

WARM UP

(OPTIONAL)

What is something that you see, hear or experience today that you feel like was much better during the time you were growing up? Why was it better?

PRAYER



EVERY NATION
BRISBANE

© 2023 by EVERY NATION BRISBANE®

All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Permission to photocopy this material is granted for local church use. This is not for sale.

WARM UP

WEEK 4 | Restoration - The Renewal

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, knowing you is a personal but not a private affair. We may come before you alone, but we can't remain alone. As soon as we bring our longings and needs before you, you enlarge our hearts and expand our gaze. We remember others. Such is the way of the gospel. Grace comes to us that it might run through us. Today as we come, we bring faces and names precious to us. Everybody needs what you alone can give, Jesus—new mercies, fresh grace and renewed joy. We all have stories of failure and fear, burdens and weakness, brokenness and stuckness, heartache and longings. The details of our stories differ, but our need for the gospel is the same. Thankfully, you welcome us with kindness, tenderness, and copious grace.

So, we ask with confidence and expectancy, restore to us the joy of our salvation, Jesus. Bring us back to the joyful, childlike love we experienced when we first met you—a love fueled by the undeserved, unparalleled, unwavering love you have for us (1 John 4:19). May your Spirit renew, refresh, and release our hearts. For your joy is our strength, Jesus—strength for being weak and honest about our condition; strength for repenting, hoping, and waiting upon you. Above all, strength for adoring you, for you alone are worthy of our affection and worship.

The only sacrifice we cling to is yours, Jesus—your “It is finished” work on our behalf. We come to you grateful, humble, and expectant. So very Amen we pray, in your most holy and loving name, Amen.

- *Scotty Smith: Restoration, Refreshment and Renewal*

WORD

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He *said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." ⁶ Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. ⁷ He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. ⁸ But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." ⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

[Revelation 21:1-9, 22-27](#)

If we believe that in the end God will put all things right, will 'do justice' in that positive, creative, healing, restorative sense; and if we believe that when God raised Jesus from the dead he did exactly that, close up and personal, in the one human being who represented and stood in for everyone else – then we cannot hold back from the imperative to 'do justice', in this full sense, at every opportunity in our world. In the power of the Spirit, we must name and shame the injustices that are still rampant, and work for their abolition. And we must take care that in our personal lives, and particularly in the lives of our churches themselves, injustice is rooted out as far and wide as can be done.

Only if we are doing this will it make any sense to preach and teach about God's new creation, about the way in which Jesus' resurrection resonates out into the renewal, the putting-right, of creation. The same is true of beauty. If we believe that God made a beautiful world which has been spoiled in so many ways but which still resonates with his love and power; and if we believe that in Jesus God has done the most beautiful thing imaginable – why else would so many artists and musicians devote their best efforts to setting it forth for our awe and contemplation! – then we must make sure that as far as we are able, in our churches and our personal lives, and in the wider communities where we have influence, we are working to foster and celebrate art, music, dance, drama, poetry sculpture, and whatever else we can. If the church is colluding with ugliness; if the church is not recognising, celebrating and giving opportunities for the many artistic gifts of many of its members, then we should not be surprised if people find it hard to believe us when we speak of the way Jesus' resurrection has launched a new world in which creation itself is renewed, and will be renewed, until the earth is filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea. That is the goal. Justice and beauty point the way.

By the power of the Spirit, our calling is to be Resurrection people, looking back to Jesus himself and, under his guidance and commission, bringing true signs of renewal into his creation today and every day.

- NT Wright: *Resurrection and the Renewal of Creation*

GUIDE QUESTIONS

(NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE)

1. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being never and 10 being always), how would you rate your belief in the miraculous/supernatural? Why would you rate yourself this way?
2. The women were surely surprised by the events of that Sunday morning. Can you recall a time when God surprised you with what was completely unexpected?
3. What does the resurrection mean for your own life? Does it cause you to live and think differently?
4. What areas in your life (or troubles that you observe in the world) are weighing you down or making you feel hopeless? Do you feel as though you can bring them to God in prayer? Why/why not?
5. If you believe that Jesus is alive, who do you have in your life that need to hear this good news? What do you think would be the most effective way to communicate this to them?

If you are not yet a follower of Jesus, would you choose today to trust Him and to follow the One who sacrificed His all for you, and offers you life by His grace and not by our own "fig leaf" salvation projects? Will you enable him to have all authority as the one who calls the shots in your life? Would you like to enter into a saving relationship with God through Jesus? Ask your Life Group leader to lead you in prayer to receive Christ. You can pray this prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite you to be the master of my life. I want to trust and follow you as my Lord and Saviour. I declare that I am yours, and you are mine. In Jesus' name, Amen.

NOTES