

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURES: Matthew 27:24–28:10
PRINT PASSAGES: Matthew 27:39-40, 45-54; 28:1-10

Ultimate Freedom



WAKE UP!

LIA AND KIA ARE GOOD FRIENDS WITH CAMRYN AND JORDYN; HOWEVER, THEIR FAMILY LIFE IS THE OPPOSITE OF CAMRYN AND JORDYN'S. Camryn and Jordyn come from a stable, functional family. Lia and Kia, on the other

hand, come from what can be called an unstable and dysfunctional family. Lia and Kia would confide in Camryn and Jordyn about the arguments and fighting between their parents. Lia and Kia confided that they could not wait until they reached age 18 to find freedom and



move out of their parents' home. Until that time, they feel as though they will be stuck in a prison.

“What can we do in the meantime?” they asked Camryn and Jordyn.

Jordyn spoke up, saying, “Lia and Kia, I cannot say that I know how you feel, but I can say I do understand. It will be about four years before you both reach the age to move out or go off to college and find the ‘ultimate freedom’ you long for. Here is my suggestion: begin to pray that your parents find the freedom they both need. They are imprisoned by forces beyond their control. Only God can set them free to be the functional parents you need them to be. God can grant ultimate freedom to anyone who requests it. Your parents may not know what they need, but just know that my sister and I will be praying with you for ultimate freedom for your parents.”

WORD UP

Matthew 27:39-40, 45-54; 28:1-10

39 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads **40** and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!”

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45 From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. **46** About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). **47** When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.” **48** Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. **49** The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.” **50** And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. **51** At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split **52** and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. **53** They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. **54** When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

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1 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. **2** There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. **3** His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. **4** The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. **5** The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. **6** He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. **7** Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.” **8** So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. **9** Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. **10** Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

KEY VERSE:

Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. (Matthew 28:9)



WORK OUT

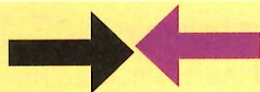
IMAGINE THE SCENE: DURING JESUS' CRUCIFIXION, THOSE WHO PASSED BY MOCKED HIM.

They challenged Him to prove His divinity by coming down from the cross. Little did they realize that His sacrifice was part of God's redemptive plan for humanity. The Cross, seemingly a sign of weakness, became the ultimate symbol of God's love and salvation. The Roman soldiers beat Him. They made bets for who would get His clothing by "casting lots," or throwing dice. They mocked Him by saying, "If you are truly the son of God, come down from the cross and save your life." They gave Him vinegar to drink instead of water. And when the time came, Jesus cried to God, "*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.*" He died for us. At the moment of Jesus' death, darkness covered the land, and the veil in the Temple tore in two. Witnessing these supernatural events, the centurion and his soldiers were filled with awe and fear. They recognized that Jesus was no ordinary man; He was the Son of God. This part of the story does not present the picture of ultimate freedom. The Cross was not the end of the story!

It is Resurrection Sunday once again. The true story of Jesus' death and resurrection will never grow old. We know that had He not done this marvelous thing for us, we would be lost. The people were divided on who Jesus really was. Many believed that He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. But many others doubted it. They said that He was just another prophet who could perform miracles. The Resurrection proved that Jesus was more than a good prophet or an excellent teacher. He was and is the Son of God. His death on the Cross brought about reconciliation between humanity and God.

Now, we have direct access to God. Now, our slate is wiped clean of sin because He took on our sins on the Cross and returned to heaven to sit on the right-hand side of the throne. That is something to shout about!

INSIDE OUT



Respond to the questions below on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Explain "Christ's victory over death." What does that mean to you?
2. Does the empty tomb prove that Jesus rose from the dead? Why or why not?
3. Jesus first appeared to women after His death. At that time, women were considered "less than." Why do you think He chose women to whom to first appear for this significant event?

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

The women went to the tomb on the third day after Jesus' burial. They encountered an angel who announced that Jesus had risen. The angel instructed them to tell the disciples and meet Jesus in Galilee. The Resurrection is the cornerstone of Christianity, validating Jesus' claims and offering hope to all believers. His victory over death ensures eternal life for those who trust in Him.

The "cause and effect" principle states that every action (cause) has a corresponding effect that usually happens as a result. Let's apply this to Jesus' death on the Cross. God sent Jesus here to free us from our sins and eternal death. He "had" to die on the Cross (that's the cause). Immediately after He died, the thick curtain that separated us from God was torn top to bottom so that we could always have direct access to God, anywhere and anytime (that's the effect). That's good news! Let's not take it for granted.

WALK OUT



In the "Wake Up!" story, Camryn and Jordyn shared with Lia and Kia that only God can set their parents free to be the functional parents that they both need them to be. God can grant ultimate freedom to anyone who requests it. Lia and Kia's parents may not know what they need, but they both know. Camryn and Jordyn assured Lia and Kia that they would be praying for ultimate freedom for their parents.



STEPPING OUT!

Note that the first people Jesus revealed Himself to were women. These were women who were followers of Jesus when He was on the earth. Some were there weeping at the foot of the cross where He hung. He trusted them to recognize Him and report to His disciples with His message. Can you think of any persons in your circle of friends who may feel as if they are bound by circumstances that seem to have them in prison? Find a way to minister to those friends and share that in Jesus Christ, we have ultimate freedom.

Media Mission



Listen to "Freedom," sung by Midtown Worship (featuring Semaj Miller). This song describes ultimate freedom. Listen to the words and experience the freedom Jesus brought us because He loves us. Praise Him for it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPMa1d6vMT4>



Crucifixion Experience

Select the correct answer to complete each statement about the lesson.

1. When Jesus died, how long was darkness over the land?
 - a. three days
 - b. three minutes
 - c. three hours
 - d. three weeks

2. One of the soldiers offered Jesus what to drink?
 - a. milk
 - b. water
 - c. vinegar
 - d. wine



3. At the moment Jesus died, the curtain of the temple . . .
 - a. was torn in two.
 - b. changed color.
 - c. fell down.
 - d. started to sway back and forth.

4. Who was first on the scene after the resurrection of Christ?
 - a. Simon Peter
 - b. Cleopas
 - c. Judas Iscariot
 - d. Mary Magdalene

5. Who rolled away the stone in front of the tomb?
 - a. Jesus
 - b. God
 - c. an angel
 - d. a Roman centurion

6. On which day of the week did Mary Magdalene and the others come to the tomb?
 - a. on the first day of the week; after the Sabbath
 - b. on the Sabbath day
 - c. on the day before the Sabbath
 - d. on the fourth day of the week