

MEET THE RISEN JESUS



STUDY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

After Jesus' resurrection, the New Testament tells us that over 500 people met him. Then, after he ascended, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit so that the presence of God could now be known by all those who invite him into their life as Lord, Saviour and Friend.

This series looks at encounters Jesus had with a wide range of people during his earthly ministry. We're asking the question, what does this mean for us to meet and know this same Jesus today?

KNOW, LOVE AND FOLLOW

These notes are primarily intended for discussion and prayer in groups, but should also help personal reflection on God's word. They're a starting point, the Lord may well lead you into other helpful discussions around these stories.

There's an opener to consider and then 3 sections:

Know - Gaining understanding of the Bible in context

Love - Applying that understanding to our hearts

Follow - What does that mean for how we live this out?

It would be good to have time to pray, perhaps to worship, and anything else that will help you know, love and follow the risen Lord Jesus. Each week can stand alone, so you might like to include some socials within your group's plan, and pick up again the following week.

1 LUKE 5:1-11

MEET JESUS WHO CALLS

OPENER

Are you able to share a time when you knew Jesus was calling you to follow him?

KNOW

What indicators are there in this passage that Jesus is gathering attention?

How do you think Peter felt when Jesus instructed him to go back out to fish?

Does Luke want us to see that the catch is miraculous, or just great fishing?

Do you think that Peter's response echoes something of Isaiah 6:5?

Why would Jesus describe the call to follow him in the way he does?

What implications would it have for them and their livelihood?

LOVE

How do you think you would have reacted in Peter's position?

Have you had those moments when you know that Jesus is instructing you directly?

Do we remind ourselves enough that Jesus is both a holy Lord and our friend?

What might a modern equivalent be to leaving their boats and following Jesus?

FOLLOW

What difference will it make this week to remember that Jesus has called you too?

Are there any specific situations/places/conversations coming up that will be helped by knowing that you're following Jesus call?

You could share these answers as a group or in 2s/3s and pray for each other in those situations.

2 LUKE 5:17-26

MEET JESUS WHO FORGIVES

OPENER

Do you tend towards thinking of God as a holy, awesome and powerful God or as a forgiving, friendly and personal God? Do you think it's possible to see that God is all this and more and hold it all together in our understanding of who God is?

KNOW

Why was it so important for the paralysed man's friends to bring him to Jesus?

Why is Jesus opening statement so inflammatory? (v20)

What is the connection between Jesus' power to heal and his authority to forgive?

How does the man respond to his encounter with Jesus?

How does everyone else respond to this encounter?

LOVE

Faithful friends are a precious gift, do you have any testimonies of when people have helped you?

Do we expect Jesus to heal him first?

What does that say about God's priorities?

Why is it so important that any miracle gives glory to God?

What dangers are there when that doesn't happen, or healing becomes more about the person 'doing' the healing, than the Lord?

FOLLOW

This may be best done alone, perhaps with worship music playing - take some time to think through anything that the Holy Spirit is convicting you needs to change or ask God's forgiveness for. Is there a practical outworking of that as well? Is there someone you could speak to and offer apology or accept one they've offered?

3 LUKE 5:27-32

MEET JESUS WHO SURPRISES

OPENER

Which jobs tend to be looked down on the most in our culture?

KNOW

Why were tax collectors so often despised by other members of the Jewish community?

Are we given any details about why Levi ('Matthew' - see Matthew 9:9) was so quick to follow Jesus?

If you think of the additional laws that some religious leaders introduced, why would Jesus eating with 'tax collectors and sinners' be such a big issue?

How does Jesus response speak into that, whilst maintaining the holiness of God?

LOVE

Do you ever feel that you or people close to you are looked down on by others?

How might this encounter with Jesus help us in those situations?

Why do you think so many of Jesus' encounters are over meals?

What does that say to us about the connection between hospitality and faith for us?

Are we ever in danger of thinking ourselves 'righteous' and forgetting our need for God's grace?

FOLLOW

Are there other ways that you could practice hospitality to help people meet Jesus or to encourage them in their faith? Maybe it's something to do with a friend or small group, to meet with others and be a blessing to them?

Perhaps take some time this week to think more about how Jesus sees you, especially if you ever feel looked down on by some people.

4 LUKE 7:1-10

MEET JESUS WHO HEALS

OPENER

Does anyone have a testimony (of yours or someone you know) that you can share of God's healing power at work?

KNOW

How does Luke show us that this is a new phase of Jesus' ministry? (finished can also mean 'fulfilled')

What's significant about the (gentile) Centurion sending to Jesus? What does it say about him that he is on good terms with the local Jewish elders?

Is Luke wanting to show us something about the possible relationship between believing Jews and Gentiles?

How does the Centurion demonstrate his faith?

LOVE

How often do we thank God that he opened up salvation in Jesus to Jews and Gentiles?

How best can Christians proclaim Jesus as Messiah, without falling into the dangers of anti-Semitism?

Do you feel the same sort of faith for Jesus to be at work in yours and your loved ones lives?

What would help you to grow in that faith?

Can we keep trusting in God even if we don't see the healing we've prayed for until the new creation?

The Centurion is right, Jesus doesn't have to go all the way there.

Does that encourage you for answers to prayer even when we can't be with people to pray for them?

FOLLOW

Healing can be more than just physical, it can also be emotional, spiritual and all other aspects of what it means to be human. Is there anything you would particularly like other people to pray for?

5 LUKE 7:36-50

MEET JESUS WHO SAVES

OPENER

Have you ever been saved or rescued? Or saved or rescued someone or something else? How did it feel?

KNOW

Is this particular Pharisee 'all bad', 'all good' or more complex than that?

What does it say about Jesus attitude to the religious leaders that he accepted this invitation?

Although strange for us, what did her actions mean at the time?

What is the main point of Jesus' short parable in vv41-42?

Why does Jesus keep talking to people about their sins being forgiven, why's it such a big deal?

LOVE

Why is it that we tend to put people into categories?

Does this story challenge any of your preconceptions about who can come to Jesus?

How can we believe in the seriousness of sin without becoming legalistic or harsh, and show welcome to 'sinners' without ignoring God's word?

If you're honest with yourself, how do you think you would have felt in Simon the Pharisees shoes?

Does reminding ourselves of the extent of God's forgiveness to us, help us to be more forgiving?

FOLLOW

How does our salvation show itself in the way we live? Would people be surprised by our actions and the way we worship Jesus in our everyday life? What might that look like - what could you offer as an act of worship to Jesus, like the oil poured on Jesus, what can we offer this week to truly worship and adore Jesus above all?

6 LUKE 8:40-56

MEET JESUS WHO GIVES LIFE

OPENER

What are some of the hardest things to have to wait for? What are some of the best things to feel anticipation for?

KNOW

We've seen a faithful Gentile, now we see a faithful Jewish leader - what is remarkable about the way he approaches Jesus?

Can you see signs that Jesus' fame is growing, and how is that impacting the opportunity people have to meet him?

What do you think the woman was expecting Jesus to say when she made herself known?

How does Jesus actually respond to her? (v48)

How ridiculous would Jesus' response in v50 have sounded when they told him the girl had already died?

Why do you think Jesus only let a few people in as he healed her, and why might he tell them not to tell anyone?

LOVE

Is our first response in times of trouble to go straight to Jesus like the synagogue ruler? Why or why not, do you think?

Do you hesitate to bring things to the Lord that are on your heart?

Does the story of this lady help you to do that?

What will you take from these two stories of healings and the different people that encountered Jesus' healing power?

FOLLOW

In this passage we have two people healed, although one had waited twelve years until her encounter with Jesus. What role might patience play in your life and faith in this and future weeks? Can you see how God is growing your faith even as you wait for some of the answers to prayer? Maybe go into prayers, share what you can, and ask for both answers and patience whilst you wait.

7 ACTS 2:1-21

MEET JESUS IN HIS HOLY SPIRIT

OPENER

Are you aware of the Holy Spirit at work in you at the moment?
What if you look for growing fruit as well as particular gifts?
Do others see the Lord at work in you, even if you find it harder to see it? Can you share an encouragement with each other.

KNOW

A shift of Bible book and timeline this week as we tie in with Pentecost - what are the risks in looking at Bible stories we might be very familiar with?
What particular gifts are given by the Spirit here?
And for what purpose are they given?
How does Peter show that Jesus fulfills Joel's prophecy?
Is this now 'the last days' (v17) since these things are coming true?
What will it be that will ultimately mean someone is saved? (v21)

LOVE

Are we always aware of the Holy Spirit at work in us?
Are there gifts and fruit of the Spirit that you know are helping you serve God?
Can you identify those gifts and fruit in other Christians you know?
Do we believe that the Spirit is still at work amongst God's people?
Is it possible that too much focus on the signs of the last days, gets in the way of the mission Jesus has given us to see people come to a saving faith?

FOLLOW

It would be a great opportunity to pray for each other to 'go on being filled with the Holy Spirit' (Ephesians 5:18-20) Maybe there's a particular gift you'd love the Spirit to give you, or one you have but would like more Divine opportunities to use? Maybe it's asking that the fruit would keep growing in a particular area of life?

8 LUKE 10:38-42

MEET JESUS WHO CHALLENGES

OPENER

Can you remember a time when you've been particularly challenged or convicted by God on something. How did you know that God was challenging you on it and what happened?

KNOW

Why was Martha so upset with her sister?

What do you think she was expecting Jesus to say?

How do you imagine the tone of Jesus' reply to Martha?

What is Jesus really saying here?

What does it say about Jesus view of himself and what was best for Martha when in his presence?

LOVE

What are some of the distractions that can hold you back from spending time with Jesus?

How can we come to Jesus without preconceptions and just hear his word to us?

Is there a time when practicalities are a part of following Jesus?

How can we find the right balance between time with Jesus in prayer, worship, quiet times and serving him in our actions?

FOLLOW

Sometimes comparison or resentment can rob us of the joy following Jesus. Do you need to come back to the feet of Jesus, lay some burdens down and fix your eyes on Jesus again? Perhaps there's a way to symbolise it as part of a prayer time - writing and then destroying those things that are holding us back from the worship Mary shows to the Lord?

9 LUKE 12:13-21

MEET JESUS WHO WARNS

OPENER

Why do you think money is often the cause of problems between friends and family? What does that say about humanity's view of money?

KNOW

What do you think of the man's question in v13, is this a fair thing to ask Jesus to help with?

Do you think Jesus had divine insight into this man's motivations? How would you sum up the message of Jesus' parable?

Does it mean that we should never make money, or save?

How does v21 help us answer that, and what does it look like to be 'rich toward God?'

LOVE

Are there things that we can't ask Jesus for help with, or is it more about why we're asking for his help?

Why is greed such a temptation, how does it play on our heart?

What would be the modern equivalent of this parable?

How does God help us to make sure that our focus is not our possessions?

What does it look like today when people are 'rich toward God?'

FOLLOW

This is quite a personal challenge, it might be a good week for some worship music and quiet time of prayer, for us all to invite God to examine our hearts and help us love the giver more than his gifts.

10 LUKE 13:10-17

MEET JESUS WHO SETS FREE

OPENER

Do you find it easy to keep a day of rest? And if so does it feel more like a rule to be followed or a gift to be enjoyed?

KNOW

What does it say about the general view of Jesus at this stage that he was teaching in the synagogue?

How must have it felt for this lady to be healed after 18 years?

What is the synagogue leader's argument for why Jesus shouldn't heal, is there any justification for that perspective?

And what is Jesus' main response - that they're just wrong, or more than that?

LOVE

Do we still believe that Jesus has the power to heal and set free?

What is the Sabbath for, do you use it well and gain spiritual refreshment?

In what ways might we be tempted to hypocrisy?

How else could we use the sabbath to bless people in accordance with God's will?

FOLLOW

Maybe this week it would be good to live with eyes open to when we might have added our own rules or regulations to what living for Jesus means? Are there habits we've got into or fallen out of, that would actually help or hinder our enjoyment of life with Jesus?

11 LUKE 18:18-27

MEET JESUS WHO CONVICTS

OPENER

What are some of the hardest things you've had to do?

Would you say that you were aware of God's help in those times?

KNOW

Why do you think Jesus responds to the man's question in the way he does?

Do you think Jesus said these things because he could see the real issue in this man's heart?

Why is it so hard to give things up when you have a lot?

Why is wealth singled out by Jesus as being one of the biggest obstacles for coming to God's kingdom?

But how do Jesus words in v27 give them hope?

LOVE

What does this passage say to us about picking which of God's laws we choose to focus on?

Is there a danger in feeling we're sorted in some areas of christian living and then missing the fact we're less than perfect in others?

Do you think Jesus teaching here applies specifically to everyone, or would each person meeting Jesus have their own issue(s) he would likely highlight?

Can we ever save ourselves by being good enough?

What hope do we have?

FOLLOW

It may be that there is a real application for us in terms of our money and possessions. But equally it might be another area of life that you find it harder to trust over to Jesus. Is there a way that this week you could step out in faith and trust something to God that you know you've tried to hold on to for too long?

12 LUKE 19:1-10

MEET JESUS WHO SHOWS GRACE

OPENER

Do you know anyone whose life has radically changed through meeting Jesus? Maybe it's you! Could you anonymously share something of their story with others in your group?

KNOW

We've seen Jesus meet a tax collector and a wealthy person already, what else might affect Jesus encounter with Zacchaeus? How does Jesus know who he is? And what does that show about Jesus knowledge of his heart and life as well? Who is it that mutters about him being 'guest of a sinner' this time? What impact does meeting Jesus have on Zacchaeus? How does Jesus explain what has happened?

LOVE

How does it feel to know that Jesus really knows us? Does that change when we remember that he knows and loves us? What types of people would be muttered about these days? How can we get away from an 'us and them' mentality of the 'types' of people who can meet Jesus and be transformed? What does repentance look like in this example, does it always involve practical changes? Do we love Jesus for his salvation coming to our house as well?

FOLLOW

Repentance is not a fashionable word. But it must be more than saying sorry, it must include a change as it did for Zacchaeus. Maybe take some time this week to ask God to show you something in your life that should change, and ask for his help this week to put that into practice.

13 LUKE 21:1-4

MEET JESUS WHO LOVES GENEROSITY

OPENER

How many different ways can you think of for people to be generous, not including with money? (e.g. someone might be really generous with inviting people to their home etc)

KNOW

What is it about this passage that gives it a spontaneous feel? Does it imply that the rich are doing their giving in a particularly obvious way?

What does Jesus mean that the lady 'put in more'?

Doesn't her level of giving feel a bit reckless if that's all she had?

Are there other aspects of Jesus teaching which if followed would mean this generous lady wouldn't become destitute?

LOVE

What might be a modern equivalent of the obvious giving of the rich that Jesus noticed?

If we're honest, is it tempting to do certain things as Christians which we know other people will see?

How can we have a similar faith as this lady and be prepared to trust God more than money?

Does that get easier with more money or not?

How can we look out for those who have very little to live on?

FOLLOW

Perhaps you could make time this week to review your own finances through a gospel-lens? I don't just mean giving to church! How generous and sacrificial are we in all areas, how well does our spending align with the values of God's Kingdom? Do we believe that we'll be happier the more we trust the Lord more than money?

14 LUKE 24:13-35

MEET THE RISEN JESUS

OPENER

What is it about going for a walk with people that often helps have really good conversation? Is there a spiritual or theological reason for that do you think?

KNOW

Does it sound like God kept them from recognising Jesus, why do you think he would do that?

How well have they grasped the reality of the situation up to this point?

Why do you think Jesus took them back to Moses and the Prophets (shorthand for all the Jewish scriptures) to explain what happened?

Do you think it was planned that they'd recognise him as he broke bread with them?

LOVE

Have you ever had that feeling of believing in what God is doing but not sure why or not knowing the outcome?

When you do feel like that, would it be helpful to see things within that bigger perspective that stretches from the past into the future?

What must it have been like to experience Jesus' Bible study?

Do you think we can know our 'hearts burning within us' - can we pray for that? Does it happen as you discover more about Jesus' love and faithfulness and God's plan for your salvation?

FOLLOW

Maybe look back over all the encounters we've looked at. What's stood out for you? What might God be saying to you about meeting with Jesus in his Spirit? What's going to shape the way that you try to live life knowing you walk through it with Jesus?

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(Copies of these Study Notes can be found at allsaintswick.org.uk/Resources)