



***SHADES STUDENTS – EASTER
DEVOTIONALS***

April 2021

What is Easter All About?

It's about the feeling you get when there's 30 seconds left on the clock and your favorite football team has one more possession to tie the game. That feeling you get as you watch each play, increasingly hopeful that they just might do it. The feeling of hope. Easter is all about hope. Hope that maybe, just maybe, He was who He said He was. Hope that Jesus was more than just another good teacher or honest man. Hope that it wasn't the end of the story when He breathed His last breath, nailed to the cross in the place called Golgotha. A hope that His life and death mean something more – enter the Resurrection.

Why does the Resurrection REALLY Matter?

Why is the Resurrection such a big deal? Without the Resurrection, nothing else matters. It's like trying to drive a car without an engine. You won't go far. Without the Resurrection, Jesus is just another troublemaking, rebellious Jew in the days of Roman occupation. He's just another teacher in the long line of teachers with claims about the universe. But if Jesus really did rise from the dead – the claims He made about salvation, grace in God, forgiveness, and knowing God are revolutionary. If Jesus didn't truly raise from the dead, then this whole Christianity thing is just a weird social experiment that has no real impact on our lives. But if He did raise, it changes everything.

Really??? More Homework??? | What is in this devotional book?

NOBODY likes extra homework. If you do, let us know and we'll pray for you. It's not our goal to give you more homework! Our goal in writing this devotional is to help you, maybe for the first time, to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. To read, answer some simple questions, and ask God to help you believe in the miraculous hope of the resurrection – and understand more what it matters for you today.

So, what's the goal? To remind you that no matter how bleak, hopeless and helpless you feel, God is never beyond saving, healing and making things right. There is nothing too far gone, nothing too messed up, nothing so dead that God cannot save. Because if He can raise Jesus – what can't He do?

He Has Risen – He Has Risen Indeed!!!

Devotional #1 – All Access Pass

Passage: Luke 19:28-40

Main Idea: Jesus's entrance into Jerusalem identified Him as the King who would die for the sins of His people.

Read Luke 19:28-40

If you've ever watched the Oscar's, you know that people tend to go crazy over celebrities. It's amazing sometimes how much movie stars walking on the red carpet can cause people to scream, take pictures, and absolutely lose their minds. The cameras alone are enough to make someone pass out! It's amazing how much people get into events like the Oscar's. But when we read about the celebration of Jesus in Luke 19, we see a different kind of celebration.

In Luke 19, Jesus is entering into Jerusalem for the last time. As He enters on a donkey that he borrows from one of the locals, people begin to gather. But instead of screaming wildly or trying to get Jesus' autograph, they do something odd. They begin to praise God, and lay palm branches on the road where His donkey would walk. This was something only done for kings – for people with special honor and authority. They were recognizing something important about Jesus – that He was more than just a popular guy. He was a king sent from God.

When we think of this celebration of Jesus in light of what was to come, it's even more incredible. Just a few days later, this great King would be beaten and bruised. He would be condemned by the very people who laid branches on the road. He would be sentenced to death. And although He had the power as the king of heaven to defend Himself – He wouldn't. Because He had come as a King ready to lay down His life for His people. He came to face death and defeat it once and for all.

So, What?

Jesus knew exactly what awaited him, and He never once hesitated to be obedient. He knew he would be beaten, bruised and rejected. He knew He faced a horrible death on the cross. So why did He carry on? Why would a great King so willingly die? The Bible tells us – it was because of His love for you. Jesus loves you in such an incredible way that He willingly laid aside His rights as King in order that you would be saved from your sins and know God. What an incredible Savior!

Take a moment and thank God for Jesus. Thank Him that even when He knew what awaited Him, He still entered Jerusalem victoriously because of His great love for you.

Devotional #2 – Darkness before the Light

Passage: Luke 23:44-49

Main Idea: The innocent death of Jesus Christ on the cross allows us to have a relationship with the Living God.

Take a moment and think about the most hopeless you have ever felt. Describe that moment in a few sentences below.

Read Luke 23:44-49

Take a moment and describe the feelings of those present at the death of Jesus. How did they feel? How would you have felt after the death of Jesus?

It's hard to imagine a more depressing moment for the disciples than this moment. The one who they had given up everything for was gone. What would come of his promises? Was He really who He said He was? Was it all a lie?

Here we see even the weather reacting to the death of the son of God. As Jesus, nailed to the cross, breathes His final breath and dies, the people knew something was wrong. Luke tells us they pounded their chests, as if they knew their own guilt. The time had passed – Jesus had died.

Yet, we call this day Good Friday. How could this be? How could a day like this, with so much darkness, be a “good day?” When we look closer at our passage, we see one small detail that signifies the goodness of such a dark day. At the darkest moment of history, we see the veil of the temple torn. Why does that matter? Because the veil was used to keep normal people out of the holy place – the place in the temple where God's presence was.

So, What?

The moment Jesus died on the cross and the veil was torn was the moment that changed everything for us. When Jesus died the death we should have died, He made a way for us to come into relationship with God. We are no longer separated from His presence – but in the death of Christ, we can know God. What good news in the midst of such darkness!

Devotional #3 – SHOOK

Passage: Luke 24:1-12

Main Idea: The Resurrection of Jesus made true every claim Jesus made about being the Savior of the world – and it's the foundation of what we believe as Christians.

Read Luke 24:1-12

Take a moment and write about a time when you were surprised and shocked by something.

What were some of the emotions you felt when you were surprised?

Read Luke 24:1-12.

Can you even imagine going through something like this? These women had seen Jesus dead and buried, and now they saw Him alive again!!! They must have been absolutely SHOOK over what they saw. What would they do? How would they tell others? What did all of this mean?

The resurrection of Jesus is the most important piece of our Christian faith. In the resurrection of Jesus, we see every claim Jesus made, every miracle He performed, and every promise He made for eternal life for us validated. In the resurrection of Jesus, we see the defeat of our sin and death, and hope that is guaranteed for us in a way that can never be refuted.

So, What?

Often when we talk about Jesus' resurrection, we talk about it like it's no big deal. We are so accustomed to saying Jesus died and rose from the grave, that we are no longer totally shook by the incredible act of God to raise Jesus from the dead. But the resurrection of Jesus is a HUGE deal. Without it, our faith has no ground to stand on.

The resurrection should never become old news to followers of Jesus – instead it should constantly be on our hearts and minds. In the resurrection, we know our sins are forgiven every day. Because of the resurrection, we know that we can know God personally in spite of our mistakes and failures. Because of the resurrection, we can have hope that one day we will be in God's presence for all eternity. Are you shook by the resurrection of Jesus?