had to suffer and die on the cross on what has come to be known as GOOD Friday. The suffering and death Jesus endured was certainly not "good" for Him. But it is certainly good for us. Read the following Bible passages and describe the good things that came out of this tragic event.

Luke 23:33–34: Jesus asked God to forgive His enemies/murderers.

Luke 23:39–43: One of the criminals next to Jesus repented of his sins, was forgiven, and received the gift of eternal life.

Matthew 27:54 and Luke 23:47: The centurion and others with him finally believed that Jesus is God's Son. Luke 23:47 reveals that the centurion praised God and said that Jesus was innocent.

John 19:28–30 (also refer to Matthew 5:17.): Through His death, Jesus completely paid the price we owed God for our sins.

John 19:35: Those present at Jesus' death were able to bear witness to the account and share it with others so, by the power of the Holy Spirit, they might also believe and come to know Jesus.

Galatians 3:10, 13–14: Jesus became cursed for us when He took all our sins upon Himself on the cross. Jesus died for all people, even the Gentiles, who now, through faith, are made sons and daughters of Abraham.

Romans 5:8–10: Even though we are sinners, Christ loves us so much that He sacrificed His life for us. The shedding of Jesus' blood when He died on the cross justifies all sinners and saves us from God's wrath and the eternal punishment we deserve for our sins. Though we were once God's enemies, Jesus' death reconciles us to our heavenly Father.

Hebrews 2:14–15: Jesus' death on the cross is a victory over the devil. Jesus also delivered those in sin's bondage from the fear of eternal death.

## Better

Jesus' resurrection from the dead on Easter morning was certainly BETTER than the gruesome torture of His crucifixion on GOOD Friday. Imagine how much BETTER the followers of Jesus felt when they learned that He was alive! Work together as a group and fill in the blanks below with the following words: cross, grave, victories, resurrection, accomplished, risen, worthless

Although Jesus accomplished many victories on the cross, they would have been worthless if He had not risen from the grave. In other words, you could say His resurrection "sealed the deal!"

Read the following verses and explain how they support the previous statement as well as reinforce the significance that Jesus not only died but rose again.

Romans 10:9: It is not enough to believe that Jesus died. We also believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, we would not be saved. His resurrection is the proof that He has conquered sin, death, and the devil.

1 Corinthians 15:14, 17–22: Without Christ's resurrection, our faith is in vain and futile, and we would still be in our sins. Those who have died would have no hope of heaven.

Reread 1 Corinthians 15:57 (this study's theme verse) found on page 1. The victory mentioned in this verse is "(the) victory over the condemnation for sin that the law brought and over death and the grave through the death and resurrection of Christ" (*Concordia NIV Self Study Bible*, ©1985, p.1770).

In the following Bible passages, identify what else is BETTER now, or what does a BETTER life consist of because of Jesus' resurrection?

1 Corinthians 15:58: (Keep in mind that this verse comes directly after the theme verse about the resurrection victory.) How does Jesus' resurrection impact our lives? By the faith given us by the Holy Spirit, we trust that Christ is alive and has given us the victory over sin, death, and the devil. Because we are certain that Jesus lives forever, the Holy Spirit motivates us to stand firm, keep the faith, and serve Him.

Colossians 2:12–14: Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, all our sins (*debts*) have been cancelled in full. In Holy Baptism, we too are raised in faith and receive a new, eternal life.

Colossians 3:1–2: As we believe that Jesus rose from the dead, the Holy Spirit leads us to seek the things that are above and set our minds on them.

Colossians 3:12–17: As God's chosen people made holy in Jesus, He leads us to *put on ... compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience* (v. 12). As one body, He leads us to forgive others and to love all. Through the power of the Word, the Holy Spirit leads us to *teach and admonish each other in all wisdom, sing psalms, hymns, and other spiritual songs* (v.16). We are to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus (v.17).

Read Romans 6:4–14. Walking in newness of life means our lives are now free from the guilt of sin (*The Lutheran Study Bible*, ©2009, study note on v. 4, p.1919). List three truths that state how our lives are BETTER because of Jesus' resurrection. Because of Jesus' resurrection, we are no longer enslaved to sin. We live with Jesus now through faith and will someday live with Him forever in heaven. We are dead to sin and alive to God.

Read Romans 7:4–6. How is our service to God BETTER because of Jesus' resurrection? Because of Jesus' resurrection, we now serve in the new way of the Spirit. Because we are now robed with Christ's righteousness, we serve with joy, rather than wondering if we've done enough.

Read Hebrews 13:20–21. In Hebrews 13:20, the author uses the phrase “eternal covenant.” That is the new and BETTER covenant ushered in by Jesus' resurrection. His death marked the end of the old covenant primarily based on the Law. This new covenant is a covenant of grace—the undeserved gift of forgiveness and the assurance of salvation and eternal life in heaven to all who believe in Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus established a new and BETTER covenant with all who believe in Him.

## **Best**

The BEST is yet to come for us because of Jesus' death and resurrection!

Read Ephesians 2:1–8. Because of God's grace, where will all believers sit someday? All believers will sit with Jesus in heaven.

Read John 14:1–4. What is Jesus doing for us? Jesus is preparing a place for us in heaven.

Reread verse 3b. In this verse, what does Jesus promise all believers? Jesus promises all believers that they will be where He is.

When Jesus returns to the world, some of the very BEST things will happen to those who believe in Him. Read 1Thessalonians 4:13–17 to find out more about Jesus' second coming.

When Jesus returns, who will be raised first? The dead in Christ will be raised first.

At the time of Jesus' return, what will happen to the living? The living will be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so they will always be with the Lord.

What do each of these Bible passages say about the BEST victory that is still to come for those who trust in Jesus?

1 Peter 1:3–5: Through Jesus' resurrection and according to His great mercy, God caused us to be born again to a living hope – the hope of an eternal inheritance kept in heaven for us which is *imperishable, undefiled, and unfading* (v.4). God is keeping us in the true faith while we live on earth for a salvation to be revealed on the last day.

Colossians 3:4: Because of His resurrection, Christ is our life. He will never die again. And when he appears (on the last day/Second Coming) we will also appear with Him in glory.

Hebrews 9:28: There will be a Second Coming of Christ to save those eagerly waiting for Him. He will not have to come to bear our sins because He has already done that.

1 Corinthians 6:14: Because God raised the Lord, we, too, will be raised by God's power.

John 6:40: It is the Father's will that all believers in Jesus who look on Him should have eternal life and be raised on the last day by the Son.

Sadly, not everyone will experience the BEST that Christians will in eternity. Jesus' Second Coming will also be Judgment Day, and the dead who are NOT in Christ will be raised but will spend eternity in hell as well as those still alive on the last day who do not know Christ—they will NOT meet the Lord in the air and live with Him in heaven.

The Easter message and the Gospel message are basically one and the same—that God loved us so much He sent His Son to die and rise again for our sins and that forgiveness and eternal life are free gifts to those who believe. In 1 Corinthians 15:1–4 Paul writes, *Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, ~~and~~ that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.* The Easter and Gospel message are of *first importance*. By the power of the Holy Spirit, as we acknowledge the truths the Bible shares concerning Jesus' second coming, why is it so important that we share the Gospel message in every way possible? In Matthew 28:19, Jesus commands us to share the truth of His death, resurrection, and saving love with all nations. God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). God works through us to tell others they are saved through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Closing Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your Son to make heaven a reality for us! Dear Jesus, thank You for obeying Your Father's will by dying for our sins and rising again to grant us salvation. Thank You for making heaven a reality for us! Dear Holy Spirit, thank You for walking with us daily as You work in us to spread the Good News and lead us to live and share Jesus' resurrection victory with everyone. Thank You, Holy Trinity, for victoriously leading us from the GOOD, to the BETTER, and finally to the BEST! In the Name of Jesus, our risen Savior. Amen.

From Good to Better to Best  
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