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**WHAT MADE IT GREAT? THE CONTENT.**

- The people had hoped Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus: the one who cared for the sick; the one who reached out to the lost, hopeless, and cast aside; the one who spoke of God as if He was a Father who cared.
- But Jesus was the one the jealous, abusive leaders had killed with the help of the oppressive Romans.

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**JESUS IS ALIVE, RISEN FROM THE DEAD.**

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**THE APOSTLES WOULD GIVE THE DETAILS ABOUT HOW THEY CAME TO THIS CONCLUSION IN THE GOSPELS.**

- They had been terrified and ran. They were destroyed economically, but when they had gone to the tomb, they saw it empty. Later, one of the women was there weeping, and Jesus came—and He was alive. Surely the men thought it was just the grief of a woman who had lost so much! But then Jesus revealed Himself to Peter, and then to two disciples leaving town on the run (to Emaus), and then, later that Sunday evening, Jesus appeared to them all!
- For the next fifty days, Jesus spent time with them. Finally, in front of them, He was taken into heaven.

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**BUT AS THEY LISTENED, SURELY THEY THOUGHT, “HOW COULD THIS BE?”**

- Their answer: “Jesus did miracles, and you saw them. He did them in front of you!”
- Peter: “You’re hearing one right now as you hear me speak in different languages; we are just Galileans.” (Acts 2)
- This was all prophesied about. Peter points to David’s Psalm 16, and later, the disciples would include many more prophecies, including Isaiah 53.

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**SOME WERE SURELY ASKING, “HOW CAN WE BELIEVE THEM?” BUT THE ANSWER WAS OBVIOUS.**

- These men had had something happen to them.
- They had run away scared, but now they were confident.
- They were in the same city Jesus had been killed in, yet there they were unafraid and confident.

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## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

- Things are not what they had seemed.

## GOD'S PREARRANGED PLAN

**Acts 2:22-38** <sup>22</sup>Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. <sup>23</sup>**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.** <sup>24</sup>**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.** <sup>25</sup>David said about him:

"I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. <sup>26</sup>Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, <sup>27</sup>because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay. [See Psalms 16:10] <sup>28</sup>You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence."

<sup>29</sup>Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. <sup>30</sup>But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. <sup>31</sup>Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. <sup>32</sup>God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. <sup>33</sup>Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

<sup>34</sup>For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand..."

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## QUESTIONS TO REFLECT AND DISCUSS:

**Passages to consider:** Luke 24; Acts 1:1-11; Acts 2:1-40

- What, from the sermon, is valuable to you as you live out following Christ during this time?
  1. Read Luke 24:1-12. What was not what it seemed in this account? What would it have been like to be there? Think about what you would have seen and heard.
  2. What questions or thoughts would you have had if you had been there? A) How do those compare to what you are experiencing at this time?
  3. Look at Acts 2:1-14. What changes do you see in those following Jesus? A) What happened? (Luke 24:13-49, John 21, and Acts 1:1-11 may help.)
  4. What about encountering a risen Jesus would be life-altering and perspective-shifting? A) Where do you need a perspective shift in your thinking?
  5. Read Acts 2:36-39 How are you pressing into Jesus as both Lord and Savior?
  6. Who needs to hear the account of what Jesus did, and how it has impacted you? *Commit to pray for them and seek opportunities to share Jesus.*

**Passages to prepare for next week's new series, Contagious—Fear or Faith: What are you carrying?**

This week, read: Psalm 25; John 14; 2 Timothy 2

As you read, ask yourself these questions:

- a) What is the passage saying about God, human beings, the world?
- b) What do I learn about myself from this passage?
- c) What adjustment does this require of me in my thinking, believing, and doing?
- d) What changes will I make as I obey what God is showing me?
- e) What area most needs to be impacted by this? Think of your Home, Church, and World (where you work, live, and play).
- f) Who will I tell what God is showing me?