

In Between

April 6-11, 2026

Monday April 6th, 2026

Scripture - Matthew 28:11-15 Now while they were on their way, some of the guards went off into the city to tell the chief priests all that had happened. They held a meeting with the elders and, after some discussion, handed a considerable sum of money to the soldiers with these instructions, 'This is what you must say, "His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep." And should the governor come to hear of this, we undertake to put things right with him ourselves and to see that you do not get into trouble.' So they took the money and carried out their instructions, and to this day that is the story among the Jews.

Observation: Whether historically accurate or not, it does make sense for the author of Matthew, writing from a Jewish community of the new Jesus movement, stating the Jewish religious elites established a conspiracy/cover-up theory. That Jesus' body was stolen, was the most common counter-theory to the resurrection.

Narrative: Today in a similar way, there are all kinds of hokey as well as pretty convincing theories against Jesus specifically, and Christianity in general, which allow individuals and societies to dismiss Jesus, look the other way, and not take his message seriously.

Question: What counter theories or critiques would you put at the top of the list today?

Tuesday April 7th, 2026

Scripture - John 20:15-17 Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said, 'Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and remove him.' Jesus said, 'Mary!' She turned round then and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbuni!' -- which means Master. Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to the brothers, and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'

Observation: A portion of the empty tomb scene and Mary Magdalene's discovery according to the author of John's gospel.

Narrative: It reminds me of the ascension scene as well, when the angel appears while the disciples are looking skyward and says, "what are you looking for.." If Jesus has indeed risen, then why are we weeping and still looking? Should we not proceed by not "clinging" to the past, and get on with the ministry and message of Jesus?

Question: What would you say is the biggest hindrance for believers in Jesus in actually putting their supposed belief into practice?

Wednesday April 8th, 2026

Scripture - Luke 24:13-17, 21a Now that very same day, two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. And it happened that as they were talking together and discussing it, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He said to them, 'What are all these things that you are discussing as you walk along?' They stopped, their faces downcast... "Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free."

Observation: The resurrection appearance story when Jesus joins the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, opens the Hebrew scriptures to them, and is finally recognized through the breaking of the bread.

Narrative: To use analogous symbolism, it is good that we talk and discuss together the message and meaning of Jesus. But do we fail to recognize Jesus walking amongst us...our family, neighbors, the poor and oppressed? Yes, Jesus sets us "free," but not the freedom we think of >> we often want solutions to our problems, whereas the freedom Jesus offers is the freeing of self to love, sacrifice, forgive, and reconcile with and for others. Instead of being freed from our problems, Jesus' legacy is to free us to be more engaged with those problems. Our lack of awareness often "stops" us in our tracks with "faces downcast."

Question: Who is the "Jesus" that walks into your life every day that you need to recognize and pay more attention to? Perhaps you need to "break bread" (aka sacrifice, be in communion with, engage) with someone more deeply today?

Thursday April 9th, 2026 Scripture - Luke 24:25-38 Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognized him at the breaking of bread. They were still talking about all this when he himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you! In a state of alarm and fright, they thought they were seeing a ghost. But he said, 'Why are you so agitated, and why are these doubts stirring in your hearts?

Observation: The aftermath of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus reporting back to the disciples. Jesus would show them his hands and feet and then have a meal with them and open up to them his fulfillment of Hebrew Scriptures to them as well.

Narrative: You offer "Peace" when you think others are not at peace - agitated, worried, anxiety, fear, etc. >> much doubt creeps into the soul and everyday thought under such circumstances.. Jesus' basic answer then, as always, is deep communion >> understanding each others' story (Hebrew scripture in this case) and sharing of that story with one another (meal/breaking of the bread in this case). There is peace in a shared experience - peace within community - peace in communion with others.

Question: What area in your life are you in most need of peace? Maybe you need to bring others into the understanding of your situation and share your agitation, worry, anxiety, fear, etc?

Friday April 10th, 2026 Scripture - John 21:10-11 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn.

Observation: This is part of the third resurrection appearance by Jesus in the gospel of John, where Jesus shows up unrecognized on shore and calls out to a number of disciples fishing offshore. After telling them to cast their nets off the right side, with a subsequent huge catch, Peter jumps in the water and swims to shore after the apostle John claims "It is the Lord." A group meal of bread and fish would then take place after the verses listed above

Narrative: So why so specific on the number of fish being 153? The simplest answer is no one knows for sure, but that hasn't stopped educated guesses and speculation like:

- Universal Mission: Early church father St. Jerome claimed Greek zoologists identified 153 species of fish, symbolizing that the disciples would bring all types of people to Christ.
- Symbolic Mathematics: 153 is the 17th triangular number (sum of 1-17), with 17 often interpreted as 10 (Commandments) + 7 (gifts of the Spirit), representing the salvation of all people
- Divine Identity & Fulfillment: Some interpretations suggest 153 is the gematria (numerical value) for "sons of God" or "Ani Elohim" (I am God), reinforcing the deity of the resurrected Jesus.
- Historical Accuracy: The precise number emphasizes the account as a literal, post-resurrection miracle rather than a parable.

Saturday April 11th, 2026 Scripture - Mark 16:9-15 When Jesus had risen, early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. She went and told his companions who were mourning and weeping. When they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. After this he appeared in another form to two of them walking along on their way to the country. They returned and told the others; but they did not believe them either. But later, as the Eleven were at table, he appeared to them and rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart because they had not believed those who saw him after he had been raised.

Observation: The "added" resurrection appearance verses. The verses 9-20 of Mark 16 are believed to have been a later addition to the original manuscript. Mark traditionally ended with the scene of the empty tomb. The appearances and Jesus' instructions added later, were a part of the developing theology/experience of Jesus after the original manuscript was written.

Narrative: Mark being the first and "crispest" Gospel written, it is short on detail of any kind. The other gospels would embellish these resurrection events >> Mary Magdalene appearance, the companions on the road to Emmaus, and the appearance(s) to the eleven disciples for instance.

Question: What do you appreciate more, a short and crisp homily, or one that is longer with more meat to it? How about explaining the merits of Christianity to a non-believer or agnostic > do you think a short discussion of the basics or a longer more detailed explanation would work best? Or does lived personal experience(s) impact the most?