

Resurrection Stories

Unlock yours.

**Guided
Reflection
Journal**



RISE ABOVE

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This journal is an accompaniment to the Worship Design Studio Easter series, "Resurrection Stories"
worshipdesignstudio.com/stories

This journal can also be used independently from the worship series or any church gathering. It can be used privately or shared with a friend or in a small group setting.

May you be inspired to reflect on your own resurrection story and unlock new transformation.

Introduction

The Easter Season is a time of celebrating all the ways in which resurrection is possible in our lives. We can be in need of rising out of the depth of imprisonment, addiction, poverty, illness, and oppression – not just physically and literally, but also spiritually. What keeps us locked up inside? What holds us back from the joy of life? What binds us, keeping us from the fullness of who God created us to be? “Resurrection Stories” lifts up powerful testimonies of courage, kindness, strength, and overcoming from those who have found “resurrection” in their lives. It might just inspire you to unlock your own rising up!

Watch the video clips on the first page of every week to witness a powerful testimony of someone who faced challenges and underwent a journey of transformation to unlock new life after hardship. Let the journaling prompt inspire you to write your own story on living with courage and resilience. And remember: **change is not easy or quick. It takes time.** Our hope is that you will be inspired with visions for a hopeful future and take the small steps today that will bring you closer to life resurrected.

Week One: Freed

We may be imprisoned by many things. Jesus' declaration that he had come to "set the prisoner free" can be interpreted for all of us, whether or not we've ever experienced being behind literal prison bars. This day, we will hear Resurrection Stories that move from chains to freedom. We will reflect on how we can each step into freedom from whatever binds us.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus were surprised that no one had heard the story of Jesus being freed from the confines of death. Not recognizing Jesus, they excitedly told him a story he already knew: that death can imprison us no more. When Jesus "opened the scriptures" to the disciples, they remarked how their hearts burned within them. We have stories of freedom to share with our community!

— from Luke 24:13-32



Hear the amazing story of this rapper-turned-country singer Jelly Roll on his journey from jail to the biggest stages in the world.

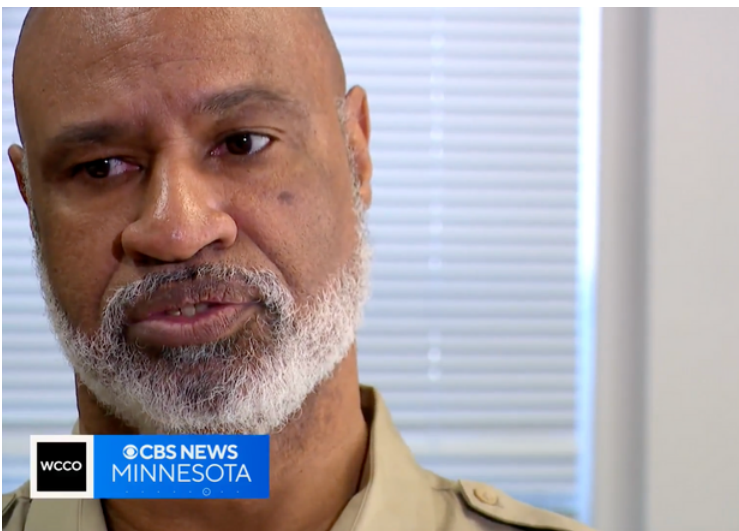


Week Two: Released ⁶

In 12-step programs, the first step is admitting powerlessness over anything that threatens to destroy our connection to our Higher Power, to ourselves, and to others. This week, we consider the variety of ways addiction occurs in our lives. We will celebrate the Good News that we can refocus our lives onto things that lead us to life and connection to the Holy.

... Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As [Abba God] has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

— from John 20: 19-23



After overcoming addiction, Ron Williams became a chaplain to guide others on road to sobriety.

Ron quotes this scripture verse towards the end of the video:

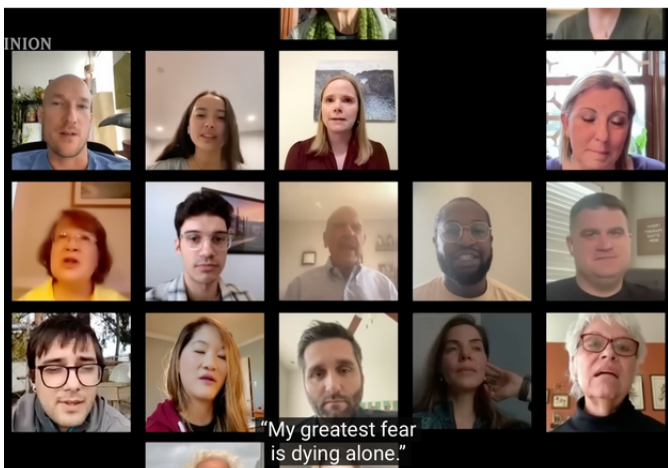
This saying is reliable and deserves full acceptance: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—and I'm the biggest sinner of all. But this is why I was shown mercy, so that Christ Jesus could show his endless patience to me first of all. So I'm an example for those who are going to believe in him for eternal life. — 1 Timothy 1: 15-16

Week Three: Found

What is it like to literally not have a home, a place to lay your head at night? "Homeless" can also mean a sense of not feeling "at home," lacking a feeling of belonging, feeling alone even in the midst of others. So many in this world are isolated. How can we find, and offer each other, "home" with the assurance of the presence of God and a beloved community?

"Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see, for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. Yet for all their joy they were still disbelieving and wondering, and he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

— from Luke 24: 36-43



This clip from a New York Times opinion piece on loneliness shows how we all have a part to play in ensuring that everyone has a sense of community and connectedness.

Week Four: Healed

Illness of mind, body, or spirit can sap us of our life passion and energy. Sometimes illness can change the course of our lives forever, asking us to adapt in ways we never imagined. And while illness is not visited upon anyone by God's design, sometimes limitations open our eyes to other possibilities. We will look for a different perspective on how we deal with any life-altering situation.

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish.

— from John 21: 1-8



Sen. John Fetterman on depression, recovery, and "making up any lost time."

Week Five: Liberated

This country is made up of so many who escaped to the “promised land” from oppressive regimes. Throughout history, people have had to flee situations of horror. Even within our country and in our own time, there are those who live with oppression and fear. We seek to widen our understanding of what we must do to continue to work for liberation on so many fronts.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.”

— from John 21: 9-19



An Iowa town goes to battle for an Afghan immigrant who has become a beloved member of their community in this story of finding refuge in a new land.

Week Six: Calmed

Mental illness is one of the most common, devastating, and yet stigmatized maladies of our time. If this is an “Age of Anxiety,” we must be a church of healers and hope-givers. We will pray for those who deal with various forms of trauma and the consequences of mental illness, those who care for them, and open compassion for our own struggles.

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him, but they doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

— from Matthew 28: 16-20



Minnesota youth unpack their trauma: "We don't have to be stuck in these emotions"

Week Seven: Transformed

The Spirit is alive and moves among us as it did in the early church! The end of our series will offer us an opportunity to commit ourselves to some important and concrete goals for our mission in the world. We are a church called to mobilize to alleviate suffering and proclaim resurrection hope through power of the Holy Spirit!

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

— from Acts 2: 1-21





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