

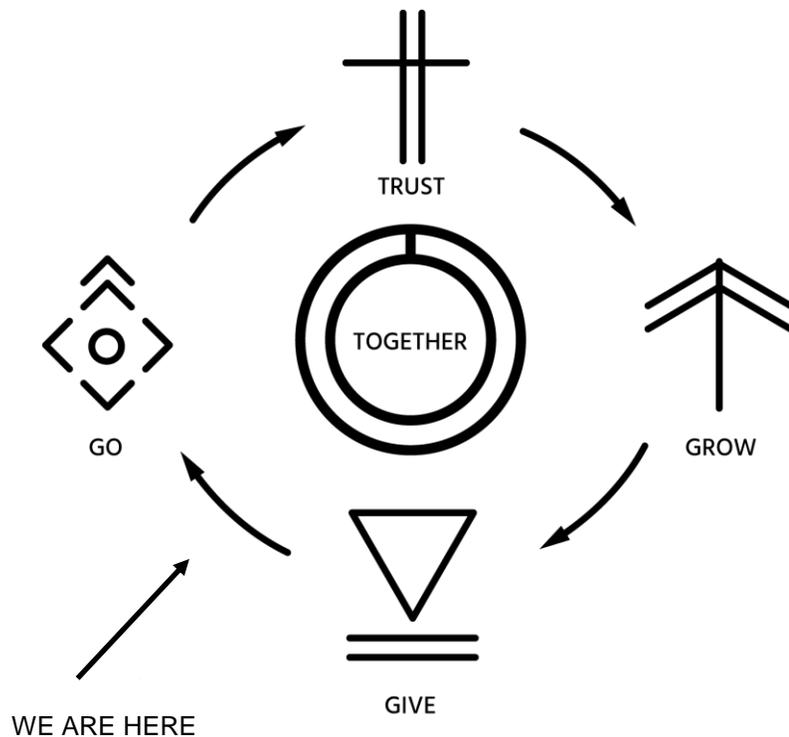
EASTER

Long Story Short

APPETIZER: Why Not Destroy Us?

This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations.

– Jesus (Luke 24:46-47)



DINE IN: The Good News the First Christians Preached

Acts 17:22-31

Gospel sermons of the early Church recorded in Acts...

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|----------------|----------------------|
| 1. 2:14-41 | 9. 13:16-41 |
| 2. 3:12-26 | 10. <u>14:15-17*</u> |
| 3. 4:8-12 | 11. 16:30-32 |
| 4. 5:29-32 | 12. <u>17:22-31*</u> |
| 5. 7:2-53 | 13. 19:8-10 |
| 6. 8:12, 26-35 | 14. 22:1-21 |
| 7. 10:34-43 | 15. 24:10-21 |
| 8. 11:20 | 16. 26:1-29 |

* = to a non-Jewish audience

This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and YOU, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But GOD raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.
~ The Apostle Peter (Acts 2:23-24)

Acts 2:36; 3:15; 4:10; Acts 5:30; Acts 10:39-40

THE PATTERN:

1. WE are responsible for killing Christ.
2. BUT GOD intervened by raising Christ.
3. AND JESUS rose to offer us forgiveness and reconciliation.

TAKE OUT: Repent and Believe

1. Stop running and start seeking.
2. God's not mad at you, so stop being mad at him.
3. Saying sorry and making things right is a good place to start.

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

~ The Apostle Peter (2 Peter 3:9)

Home Church Questions

HANGOUT [Warming Up to the Topic – in one Large Group]

1. Review Sunday's message. Talk about what most encouraged, convicted, or puzzled you. There is lots here to talk about!

HEAR [Listening to God through Scripture – in Discussion Groups]

2. Read **Acts 17:22-34**.
 - a. What verse or idea stands out to you?
 - b. Calling the Athenians very "religious" at the start of his sermon might have been a compliment or an insult or merely a neutral observation. Why do you think Paul started by using this label?
 - c. Before he took his turn to talk, Paul took his time to learn (v. 23). This is an important skill for evangelism. On a scale of 1-10, how well do you demonstrate curiosity, ask questions, and learn about your friends' and family's beliefs when having spiritual conversations?
 - d. "Non-Christians are basically worshipping the same God, just without all the facts." What evidence do you see of this proposition in Paul's sermon?
 - e. How is the gospel message Paul preaches here "irreligious"?
 - f. God will arrange circumstances to help everyone hear his good news, but he will never overpower our will. What is the evidence of this position in this sermon?
 - g. What is the significance of the risen and ascended Jesus still being called a "man"? How is this part of the gospel?

HUDDLE [Making It Personal and Praying Together – in Huddles]

3. Use your regular huddle questions for discussion before prayer.

Quotes

Welcome to our Easter Sunday service. Today we are examining what the early Christians taught about the Good News of Jesus and his resurrection.

In Acts 17, we read about how the Apostle Paul talked about Jesus and the resurrection with people in Athens...

While Paul was waiting in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him.

Some of them asked, "What is this babler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus,

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious.

For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.

God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being. As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

And he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."

When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." At that, Paul left the Council. Some of the people joined Paul and believed.