

Movement Into Love

“In the first century, to claim that your god had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, well, it just wasn’t that unique. The claims of these first Christians weren’t really anything new. Everybody’s god had risen from the dead. What makes yours so special?”

- Have you ever thought about what makes your faith special?
- Do you believe that act of Jesus raising from the dead is what makes the Christian faith unique?

Read Acts 1:3-11

“These first Christians believed that Jesus’ resurrection had implications for the entire universe. Their tradition had taught them that the world was broken and desperately in need of repair and that at some point in the future God was going to put it all back together again. Now for them, this future restoration had nothing to do with leaving this world. It was all about the restoration, the renewing and the reclaiming of this world.”

- What are your beliefs about the implications of Jesus’ resurrection?
- Do you believe the references about restoration are about this world or about leaving this world?

“They saw in Jesus’ resurrection the beginning of this universe-wide move-

ment to put it all back together again.”

- Do you have the sense that you’re part of a movement that’s putting the world back together? Why or why not?

Read Romans 8:20-25

“These first Christians believed very passionately that the world was not made better through military power or political coercion. This gospel they were living had nothing to do with using political force to make people live according to your laws. For them this gospel was about loving the world, especially those on the underside of the empire. For them it was about serving, not ruling.”

- Is your understanding of the central claims of the Christian faith that it’s all about serving and not controlling or ruling?
- Do you think people today generally perceive Christians as people who serve or as people who forcefully try to rule?

Read Acts 2:42-45

“Because with some people there’s something going on inside of them, so powerful, so tangible, that you can’t help but ask them questions. You’re dying to know why they are the way they are. You want them to explain the reason for the hope that’s within them. It’s because when you’re around someone like this you have the sense that you’ve in some way been with Jesus.”

- Do you know anyone like that?

Gods of Rome

Julius Caesar, left, was thought to have ascended into Heaven to sit at the right hand of the gods. Mithras, far left, was believed to be born of a virgin and have the unique role of acting as mediator between heaven and earth.



- Are you that kind of person yourself?

“This has a deeply personal dimension to it. Jesus is saving you. Jesus is saving me, he’s saving me from my sins, from my mistakes, my pride, my indifference to the suffering of the world around me, from my cynicism and despair - the brokenness I see in the world around me is true of my own soul.”

- Have you ever put into words the implications that Jesus’ resurrection has for you personally?
- What are some words you would use to describe them?

“We all fall short and that’s the beautiful part. Broken, flawed, vulnerable people like you and me are invited to be the hands and feet of a Jesus who loves us exactly as we are, yet loves us way too much to let us stay that way.”

- If we’re loved exactly as we are, then what is our motivation for change?

Read Romans 3:23

“If people only had your life and were asked the question, ‘Has Jesus risen from the dead?’ how would they answer? Has he?”

- If others could only watch how you spend your time, how you spend your money, what you love, who you love, do you think they would see that Jesus has risen from the dead?

Notes:

If people only had your life and were asked the question has Jesus risen from the dead, how would they answer? Has he?

