

# LIFE GROUP

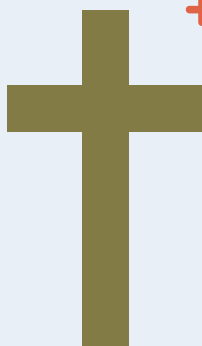
Participant Guide

Book 3



THE GOSPEL OF

MARK

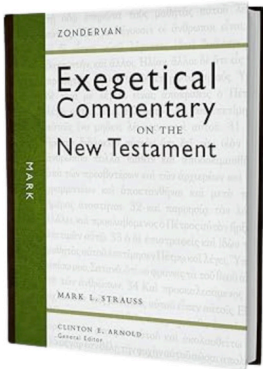


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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	LOVE BRINGS TOUGH TRUTHS   MAR 16   WEEK 11
6	LOVE IS THE GOAL   MAR 23   WEEK 12
8	LOVE KEEPS US STEADFAST   MAR 30   WEEK 13
10	LOVE LEADS US TO SACRIFICE   APR 6   WEEK 14
12	LOVE MAGNIFIED ON THE CROSS   APR 13   WEEK 15
14	LOVE CONQUERS DEATH   APR 20   WEEK 16

## COMMENTARY FOR THIS MARK STUDY



## LETTER FROM KEITH

We are in the home stretch of the Gospel of Mark. Jesus and his disciples have already begun to make their way to Jerusalem. As we enter the last week of Jesus' ministry, we will see him crucified, buried, and resurrected! (Hope I didn't give anything away!). If you haven't done so already, take some time to read through this whole gospel. With the weather changing, it might be a good time to hit the porch or patio and spend some time with Jesus in His Word.

We've called this series "Go Love" because a gospel account is a telling of the life of Jesus. It gives us a picture of who Jesus is and, for that reason, who God is. So when we see Jesus showing mercy and love, that's because the Father is merciful and loving. But that also means we are to be merciful and loving to others. We shouldn't ditch our responsibility to love others simply because we think, "Jesus took care of that!" God calls us on this mission of love; it is our highest privilege, honor, and priority. Do we treat it that way? In fact, the Father and Son have given us the greatest gift to help us with this mission: the Holy Spirit.

Now would be a good time as we enter this last section of Mark to evaluate where we are and what we are about regarding our mission to love others. How have we adjusted our schedules, sacrificed our ambitions, or stepped into the uncomfortable to show love to someone else? Someone once said, "The best things in life aren't free." Jesus knew that and lived that by giving his own life for our salvation. In turn, our living for the Kingdom of God and seeking to live for Jesus by loving others every day won't be easy. In fact, it may cost us our time, our effort, our comfort. But what will we do for the one who gave it all?

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30-31)

Blessings & Go Love!  
-Keith Comp  
Senior Minister

CONNECT QUESTIONS

- 1. Who is the most famous person you’ve ever met in person? How much authority did/does that person have?
- 2. How does someone’s authority influence how the world interacts with them? (For Example: A Homeless Person Versus The President)

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

- 1. A common theme we have seen in the book of Mark is Jesus’ reluctance to make the world know that he is the Messiah. His urge for people to “keep quiet” regarding his title is not denial but delay. Jesus wants to define his messiahship on his own terms. Today, in Mark 11, Jesus will boldly declare before Jerusalem and the religious leaders that he is the Messiah. First, have someone in your group read Mark 11:1-11. Then, have someone else in the group read Zechariah 9:9. How does knowledge of this Old Testament passage confirm that Jesus is the Messiah?
- 2. The word Hosanna can mean “save us” or communicate a general shout of praise. When the crowds declare, “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David,” they are celebrating Jesus’ intention to come rule as king. How does Christ’s authority as King impact how we interact with him?
  - a. Commentary From Commentaries: The implications for Jesus’ messiahship today are profound. If Jesus is King, then his followers owe him total allegiance. For many people today, the Christian faith is a self-help program. If I put my faith in Jesus, what will he do for me? Christianity is fine if it meets my needs. Yet Jesus’ kingship reminds us that our lives are not our own, but belong completely to the one who “rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son” (Col 1:13). As mere servants in the kingdom of the Son, we live to serve him.

- 3. As King, you have the authority to make decrees and decisions on behalf of your kingdom. Have one person read Mark 11:15-19 and encourage the group to read along in their copy of the Scriptures. What do we learn about our King’s heart through these actions?
- 4. If King Jesus visited the American church today, what would cause him to flip tables?
- 5. Have one person read Mark 11:12-14 and another read verses 20-26. Jesus’ problem with the fig tree was that it was not bearing fruit. Even though it outwardly had leaves, which creates the potential for fruit, it wasn’t the season for figs and fruit wasn’t being bore. How does this fruitless fig tree represent what we’ve seen from the Pharisees and the Jewish leaders throughout the book of Mark?
  - a. Bearing fruit looks like rooting ourselves in God and taking action to expand His Kingdom. The Pharisees were resistant to the Kingdom Jesus came to create and were, therefore, fruitless like the fig tree.
- 6. Mark 11 ends with the Pharisees challenging the authority of King Jesus. What are some ways that the authority of Jesus is still challenged today?
- 7. Go Love Exercise: A close friend shares with you a desire they have to be baptized. You want to make sure that your friend understands the weight of that decision to make Jesus Lord and King of their life. What would you say to help them understand the authority that Jesus needs to have in their life after baptism?

PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER & THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

MISSION OF THE WEEK: Strong Tower Ranch

Strong Tower Ranch is a Christ-centered refuge offering hope and equipping the next generation. “Strong Tower” reminds us that we have a mighty fortress in Christ. STR wants children, teens and adults who come to find love and refuge from a harsh world. We aspire to empower individuals with the confidence of who they are in Christ through camps and programs.

CONNECT QUESTION

1. In your opinion, what’s the most important job of a parent?
2. What happens when a parent ignores or forgets that important job you previously mentioned?

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. In the opening question, you took all the responsibilities of a parent and picked what you felt were the most important. In today's session, Jesus will be asked what the most important commandment is. He will look at all of the commands mentioned in Scripture and select two. Have someone read Mark 12:28-31 and encourage everyone in the group to read along in their copy of the Scriptures. What two commandments did Jesus identify as the two most important? Why do you think he picked these two?
2. As a group, come up with different commandments mentioned in Scripture. How do these commandments fall under the two most important that Jesus mentioned? (For example, we don’t lie because that is not loving to our neighbor.)
3. Have someone in your group read Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and encourage everyone to follow along in their copy of the Scriptures. This Deuteronomy passage is what Jesus was quoting when asked what the most important commandment was. These verses in Deuteronomy were recited by pious Jews every morning and evening as a part of the Shema. Deuteronomy’s title comes from the opening word of Deut 6:4 in Hebrew, “Hear” (šěma’). Why is it good to remind ourselves of this first commandment when we wake up and when we lie down? What would change if you anchored your day this way?

4. Have someone in your group read Leviticus 19:17-18 and encourage everyone to follow along in their copy of the Scriptures. This Leviticus passage is what Jesus was quoting for the second important commandment. How do these two commandments of loving God and loving others relate to one another? Why do you need both?
5. Have someone in your group read Mark 12:28-34 and encourage everyone to follow along in their copy of the Scriptures. The person asking the question about the most important commandment is a teacher of the law. What is his response to Jesus’s answer? What is Jesus’s response to the man’s response? Why is their exchange surprising?
6. What is one practical thing you can do this week to love God more? What is one practical thing you can do this week to love your neighbor?
7. Go Love Exercise: Your agnostic friend invites you over for dinner. In the middle of your meal, they begin talking about how their heart is softening to the idea of religion. They ask you, “What do I need to do to follow God? Are there like a bunch of rules I need to follow?” Utilizing Mark 12:28-34, how would you answer your friend’s question simply and practically? What steps would you encourage your friend to take first?

PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER & THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

MISSION OF THE WEEK: Team Expansion: Allen & Cherry Messimer – Taiwan

The Messimers have served as missionaries in Taiwan since 2004. Their mission is to evangelize, disciple, and provide training so every believer can use his or her gifts in a simple church ministry. This also means every church can start new, indigenous churches. Over 90% of Taiwanese people worship idols. To learn more, visit [teamexpansion.org](http://teamexpansion.org).

CONNECT QUESTION

- 1 God is sovereign over time. He knows what happened 1,000 years ago and He knows what will happen 1,000 years into the future. How does that make you feel?
- 2. What have you heard or been taught regarding prophecy? What’s the difference between prophecy and prediction?

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

- 1. Let’s all open to Mark 13. Today we are going to look at a moment where Jesus prophecies about future events and we are going to study history to see how these events came true. To walk through this history, we’ve got a video that Alex Goff, our Discipleship Minister, created. Once the video wraps up, we have discussion questions that will wrap up our discussion.



- 2. What details stuck out to you from the video? What did you learn about God and history?
- 3. For the rest of our time, we are going to look at the second coming of Jesus. Have someone in your group read Mark 13:32-37 and encourage everyone to follow along in their own copy of the Scriptures. How is the prophecy given by Jesus of his second coming similar and different compared to his prophecy about the destruction of the temple?

- a. In both prophecies, the takeaway message is the same. Be ready! Keep watch! This is coming and you need to be prepared for it. The difference with the temple was that there were signs pointing to when it would happen. Verse 33 tells us that we won’t know when Jesus comes back.

- 4. In verses 32-37, Jesus encourages His disciples to stay awake and be ready for his return. What does the life of a Christian look like who is ready for Jesus’ return?
- 5. Go Love Exercise: You have a Christian friend who is anxious about the return of Jesus. You ask them why and they begin to talk about different family members they have who are resistant to Christ. These relatives want no part of Jesus. What can you say to your friend to comfort them?

PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER & THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

MISSION OF THE WEEK: Central Christian College of the Bible

The goal of Central Christian College of the Bible is to raise up servant leaders for the church and to do so as affordable as possible. CCCB believes so completely in what their students will do for Christ that they want to not only equip them with a quality education, but an affordable one so their future ministry will not be burdened by financial stress. To learn more, visit [cccb.edu](http://cccb.edu).

APR 6 | WEEK 14 | LOVE LEADS US TO SACRIFICE [MARK 14]

CONNECT QUESTION

1. Share a moment when someone sacrificed for you out of love. What did they do and how did it demonstrate their affection toward you?

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. Mark 14 is filled with beautiful gut-wrenching stories of sacrifice. As a group, read the three stories and discuss how you see the elements of sacrifice and love on display.

a. Mark 14:1-9: Some translations of Mark 14:1-9 mention that the perfume was worth 300 denari. With a denari being a day’s wage, and if a daily wage today is about \$100-\$150, then 300 denarii would be approximately \$30,000-\$45,000 in today's value. That’s an expensive perfume!

b. Mark 14:12-26: Jesus’ words during the Last Supper reveal the sacrifice that he is about to experience. Love will keep him on the cross knowing that his sacrifice is what it takes to pay the costs of our sins.

c. Mark 14:53-65: Similar to the last story, Jesus knew that it would take a sacrifice to pay for the sins of the world. While Jesus had the power to wipe out the Sanhedrin that were beating him, he chose to sacrifice for us.
2. What would you say to someone who views the woman’s decision to pour the perfume as a waste?
3. Throughout the rest of Mark 14, we read stories of people who chose not to sacrifice for Jesus. As a group, read the four stories below. Discuss what would have changed if the people chose to sacrifice for Jesus.

a. Mark 14:27-31, 66-72

b. Mark 14:32-42

c. Mark 14:10-11, 43-52

4. What are some ways that you can sacrifice for Jesus? How would those sacrificial acts be demonstrations of love?
5. Listed below are four categories that we can demonstrate sacrifice for the sake of our Savior. What category is the easiest for you to sacrifice for Jesus and what category is the most difficult?

a. Our Money

b. Our Time

c. Our Wants and Desires

d. Our Relationships
6. Go Love Exercise: In talking with your recently widowed neighbor, she mentions that everyday tasks have become a lot more difficult. How can you go love your neighbor? What can you sacrifice to help her?

PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER & THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

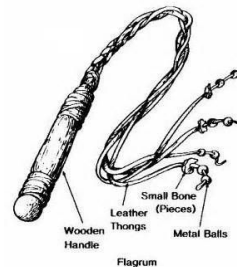
MISSION OF THE WEEK: CMF International: Eric & Cait Pitts - Kenya

Eric & Cait serve with the Kenya Church Catalyst Team among the Turkana in northern Kenya. Eric’s focus is on developing church leaders and pastors as well as working with a group of local disciple makers to begin a Disciple Making Movement that spreads throughout Kenya and beyond. Cait focuses on community Health Evangelism, mainly with girls and women throughout Turkana. You can find more information at [cmfi.org/ecpitts](http://cmfi.org/ecpitts).



COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. Read Mark 15:1-15: At the very end of the story, we see Jesus getting flogged. Thinking back over the last few chapters, what events led to Jesus getting flogged?
2. READ: Flogging was often done in preparation for crucifixion. Such scourging was incredibly severe and often resulted in death. The victim would be stripped and their hands tied above their head. A whip of leather cords with pieces of bone, lead, or glass embedded in them would be used. The Jews limited scourges to forty lashes, but the Romans had no such limitations. The whipping would cause severe lacerations not only to the skin but also to muscle tissue and bone.
3. Read Mark 15:16-20 and encourage everyone to follow along in their own copy of the Scriptures. In what ways are the soldiers utilizing king imagery to mock Jesus?



4. READ: The “purple” cloth or cloak thrown on Jesus was likely a faded scarlet military cloak, as Matt 27:28 suggests (“a scarlet robe”), which looked purple enough to mimic royalty. The “crown” the soldiers weaved together from thorns mimicked the laurel wreath used to celebrate conquering heroes, victorious athletes, and honored citizens. The adjective “thorny” is a general one and could refer to any of various Palestinian plants with thorns or barbs. Matthew adds that they put a “reed” or “staff” in his right hand, no doubt a parody of a royal scepter. The mocking cry, “Hail, king of the Jews (v. 18), parodies the Latin greeting to the emperor, Ave, Caesar, imperator (“Hail, Caesar, Emperor!”). The scene as a whole resembles the Roman triumph, where Caesar would be hailed as emperor wearing a purple robe and



laurel wreath and holding a scepter. In addition to the mocking, the abuse continues as the soldiers repeatedly beat Jesus’ head with a staff—probably the mock scepter reported by Matthew—and spit on him.

5. Read Mark 15:21-24. Assuming the cross was made of solid wood, historians estimate it weighed over 300 pounds. Scholars believe that he carried the cross about half a mile. Simon of Cyrene was most likely brought in to help carry because of Jesus’ weakened condition. How do you think Simon felt when he was forced to carry Jesus' cross, and how might that experience have changed him?



6. Read Mark 15:25-37. What details stuck out as you read through the twelve verses?
7. READ: The Romans practiced various forms of crucifixion. Sometimes victims were impaled on a stake. More often, a crossbeam (patibulum) was used, either on top of the palus like a T or in the traditional cross shape. Various methods of crucifixion were used for maximum torture and humiliation. Seneca wrote that “some hang their victims with head toward the ground, some impale their private parts, others stretch out their arms on a fork-shaped gibbet.”

Victims would be fastened with ropes or with nails. Jesus was apparently nailed, since John 20:25 refers to the nail marks in his hands (cf. Luke 24:39: “Look at my hands and my feet”). Death by crucifixion resulted from bleeding, exposure, exhaustion, and asphyxiation. Sometimes, a small seat was attached to the cross and/or footrests to allow the victim to push themselves up to breathe, thus lengthening the time of torture. Victims could linger for days on the cross, gradually becoming prey for birds and wild dogs.

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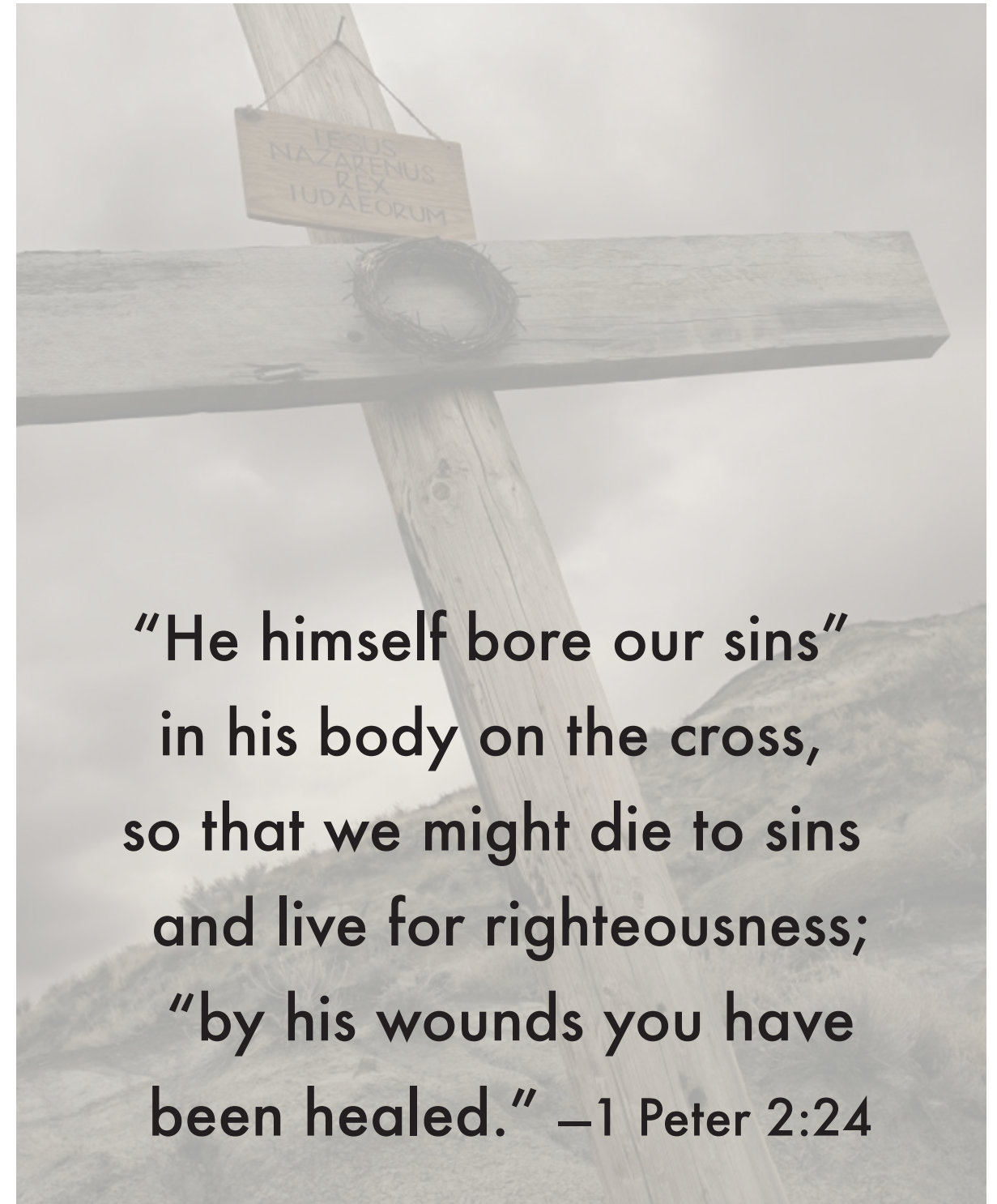
## APR 13 CONT. | WEEK 15 | LOVE MAGNIFIED ON THE CROSS

8. How do these moments of torture throughout Mark 15 display Jesus' love for us?
9. We are going to conclude our group time today by taking communion. I have prepared bread and juice for all of us to take. First, I want us to read and reflect on 1 Peter 2:24-25 silently and then we will take communion together.
10. Your group leader will now guide you through communion.

### PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER & THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

#### MISSION OF THE WEEK: LINC - Love in the Name of Christ

LINC's mission is to provide support and direction for disadvantaged families and individuals in the community, helping them to set goals and objectives that will empower them to become productive citizens within the community.



**“He himself bore our sins”  
in his body on the cross,  
so that we might die to sins  
and live for righteousness;  
“by his wounds you have  
been healed.” —1 Peter 2:24**



CONNECT QUESTION

1.

As we conclude our study through the book of Mark, what have been some of your favorite stories from this Gospel?
2.

What key insights and takeaways have you gathered over the last four months from this book?

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

Before we jump into Mark 16, we want to address the divisions between verses eight and nine. The earliest manuscripts of this chapter and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9–20. Most scholars agree that verses nine through twenty are not a part of the original ending of Mark. Its style and content do not match with the rest of this Gospel. The more significant debate is whether Mark intended to end his Gospel in verse eight or if the book's ending was lost in translation. In this study, we will teach that the book was meant to end at verse eight. You can scan the QR code below for a more detailed explanation of each camp regarding Mark's ending.



1.

Read Mark 16:1. Put yourself in the shoes of these three women. What would you be thinking and feeling as you brought the spices to the tomb?
2.

Read Mark 16:2-7. The angel encourages the women to go and tell as a response to the resurrection. Why is going and telling an appropriate response to the reality of Jesus conquering death?

a.

Commentary from Commentaries: As noted earlier (comment on 15:47), the discovery of the empty tomb by women—reported in all four Gospels—constitutes important evidence for the veracity of this account. Since in first-century Judaism the testimony of women was not considered reliable, the early church would never have created stories in which women were the primary witnesses. It seems beyond dispute that a group of women discovered the empty tomb on the third day after Jesus’ crucifixion.

3.

Author and Pastor Timothy Keller commented on this story, saying:  
“The resurrection was indeed a miraculous display of God’s power, but we should not see it as a suspension of the natural order of the world. Rather it was the beginning of the restoration of the natural order of the world, the world as God intended it to be. . . . The resurrection means not merely that Christians have a hope for the future but that they have a hope that comes from the future. The Bible’s startling message is that when Jesus rose, he brought the future kingdom of God into the present.” What sticks out to you from this quote? Based on this quote, how does the resurrection of Jesus relate to you?
4.

Read Mark 16:8. Why do you think the women were afraid and chose to say nothing?
5.

Thankfully, Jesus himself appeared to these women again encouraging them to go and tell. In your group, take turns as you read Matthew 28 out loud. What extra information does Matthew present when it comes to the resurrection account?
6.

How does the resurrection relate to our theme this year, Go Love?
7.

Go Love Exercise: The resurrection is evidence that God can bring life out of something that is dead. As a group, go around and share a personal area of death that is in need of life. Is there an area of death in your testimony that is need of Jesus’ resurrection power? It could be a lost friend or family member, a sin struggle, an old habit, a toxic trait, etc.

PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER & THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

MISSION: Outreach International - Mexico | Josh & Susan Sanchez

This mission, called Me & My House Ministries, is a church plant in Colima City. Their goal is to begin a church planting movement within the region.



***COLLIDE***

**CONFERENCE**

WHEN THE WAY WE LIVE BUMPS INTO TRUTH

**ONE-DAY**

**CONFERENCE**

**APRIL 12, 2025**

**9AM-1PM  
LUNCH INCLUDED  
\$20 PER PERSON**

**[WENTZVILLECC.ORG/COLLIDE](https://wentzvillecc.org/collide)**

**YOU'RE INVITED**

*to a celebration on Easter weekend*

**SATURDAY**

**APRIL 19**

**5:00pm**

**SUNDAY**

**APRIL 20**

**8:00am 10:20am**

**9:10am 11:30am**

**[wentzvillecc.org/easter](https://wentzvillecc.org/easter)**

